

# Connected Beginnings National Gathering

17-18 NOVEMBER 2022, BRISBANE

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## FOREWORD

**The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth**



I am excited to welcome attendees from across the country to the 2022 Connected Beginnings National Gathering.

Connected Beginnings draws upon the strength and knowledge of First Nations' communities to increase children and families' engagement with early childhood, maternal, child health and family support services. The program's goal is to ensure children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school by the age of five.

The Australian Government is expanding the program to 50 sites nationally by 2025. The program contributes to the Priority Reforms and outcomes under the Closing the Gap National Agreement by lifting participation in early childhood education and care activities as well as increasing school readiness.

We know on the ground this takes determination and passion from each and every one of you – and the families and communities you work alongside – to drive this transformative program forward, and I commend you for your incredible work.

This event is an excellent opportunity for sites and their key program partners, to come together to share stories. Your involvement in the National Gathering will provide a space for reflection and shared learning, and will help inform the direction of the program as it continues to expand into more First Nations communities.

I hope you enjoy the event and the opportunity to connect face-to-face and take away some key learnings to implement on the ground so children get the best start to their education journeys.



# FOREWORD

**Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health**



Welcome to the 2022 Connected Beginnings National Gathering.

It's so vitally important that all children thrive in their early years. To help achieve this, the Connected Beginnings program supports First Nations children from birth to school age to better access education and health services.

I'm proud that the Australian Government is working in partnership with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) to deliver the health component of this program. Together with SNAICC – National Voice For Our Children, we are putting into practise a truly community driven, self-determined, culturally safe approach.

The Australian Government provides funding through Connected Beginnings to make sure our children receive steady, wrap around support to help meet learning and development milestones for a smooth start to school. The National Gathering is your chance to think, listen and talk about your community's priorities for children and their families.

I hope you take back to your community some useful tools and resources, new ideas about how to work with other organisations, how to bring your community along with you, how to measure your success in practical ways and how to build on your success and achieve real change for children and their families now and in the future.







# WELCOME

**Catherine Liddle, Chief Executive Officer of SNAICC**



Welcome to the Connected Beginnings National Gathering, the first hosted by SNAICC in our new role as the Community Partner for the program.

We are very excited to be working with backbone teams around the country, supporting existing sites and offering foundational support to new locations.

As an Aboriginal-community controlled peak, we are particularly pleased to assist in the transition of sites to ACCO-led organisations.

The strength of Connected Beginnings lies in its community owned and led approach, making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and services have control and agency in deciding what will work best in their communities, for their children.

This National Gathering is about sharing the stories and celebrating the successes of Connected Beginnings.

Hearing about the achievements that backbone organisations have already achieved and learning about new and innovative approaches that so many of you are driving is inspirational.

I hope you enjoy the opportunity to network, share ideas and have some great yarns about the wonderful work everyone is doing to support our young ones to thrive.



# DAY 1 PROGRAM - THURSDAY

**8:30–9:15**      **Registrations**

**9:15–9:45**      **Welcome to Country**

**9:45–10:15**      **Welcome from Ministers**  
Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood  
Education and Minister for Youth  
Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, Assistant Minister  
for Indigenous Health

**10:15–10:30**      **SNAICC Welcome**  
Catherine Liddle, CEO (SNAICC)

**10:30–10:45**      **NACCHO Welcome**  
Monica Barolits-McCabe, Executive Director (NACCHO)

**10:45–11:30**      **KEYNOTE: Talking from the Heart - The Uluru  
Statement and the Voices of Our Children**  
Thomas Mayor, Torres Strait Islander Author and Advocate

**11:30–12:00**      **Morning Tea**

**12:00–12:45**      **Breakout Session 1 (choose one)**

*Auditorium  
Capacity: 170*

**First 1,000 Days - Understand Your Brain  
(Virtual)**

Nathan Wallis, Neuroscience Educator, Host of the  
documentary “All in the Mind” and Co-Host of the TV  
series “The Secret Life of Girls”

*Patterson Room  
Capacity: 60*

**Introduction to UMEL for Connected Beginnings  
- Understanding, Measurement, Evaluation and  
Learning**

Ellise Barkley, Principal Consultant (Clear Horizon)

*Simpson Room  
Capacity: 30*

**Galiwin’ku Gurrutu - Walking and Working in  
Two Worlds**

Danny Dangadanga, Community Engagement Leader  
(Galiwin’ku), a respected and highly regarded Yolŋu  
Cultural Authority and Leader, and Lucy Strickland, Acting  
Director (Connected Beginnings Galiwin’ku)

*Mackellar Room  
Capacity: 30*

**Building Collaborative Partnerships**

Mildura Primary School + Mallee District Aboriginal  
Service (MDAS) Mildura Connected Beginnings

*Gilmore Room  
Capacity: 30*

**Part 1 - ACCO Leadership Transition Framework**

Tamasin Tunny, Manager, Early Childhood Education  
& Development and Anna McCracken, Senior Policy &  
Research Officer (SNAICC)

**12:45–12:55**      **10 Minute Break**







**12:55–13:40**

**Breakout Session 2 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*  
*Capacity: 170*

**Data for Community-Led Change**

Kristi Mansfield, CEO (Seer Data and Analytics) and Co-Host of 'The Foil' Podcast

*Patterson Room*  
*Capacity: 60*

**Change Your Brain, Change Your Life (Virtual)**

Nathan Wallis, Neuroscience Educator, Host of the documentary "All in the Mind", and Co-Host of the TV series "The Secret Life of Girls"

*Simpson Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Iutruwita Learnings**

Connected Beginnings Team (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)

*Gilmore Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Part 2 - ACCO Leadership Transition Framework**

Tamasin Tunny, Manager, Early Childhood Education and Development and Anna McCracken, Senior Policy and Research Officer (SNAICC)

**13:40–14:25**

**Lunch**

**14:25–15:10**

**Breakout Session 3 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*  
*Capacity: 170*

**UMEL in Action**

Ellise Barkley, Principle Consultant (Clear Horizon)

*Patterson Room*  
*Capacity: 60*

**Language and Literacy Projects in Doomadgee**

Guy and Cecilia Douglas and Isabel Toby, Project Coordinators (Doomadgee Connected Beginnings)

*Mackellar Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**101 on Financial Literacy**

Joshua Duke, Senior Manager (Deloitte Indigenous Services)

*Gilmore Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**How Do We Create Culturally Safe, Seamless Transitions from Home Through to School?**

Fiona Mann Bobongie, Manager (Mackay Connected Beginnings)

**15:10–15:20**

**10 Minute Break**



**15:20–16:05    Breakout Session 4 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*  
*Capacity: 170*

**Creating and Sustaining Genuine Partnerships**

Michael Currie, Principal Advisor, Indigenous Development and Tarsha Jones, Partnerships & Engagement Officer, Aboriginal Development, Business Development, Impact & Engagement (The Benevolent Society)

*Simpson Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Cultural Governance and Leadership in Hedland/Pilbara**

Maureen MK Kelly JP OAM, Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma Elder, Co-Vice Chair, and Raylene Button, Kariyarra Elder, Co-Chair (Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders (Director-Julyardi))

*Mackellar Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Engaging with Philanthropy**

Gretchen Young, Program Manager, Connected Beginnings (SNAICC)

*Gilmore Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Improving Linkages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children**

Joanne Goulding, National Director (THRYVE)

**16:05–17:00    Networking and Close of Day 1**

**18:30–22:00    Conference Dinner (Lawson Ballroom)**







## DAY 2 PROGRAM - FRIDAY

**9:00–9:15**

**Welcome, Recap from Day 1**

**9:15–10:00**

**KEYNOTE: Resilience Before and After the Storm**

Naomi Moran, General Manager (Koori Mail)

**10:00–10:30**

**Morning Tea**

**10:30–11:15**

**Breakout Session 5 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*

*Capacity: 170*

**Self-Determined Governance for Your Community**

Jessica Bulger, CEO (Australian Indigenous Governance Institute)

*Patterson Room*

*Capacity: 60*

**All Your Big (and Small) Data Questions Answered**

Kristi Mansfield, Co-Founder and CEO (Seer Data and Analytics) and Mike Jackson, Director of Connected Beginnings (Department of Education)

*Mackellar Room*

*Capacity: 30*

**Creating Change Within the Mareeba Maternal Health Unit**

Christine Buckland, Mareeba Connected Beginnings Project Manager, and Donna Francis, Mareeba Connected Beginnings Project Officer (Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Primary Health Care Service)

**11:15–11:25**

**10 Minute Break**

**11:25–12:10**

**Breakout Session 6 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*

*Capacity: 170*

**Telling the Whole Story**

Glenn Pearson, Director First Nations Strategy & Leadership (Telethon Kids Institute)

*Patterson Room*

*Capacity: 60*

**Establishing Diagnostic Service in Remote Communities (The Yapatjarrathati Project)**

Associate Professor Dianne Shanley (Griffith University) and Sarah Horton, Connected Beginnings Doomadgee and Clinical Lead of Family Health (Gidgee Healing)

*Simpson Room*

*Capacity: 30*

**One Voice, One Community**

Valerie Ross, Project Coordinator (Connected Beginnings Roebourne and 6718 Yandi for Change)

*Mackellar Room*

*Capacity: 30*

**Telling Your Story - Talking About Good Work**

Mandy Taylor, Director Strategic Engagement & Communications and Lily Harris, Communications Coordinator (SNAICC)

*Gilmore Room*

*Capacity: 30*

**Collective Impact, Collective Responsibility**

Claire Prideaux, Senior Policy & Research Officer (SNAICC)



**12:10–13:00**    **Lunch and Group Photo**

**13:00–13:45**    **Breakout Session 7 (choose one)**

*Auditorium*  
*Capacity: 170*

**Deep Collaboration in Place - How We Can Work Together Through Some of the Tricky and Icky Stuff**

Mark-Yettica Paulson, Deep Collaboration Practice Lead  
(Collaboration for Impact)

*Patterson Room*  
*Capacity: 60*

**Workshop for Health Partners and Other Organisations**  
NACCHO

*Simpson Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Thrive by Five - Putting Early Years on the Agenda**

Juan Larranaga (Thrive by Five)

*Mackellar Room*  
*Capacity: 30*

**Supporting a Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC Workforce**

Miranda Edwards, National Workforce Advisor, Early Years  
(SNAICC)

**13:45–14:45**    **Yarning Circles - Sharing Stories from Connected Beginnings**

**14:45–15:00**    **Reflective Plenary - Where To From Here?**

Adele Cox, Director of Sector Development (SNAICC)

**15:00–15:30**    **Closing Ceremony**







# SESSIONS

## Day 1

### **KEYNOTE: Talking from the Heart - The Uluru Statement and the Voices of Our Children**

Thomas Mayor, Torres Strait Islander Author and Advocate

*"When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country." – Uluru Statement from the Heart*

Thomas Mayor is a Torres Strait Islander man born on Larrakia country in Darwin. Quietly spoken in character, Thomas found his voice on the wharves. As he gained the skills of negotiation and organising in the union movement, he applied those skills to advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples, becoming a signatory to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a tireless campaigner. He is an author, dad and strong supporter of early childhood reforms that uphold the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

### **First 1,000 Days - Understanding Your Brain (Virtual)**

Nathan Wallis, Neuroscience Educator, Host of the documentary "All in the Mind" and Co-Host of the TV series "The Secret Life of Girls"

*In this session, Nathan will present on how our loving day-to-day interactions with children, significantly the first 1000 days, plays a critical role in defining later outcomes for our children and for their future. To understand how this structure comes about means re-examining your early life and the first 1000 days.*

### **Introduction to UMEL for Connected Beginnings - Understanding, Measurement, Evaluation and Learning**

Ellise Barkley, Principal Consultant (Clear Horizon)

*This session is for those coming fresh to 'measurement, evaluation, and learning' in Connected Beginnings. Ellise will give the 'big picture' of UMEL, explain what's involved, share examples, and there'll be time to ask questions. This session will draw on recent work led by Kowa, with the support of Clear Horizon, on Connected Beginnings UMEL.*

### **Galiwin'ku Gurrutu - Walking and Working Together in Two Worlds**

Danny Dangadanga, Community Engagement Leader (Galiwin'ku), a respected and highly regarded Yolŋu Cultural Authority and Leader, and Lucy Strickland, Acting Director (Connected Beginnings Galiwin'ku)

*All Yolŋu people are part of an ancient kinship system known as Gurrutu. This presentation will explain how approaching services and the community through Gurrutu has enabled CB Galiwin'ku to build trust and shared understanding. A child's development is everyone's business and Räl mananapanmirr Djäma is a collective and shared responsibility between the community and child-focused services and organisations.*



### **Building Collaborative Partnerships**

Mildura Primary School and Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS)  
Mildura Connected Beginnings

*This presentation will look at how the partnerships we have built and maintained have led to working together collaboratively to ensure all children are treated equally and feel loved and safe.*

### **ACCO Leadership Transition Framework**

Tamasin Tunny, Manager, Early Childhood Education & Development and  
Anna McCracken, Senior Policy & Research Officer (SNAICC)

*This interactive session will workshop the ACCO Leadership Transition Framework currently in development, with a facilitated discussion to elicit sites' feedback and insights that will shape the framework with the opportunity to ask questions. This session runs in two parts and attendees are encouraged to stay for the whole session.*

### **Data for Community-Led Change**

Kristi Mansfield, CEO (Seer Data and Analytics) and Co-Host of 'The Foil' Podcast

*Seer Data and Analytics will share stories about First Nations communities using data to inform collaborative work on the ground. Hear about the Data Packs available for Connected Beginnings sites, Government to Community data sharing to support data sovereignty, and local data capability building and training options.*

### **Change Your Brain, Change Your Life**

Nathan Wallis, Neuroscience Educator, Host of the documentary "All in the Mind" and Co-Host of the TV series "The Secret Life of Girls"

*Nathan will share the principles of neuroplasticity and how to apply this in everyday situations. Nathan's message is that we are not subject to the biology dictated by the brain, but rather, it's actually an interactive process – the biology of the brain is also dictated by our thoughts and actions.*

### **Iutruwita Learnings**

Connected Beginnings Team (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)

*A group presentation on the key learnings we have had across our three sites in Iutruwita/Tasmania. We will share our experiences on backbone functions, data, systems change and importantly community championing the work and building their capacity.*

### **UMEL In Action**

Ellise Barkley, Principal Consultant (Clear Horizon)

*This session offers tips for doing UMEL in order to better understand, communicate and increase the difference you are making. This session is for Connected Beginnings partners that are ready, or have started, to use and collect feedback, stories, and data for learning and showing impact. Ellise will talk about using a mix of tools for gathering information (Impact Yarns, creative methods, numbers/metrics, steppingstones tool), how to weave it together to interpret and share, and tips for feeding it back into the work and your local partnerships. This session will be a mix of presentation and Q&A discussion and will draw on recent work led by Kowa.*







### Language and Literacy Projects in Doomadgee

Guy and Cecilia Douglas and Isabel Toby, Project Coordinators  
(Doomadgee Connected Beginnings)

*54reasons Connected Beginnings team, Doomadgee invites you to our yarning circle, where we will share the literacy and language projects and events we have run in partnership with our children, families, and community. Our Digital Story Teller project, children's story books, Black Star Radio 'Story Time', Family Camps and Babies' 'Welcome to Country' events have not only supported our young ones in Doomadgee in their right to education, but to grow up strong in their culture.*

### 101 on Financial Literacy

Joshua Duke, Senior Manager (Deloitte Indigenous Services)

*The workshop has been prepared for mob by mob. It is designed to be an interactive, safe place that will provide attendees with the knowledge and skills to:*

- Develop a personal/business budget*
- Manage business cashflow*
- Interpret profit + loss and balance sheet reports*
- Industry case studies to improve your knowledge and skills*
- Build confidence in business finance*

### How Do We Create Culturally Safe, Seamless Transitions from Home Through to School?

Fiona Mann Bobongie (Mackay Connected Beginnings)

*Fiona Mann Bobongie is a Darumbal Australian South Sea Islander woman, with experience in education for over 35 years and has delivered professional development nationally. Fiona manages the Connected Beginnings Mackay project.*

### Creating and Sustaining Genuine Partnerships

Michael Currie, Principal Advisor, Indigenous Development and Tarsha Jones, Partnerships & Engagement Officer, Aboriginal Development, Business Development, Impact & Engagement (The Benevolent Society)

*The Benevolent Society's approach and learnings to embedding SNAICC's best practice partnerships framework with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations. "Creating Change through Partnerships" a model of action genuine and successful partnerships between community controlled and mainstream organisations.*

### Cultural Governance and Leadership in Hedland/Pilbara

Maureen MK Kelly JP OAM, Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma Elder, Co-Vice Chair, and Raylene Button, Kariyarra Elder, Co-Chair (Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders (Director-Julyardi))

*This session will share the story of the Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders (HASL) and Julyardi Aboriginal Corporation as an example of cultural governance and leadership in Hedland/Pilbara. Hear from Elders and Co-Chairs of HASL on their story, approach to service delivery, advocacy, collaboration, the change and achievements and plans for the future.*



### Engaging with Philanthropy

Gretchen Young, Program Manager, Connected Beginnings (SNAICC)

*This interactive session will discuss your experiences on attracting philanthropic support for your work and your insights on how to address the gaps, barriers and opportunities for sustainable partnerships.*

### Improving Linkages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

Joanne Goulding, National Director (THRYVE)

*THRYVE is a division of SNAICC operating in NSW, Victoria and WA which provides backbone support to Aboriginal early years services. THRYVE's National Director, Joanne Goulding will explore the linkages between THRYVE and Connected Beginnings so Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander children and families have a direct pathway to the support they need.*

## Day 2

### KEYNOTE: Resilience Before and After the Storm

Naomi Moran (Koori Mail)

*In 2022, after the devastating Lismore floods, the Koori Mail became a flood hub responding to the community's needs for food, supplies, clothing and support.*

*Naomi Moran is a Nyangbal, Arakwal and Dunghutti woman from New South Wales, and is the General Manager of Australia's only independent Indigenous newspaper, the Koori Mail. Her career in Indigenous media spans over 20 years, and includes experience in print, television and radio. At just fourteen years old, in April 1998, Naomi joined the Koori Mail as a trainee office worker, which resulted in a ten-year journey working for the paper in various roles and departments throughout the business including advertising, sales, marketing and editorial. In 2008 she pursued her career goals in Indigenous Media, joining the communications team at NITV, Australia's only Indigenous TV station, and then went on to explore working in radio with a joint position with both the Brisbane Indigenous Media Association and the National Indigenous Radio Service, in Brisbane. In April 2016, Naomi returned to the Koori Mail, with the Koori Mail Board of Directors appointing her as General Manager. Naomi has a passion for supporting Indigenous youth with employment and career pathways, by developing and delivering in-school programs and mentoring for students throughout the northern NSW region.*

### Self-Determined Governance for Your Community

Jessica Bulger, CEO (Australian Indigenous Governance Institute)

*Through evidence-based tools, resources and a range of development, training and advisory offerings, AIGI supports excellence in self-determined governance for Indigenous individuals, communities, nations and organisations in Australia, contributing to improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians and to a broader change in Australia that everyone can be proud of.*







### **All Your Big (and Small) Data Questions Answered**

Kristi Mansfield, Co-Founder and CEO (Seer Data and Analytics)

*Join us for a Q&A where you can ask any question about data. Join us for a Q&A where you can ask any question about data. We'll talk about data access and data sharing, community data collection and data capability building. You'll learn about the Department's vision for data and support of First Nations Data Sovereignty.*

### **Creating Change Within the Mareeba Maternal Health Unit**

Christine Buckland, Mareeba Connected Beginnings Project Manager, and Donna Francis, Mareeba Connected Beginnings Project Officer (Mulungi Aboriginal Corporation Primary Health Care Service)

*Mareeba Connected Beginnings placed community needs at the centre of the work by supporting cultural change within the maternity ward. The Maternal Health Project was initiated through community conversations of experiences and the realisation of emotional and spiritual risks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who birthed at the hospital. The ripple effect coming from this collaboration enhanced cultural experiences for all involved and built capabilities within the maternal health at a level that was not anticipated.*

### **Telling the Whole Story**

Glenn Pearson, Director First Nations Strategy & Leadership (Telethon Kids Institute)

*Drawing on examples from the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey, Glenn will talk about the importance of understanding data in the context of your community and lived experience, and the need for approaches that are as sophisticated as the families you work with. The session will explore how to position community and First Nations' cultural leadership and expertise in the data story.*

### **Establishing Diagnostic Service in Remote Communities (The Yapatjarrathati Project)**

Associate Professor Dianne Shanley (Griffith University) and Sarah Horton, Connected Beginnings Doomadgee and Clinical Lead of Family Health (Gidgee Healing)

*This presentation will discuss how Dreamtime stories can be used as an approach to communicate between healthcare providers and First Nations consumers. A/Prof Shanley and Ms Sarah Horton will provide a detailed example of how a Dreamtime story was especially co-designed to support children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in remote primary care, but ended up providing a blue print for service delivery that empowered primary healthcare to effectively identify any child who was developmentally not on track.*

### **One Voice, One Community**

Valerie Ross, Project Coordinator (Connected Beginnings Roebourne and 6718 Yandi for Change)

*An overview of the Journey of 6718 Yandi for Change and how Roebourne community has adopted a Collective Impact model to develop strategies that brings local people, government and non-for-profit groups to work collaboratively to close the disadvantage gap in Roebourne WA.*



### **Telling Your Story - Talking About Good Work**

Mandy Taylor, Director Strategic Engagement & Communications and Lily Harris, Communications Coordinator (SNAICC)

*We all have great stories to tell, but how do you make sure they resonate with all of your target audiences? In this session, SNAICC's Communications Team will share some practical advice for making your communications count - from focusing your messaging for maximum media coverage, to generating buzz on social media.*

### **Collective Impact, Collective Responsibility**

Claire Prideaux, Senior Policy & Research Officer (SNAICC)

*How can Connected Beginnings help uphold our kids' rights? SNAICC's Claire Prideaux and representatives from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) discuss how we can all support our kids to stay connected to culture and community.*

### **Deep Collaboration in Place - How We Can Work Together Through Some of the Tricky and Icky Stuff**

Mark-Yettica Paulson, Deep Collaboration Practice Lead (Collaboration for Impact)

*Collaboration for Impact's Deep Collaboration Lead, Mark Yettica-Paulson, will draw on his rich experience working across First Nations Australia and non-Indigenous Australia to navigate through the 'icky and gritty' sides of collaboration within complex systems.*

### **Workshop for Health Partners and Other Organisations**

NACCHO

*NACCHO will facilitate a discussion for health partners, backbones organisations and other interested attendees to workshop what is working well in Connected Beginnings sites, challenges and barriers to integration, lessons that can be shared going forward and the role of NACCHO within the program.*

### **Thrive By Five - Putting Early Years on the Agenda**

Juan Larranaga (Thrive by Five)

*Thrive by Five involves a wide range of stakeholders advocating for better policy and increased investment to improve outcomes in early childhood. SNAICC and Thrive by Five are working together on a strategy to ensure the voices and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations are heard at a national Early Years Summit planned by the Federal Government for next year. Share your experiences of the current systems, what works, what doesn't and ideas for change.*


### **Supporting Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC Workforce**

Miranda Edwards, National Workforce Advisor, Early Years (SNAICC)

*We know that a strong, sustainable and culturally safe ECEC workforce is needed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This session will share information on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC Workforce Development Strategy and discuss the challenges and opportunities to attract, retain and value a highly skilled early childhood workforce.*







**Connected Beginnings draws upon the strength and knowledge of First Nations' communities to increase children and families' engagement with health and early childhood education and care. It improves access to existing early childhood, maternal and child health and family support services to ensure children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school by the age of five. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap has provided SNAICC an opportunity to work with the Department of Education for increased First Nations leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Connected Beginnings project. The Department of Health and Aged Care primarily funds Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to deliver the health component of the program.**

*Artwork provided by Chern'ee Sutton and used with permission.*