SNAICC – National Voice for our Children acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters now recognised as Australia and pays its respects to the ancestors and Elders of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

SNAICC Annual Report 2020-21 | © SNAICC December 2022
Photography by Jacinta Keefe; Sarah Francis; Wayne Quilliam
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ABOUT SNAICC

SNAICC is the national non-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC works for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, to ensure their safety, development and wellbeing. We do this by:

• supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through collaborative workshops, resources and training
• conducting research to inform our positions on policies, and providing advice to government on issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
• acting as a collective voice for SNAICC member organisations, calling for change and equality
• fostering partnerships and undertaking joint projects with other NGOs, including non-Indigenous agencies, to improve service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
• participating in various committees to advocate on behalf of our children, families and member organisations, and
• sharing knowledge and garnering support to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through campaigns and events such as Family Matters, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day and the biennial SNAICC conference.

A core component of the work we do is strengthening and bolstering the sector and services that support and work with these children. Our work and efforts are formed by three interconnected roles to deliver on this purpose and achieve our organisation’s vision.

Community and Sector Voice

SNAICC engages with Community and the sector to understand their needs and aspirations, give a strong voice to these perspectives and to influence change. We do this through engaging and working with our members, bringing the sector together to discuss and consider community needs and aspirations, spending time in and with our community, and building respected relationships with decision makers.

Sector Development

SNAICC works with and supports the sector to enhance the quality, access and sustainability of services. We do this through our dedicated sector development work and activities supporting members and other community-controlled organisations working across the sector.

Research, Policy and Leadership

SNAICC seeks to understand and share what works to drive better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and translate this into policy and practice. We do this through our dedicated policy, research and leadership work.
OUR VISION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families are protected, our communities determine their own futures, and our cultural identity is valued.

OUR PURPOSE

We work to amplify the voice of community and the sector for the fulfilment of the rights of our children.

OUR GOAL

Strong, safe, healthy, self-determining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, connected to family and culture.
What an amazing year for SNAICC, reflecting on the incredible achievements we have had in the last year and the growth of the organisation.

This report demonstrates that SNAICC is in a very prominent position and well situated to drive reforms across the early years and child and family welfare sectors. During this period, we strengthened our relationships with both the Commonwealth and state and territory governments and are looking forward to growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector voice, with greater participation over the coming years. We continue to lead policy analysis and advocacy for our members, our sector and our children.

We have used every opportunity to make children’s voices heard and will continue to do so in 2023. In 2021-22, SNAICC led the development of the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan and co-designed a peak body for Aboriginal children and families in South Australia. We will continue to build on the strengths of our children and families and the community-controlled sector to ensure their voices are represented and policies work to keep our children connected to culture, family and community.

Our virtual 9th SNAICC National Conference showcased our children, with representatives from every state and territory, as well as international guests. We were exposed to innovation in practice, where our culture was showcased in programs, practice, policy and legislation. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day again exceeded our expectations with our resources sent all over Australia, and communities celebrating this special day in innovative ways. SNAICC’s governance is strong, our partnerships with the government and our philanthropic partners are growing.

Over the last 12 months SNAICC has diversified its funding sources with less reliance on government funding. In 2020-21, 76% of SNAICC’s income came from government funding and 18% from non-government and philanthropic partners. In 2021-22 this ratio shifted to 56%: 27% ratio. This is important as we look to diversify our funding sources to reduce reliance on government funding and bolster our financial sustainability.

As Chairperson of SNAICC, I want to thank our Chief Executive Officer Catherine Liddle for continuing to elevate the profile of our work as a national peak body. I also want to thank staff for their dedication to and support of SNAICC. We look forward to 2023 to ensure our progress makes a real difference for our children and families.

Muriel Bamblett
Chairperson
What an incredible year we have had. While 2021 brought challenges with COVID-19, we have hit the ground running this year and have taken on exciting new projects to affect real change for our communities and Aboriginal organisations and services. Projects that strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to continue to deliver culturally safe wrap around services and supports to our children and families.

Throughout 2022, we spent a lot of time connecting with community and our organisations on Country and online. If 2021-22 has taught us anything, it is the value of coming together and holding space for one another to tell and share stories. Over the year, we held gatherings, conferences, and community forums to strengthen our services and the sector to deliver better supports for our children. We have been working closely with our Aboriginal organisations to understand the challenges they face and the needs they identify to actualise our shared vision for our sectors where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations are supported and participate in decisions and actions impacting our children and families.

We have been listening and using our platform to elevate the voices of our communities and services, to strengthen and support the child care and child protection sectors, and to inform policy and influence government action. We have sat on round tables and government meetings to amplify the voices of our ACCOs and share what is working best for our mob from Aboriginal organisations working on the ground.

Some incredible success stories of listening with your heart, placing culture at the centre of care and wellbeing, and understanding the needs of families are being listened to by government decision-makers. We are seeing more Aboriginal organisations are being asked to sit at the table.

SNAICC continued to amplify the voices of our children, our members, and our communities through our strong campaigns and advocacy work. In 2021, the Family Matters Report was launched at the 9th SNAICC National Conference. Following this was the successful celebration of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day, where we developed cultural resources and delivered 15,000 resource bags to our communities across Australia sharing our theme: Proud in culture, strong in spirit.

SNAICC had a victory over the Child Care Subsidy, after years of lobbying for an increase in Child Care Subsidy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We see this as our win, one which we couldn’t have achieved without the help of our Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

We have felt support from the momentum over the Closing the Gap agreement and have been working with organisations to influence government reform. Without your voices we would not be able to hold governments accountable and influence the policy reform that will see our children thrive connected to family, culture, community, and kin.

These achievements would not have been possible without our incredibly dedicated and talented SNAICC team. We continue to grow, and continue to punch above our weight to change the systems affecting our children that were designed without us.

Catherine Liddle
CEO
Our Board

Muriel Bamblett, Chairperson

Muriel is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung woman and one of Australia’s leading experts on Aboriginal child welfare, particularly in the area of child and family services. Muriel has been the CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) since 1999 and has returned as Chairperson for SNAICC after holding the position from 1998-2008.

Candice Butler, Deputy Chairperson

A social worker with over 15 years’ experience working across government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, Candice Butler has strong family connections to Yarrabah in North Queensland. As Manager Practice Development for the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd (QATSICPP), Candice is responsible for providing leadership in the analysis of policy and legislation to inform the design of programs that will improve practice and reduce risk. She has provided significant leadership in the design, delivery, management, and evaluation of projects to improve child and family wellbeing across Queensland.

Rachel Atkinson, Secretary

Rachel is a proud Yorta Yorta woman. She was instrumental in the creation of the Palm Island Community Company and has been CEO since its foundation in 2007. Rachel is the Chair of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, and a board member of the Queensland First Children and Families Board. She was formerly President of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council, and CEO of the Townsville Aboriginal and Islanders Health Service.
John Leha, Treasurer

John is a proud Birri Gubba, Wakka Wakka and Tongan man born raised on Gadigal land and has been the CEO of AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation since 2021. He has a wealth of knowledge and strategic thinking to address the many challenges facing Aboriginal children and families in NSW. John has worked extensively in Indigenous health, education and employment programs across state and federal government and is well known as a health ambassador.

Kathleen Pinkerton, Board Member

Kathleen is a proud Widi woman from the Yamatji Nation in Western Australia. She is a Chairperson of Yorganop Association Incorporated and a graduate of Edith Cowan University with a Batchelor of Social Science in Indigenous Services. Kathleen’s background includes having worked in child protection, early childhood and training sector where she developed extensive experience in facilitating, coordinating and delivering programs, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Sharron Williams, Board Member

Sharron is a Narungga/Kaurna woman who has been the CEO of Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS), the peak Aboriginal child welfare organisation in South Australia, since 1997. Sharron’s experience includes 15 years with Correctional Services in strategic and policy development positions. Sharron’s strengths are building relationships with government and industry on behalf of the community, based on respect and a commitment to protecting the rights of the Aboriginal community. Sharron has been with SNAICC since 1999.

Joanne Della Bona, Board Member

Joanne Della Bona is a Noongar yorga (woman) from Whadjuk (Perth) and Balardong (Wheatbelt) Boodja (country) in Western Australia. Joanne has more than 30 years’ experience in the community services sector, in early childhood education and care, education, housing, child protection, governance. Joanne commenced her career with qualifications of a Bachelor of Education. She is passionate about early childhood education for Aboriginal children and providing children with a solid development foundation through education. She was awarded Western Australian of the Year Awards 1994 – Youth Category. Joanne has held Board positions at Noongar Radio, Aboriginal Family Law Services, Noongar Family Safety Wellbeing Council (NFSWC) and Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS). Currently a Council Member of SNAICC, Campaign member of Family Matters and Trustee to the Wongatha Peoples Education and Recreation Trust.
OUR WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Culturally-informed, evidence-based best practice
- Innovation and flexibility
- Self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Value and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Collaboration with relationships of trust and confidence
- Commitment to child rights principles and a child-centered approach
SNAICC’s members have adequate funding and resources to grow and ensure our children and their families access the supports that they need to grow up strong, healthy and proud of who they are, with the skills to realise their potential.

SNAICC is strong, stable and respected as an effective peak in providing a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, both individual and collective, on issues impacting children.

SNAICC influences policy reform and practice to achieve outcomes that will benefit our children and families through promoting an enabling environment of laws, policies, procedures and practices that values their cultures, hears their voice and respects their ways.

Family, as the foundation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s social, cultural and emotional wellbeing, have access to integrated supports and resources they need.

SNAICC increases awareness and shifts attitudes through amplifying our stories and providing avenues for support to influence the laws and policies that support our children.

Culturally strong and responsive laws, policies and practices

Culturally strong families and communities

Target outcomes

Awareness and understanding among the broader population

Strong and effective national peak body for children

Strong members and other services
WHAT ARE OUR FOCUS AREAS?

Children and Families
Strengthening the safety and wellbeing of our children raised within family and culture

Child Protection
Transforming the cultural safety and experience of children engaged with child protection services

Early Learning and Development
Increasing the quality, access and sustainability of early childhood development series
In 2021, the SNAICC National Conference diverted from tradition, hosting our first ever virtual conference in the wake of a year blighted by COVID-19.

Whilst we dearly missed the opportunity to connect in-person with our friends, our communities, and our colleagues, over 950 delegates joined us from rooms all over the country to double down on our collective efforts to celebrate and see the fulfilment of the rights of our children.

This year SNAICC – National Voice for our Children celebrated 40 years since our journey began and did so under the theme of Our children matter: Innovative approaches to new world challenges. This theme was chosen in the context of two years of political and social landscape-shifting change in our sector. In particular, the coronavirus pandemic has had a disproportionally high impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The conference saw representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations across the country share stories of innovative practice that has maintained our children’s connection to family, community, culture and Country during extraordinary times.

The responsibility to support child wellbeing and safety outcomes rests with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Research highlights the unique value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices, the importance of Aboriginal-led solutions to improving outcomes, and impact of cultural identity to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Yet, these strengths are undermined by an ever-deepening crisis of child removal that breaks families apart and disrupts the social fabric of communities. The answer for our children lies not in service systems but in redressing the causes of vulnerability and investing in early intervention and prevention to better support and heal families experiencing vulnerabilities. This means engaging in proactive measures to redress poverty, trauma from the Stolen Generations and its ongoing impacts, and the exclusion of our people from designing the solutions.
The 2021 SNAICC National Conference calls for urgent and transformative change to the systems that impact our children. We call on all governments to work with us to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have every opportunity to grow up safe and cared for in their family, community, and culture, and on Country. The following actions are needed to set us on that path:

- transfer authority in child protection to our families and communities through delegated statutory authority and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making
- invest to build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce that we need for our culturally strong community-controlled services
- set ambitious targets to invest in and build our community-controlled child protection and family support services, including transfer of resources from mainstream organisations.
- scrap the child care activity test and develop a dedicated funding model to support and grow our community-controlled integrated early years services
- establish a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s commissioner, and equivalent roles in each state and territory
- provide opportunities to build our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evidence base for best practice and control our own data
SNAICC has been coordinating National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day for more than 30 years, and each year more and more Australians embrace the day to support our children.

The date 4 August was historically used to communally celebrate the birthdays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were taken from their families at a young age, without knowing their birthday – the Stolen Generations.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 and restrictions in face-to-face events, SNAICC persisted in promoting the Children’s Day campaign throughout early 2021. Many Australians celebrated across the country in their own way, embracing cultural traditions such as storytelling by Elders, bush tucker, craft making, face painting, traditional dancing and more.

Hundreds of celebrations took place in early years services, schools, communities and at home. Supported by an online campaign, SNAICC pre-delivered 15,000 Children’s Day bags across Australia – to remote communities as well as cities and regions across all states and territories.

This year, we provided fabric reusable backsacks with a beautiful design of Taungurung Bubup (a baby in a coolamon) by artist Annette Sax of Yarn Strong Sista. The bags included a book donated by the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) Can You Dance, written by Sally Morgan and illustrated by Kathy Arbon. Other items in the bag included an activity sheet and crayons, golden wattleseed for planting, a wooden hand on a spike for children to paint and put in the garden and a Children’s Day 2021 sticker.

Children from across Australia embraced our theme, sending in drawings of ‘What spirit means to me’. These drawings are showcased on our Children’s Day website gallery, together with photos of children celebrating being proud in culture and strong in spirit that were sent in by many of our member organisations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have provided love and care for their children, growing them up strong and safe in their cultural traditions, for thousands of generations. For our children, safety, wellbeing and development are closely linked to the strengths of their connections with family, community, culture, language, and Country.

Our community service announcement featured Nikinpa Child and Family Centre on Awabakal Country in New South Wales, filmed by Wayne Quilliam. The TV commercial was narrated by SNAICC Sector Development Manager Adele Cox, and music provided by OKA with their song ‘Standing strong in my Kulcha’.
Focus Area 1

1,300+
EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

3,500+
POSTERS DELIVERED

15,000
BAGS SOLD OUT IN 2 WEEKS

#PROUDINCULTURE and
#STRONGINSPIRIT
MULTIPLE SHARES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

51,472
IMPRESSIONS ON TWITTER ON 4 AUGUST

7,167
FACEBOOK REACH 4 AUGUST

1,600
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

90,318
PAGE VIEWS ON 4 AUGUST
Throughout 2021 and 2022, SNAICC continued to leverage its social media platforms to highlight important sector issues, consulting and communicating our work with our members and stakeholders, as well as the wider public.

SNAICC’s key messages were shared through traditional media outlets, webinars series, quarterly newsletters, the SNAICC website and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

In 2021-22, engagement with SNAICC’s social media platforms increased dramatically and represents the biggest year-on-year increases for Facebook and Instagram. Facebook reach has increased rapidly to 270%, achieved through strategic social media planning. Twitter and LinkedIn have also continued to grow, with a steady increase in followers during this period.
EARLY CHILDHOOD AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR STRENGTHENING PLAN

SNAICC led the development of the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan (the Sector Strengthening Plan) in partnership with Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Early childhood care and development is one of five areas prioritised for community-controlled sector strengthening under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) because of its potential to impact a range of Closing the Gap targets and enable positive structural change.

This Sector Strengthening Plan is central to the Governments’ commitment to build the community-controlled sector and its governance and implementation will be undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and Governments at the state, territory and national level. It aims to achieve increased service delivery, coverage, capacity, quality and resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in alignment with Priority Reform 2 of the National Agreement. Its objectives are supported by 36 key areas of action (18 for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and 18 for family support and child protection services), targeting sector growth and development across areas of workforce, capital infrastructure, service delivery, governance, consistent funding model and peak bodies. The identified key areas of action are for further consideration and development, as relevant by all levels of government, peaks and the community-controlled sector.

The extensive consultation process conducted by SNAICC to inform the development of the Sector Strengthening Plan included national workshops, attended by over 150 people and opportunities to provide written feedback.

SNAICC also leveraged consultations held to inform the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy and Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021 – 2031 in the development of the Sector Strengthening Plan.

The Sector Strengthening Plan was endorsed by all governments and the Coalition of Peaks through the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.
In early 2021, SNAICC was contracted by the South Australian Department for Child Protection (DCP) to lead a consultation process on the design of a state-wide peak body for Aboriginal children and families. Following sustained advocacy from Aboriginal communities and organisations around the need for such a peak body, the South Australian Government committed to fund its establishment in their Aboriginal Action Plan 2021-22 and their first state-wide Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

The SNAICC policy team ensured that our entire process was led by the Aboriginal community of South Australia – from consultation locations to priority topics, to final recommendations. We partnered with Commissioner April Lawrie, the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, to ensure that our consultations were targeted and that they reflected the key findings of Commissioner Lawrie’s state-wide consultation processes throughout 2019 and 2021.

Even with border closures mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we held face-to-face workshops in Adelaide, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Ceduna, Mount Gambier and Murray Bridge, and held online consultations with community members and organisations across South Australia. We were fortunate to hear the expert perspectives and advice of Aboriginal community and sector leaders all over the state and were able to reach a high degree of consensus among stakeholders on our final recommendations to be put forward to DCP. SNAICC has submitted the final report to DCP and is awaiting the response of the South Australian Government.
FAMILY MATTERS 2021

Family Matters, led by SNAICC, is Australia’s national campaign to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture. The Family Matters report is a key policy document that each year tracks how governments across the country are responding to the challenge of ending the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander children in out-of-home care. The report holds governments in all eight jurisdictions to account and is influential in making the case for change.

In December 2021, The Family Matters Report 2021 was officially launched online as part of the SNAICC Conference, with several hundred participants joining to hear from federal politicians (including Hon Linda Burney MP) plus several members of the National Family Matters Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group (Jacynta Krakouer, Karl Williamson and Co-Chair Paul Gray).

The Report findings show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be removed from family and kin at disproportionate rates. The report found that 21,523 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were living away from their parents and that they were 10 times more likely to be removed from their families than non-Indigenous children. By 2031, the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is projected to increase by a staggering 54% if governments do not intervene to interrupt the current rate of growth.

Focus Area 2

Supporting strong, healthy, self-determining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children connected to family and culture requires the transformation of Australia’s child protection systems. Outcomes for children in out-of-home care remain critical issues: preventing the need for ongoing contact with child protection services is essential as is addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children in contact with child protection systems. Quality child protection responses can support healing for children, families and communities, preventing inter-generational harm. Solutions lie in the full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, recognising the centrality of our cultures and the genuine participation of our people in decisions impacting our children. Change also requires redressing the unconscious bias embedded within the systems and those that are tasked to apply them. In practice, this bias may manifest in higher surveillance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by child protection agencies, or in a tendency to make more punitive decisions when considering plans for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.
The Report also found that the steep, decade-long decline in the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers was continuing. Furthermore, 79% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care or other supported care were on long-term or permanent care orders, leaving them at serious risk of being permanently disconnected from their families, communities and cultures. A significant proportion of government investment in child protection service is channeled into tertiary intervention and out-of-home care (84%), compared to services that provide support to families to safely care for their children (16%). SNAICC and the Family Matters Leadership Group advocated for the urgent need to dedicate greater investment in prevention and early intervention services that support our children and families. Together, we emphasised that involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision-making about their own children, and funding Aboriginal-led services, is the key to preventing the removal of children from their families.

Despite The Family Matters Report 2021 being launched remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions, SNAICC and the Leadership Group were pleased with the amount of media coverage the launch engendered – including major feature articles in The Age/Sydney Morning Herald, the ABC, and NITV.

www.familymatters.org.au

Thank you to the members of the Family Matters National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group for your tireless efforts.
21.5K children in out-of-home care

6% of all children in Australia but 39% of the total number of children in out-of-home care

10x more likely to be living in out-of-home care than non-indigenous children

40 adoptions of indigenous children, 2015-20

42% less than half are living with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers

23 adoptions of indigenous children, 2010-15

40% less likely to be reunified with birth parents than non-indigenous children

9.4x more likely to access specialist homelessness services

79% in long-term ‘permanent’ care

70% more likely to have a low birthweight than non-indigenous babies

35% of 0-5 years to be developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains by age 5

Focus Area 2

SNAICC Annual Report 2021-22
ABORIGINAL-LED SOLUTIONS

Family Matters calls for investment in community-led solutions and a national commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to eliminate over-representation of our children in out-of-home care.

**BUILDING BLOCK 1**
- Access to universal and targeted services
- Invest in community-controlled organisations to provide culturally safe early intervention and prevention services
- Aboriginal-led early intervention and prevention services and holistic integrated early years services such as MACS and ACFCs

**BUILDING BLOCK 2**
- Participation and control in decision-making
- Establish resourced legislative roles for participation of community-controlled organisations in all child protection decisions
- Delegation of child protection decision-making (Qld and Vic.) and Aboriginal-led out-of-home care and kinship programs (eg NSW, Vic., NT and SA)

**BUILDING BLOCK 3**
- Culturally safe and responsive systems
- Permanency planning that supports Aboriginal child rights. Invest in Aboriginal-led family reunification programs
- Keeping families together sooner, more often, and for longer, through community-led family reunification programs (eg Qld and Vic.)

**BUILDING BLOCK 4**
- Accountable governments and services
- Establish and resource commissioners and peak bodies for our children. Build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to oversee data and outcomes for children
- Aboriginal commissioners for children in each state and territory (SA, Vic., Qld) and deputy guardian (NSW)

**HEADLINE INDICATOR**
- Over-representation in OOHC (rate)

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<td>Participation, control in decision-making</td>
<td>Culturally safe and responsive systems</td>
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**2021 REPORT CARD SNAPSHOT**

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**KEY**
- Very poor
- Poor
- Promising/Improving
- Stronger practice/outcomes

**THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT**

**CLOSING THE GAP**

**NEW TARGET**

**BY 2031**

- **REDUCE** BY **45%**
  - The over-representation of our children in out-of-home care

**CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING**

**REMOVAL VS FAMILY SUPPORT**

- $84% ON INTERVENTION AND OUT-OF-HOME CARE
- $16% ON SUPPORT
REVIEWING ACT’S LEGISLATION TO ALIGN TO THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILD PLACEMENT PRINCIPLE (ATSICPP)

SNAICC was engaged by the ACT Government Community Services Directorate as part of implementing the fifth recommendation of the Our Booris, Our Way Review; to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in the Children and Young People Act 2008.

SNAICC convened an Expert Advisory Group of Aboriginal leaders and key service providers to oversee and advise on the project. We conducted an online survey and held a range of online and face-to-face consultations with communities on how the ATSICPP should be embedded in the Act. The final report and recommendations were delivered to Community Services Directorate in October 2022.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILD PLACEMENT PRINCIPLE TRAINING

SNAICC has been engaged by the ACT Government to develop and deliver a training and support program for commencing Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) staff since the end of 2020, following on from a program delivered to all their frontline staff in 2019. Delivery of this training continued in 2022.

Training on the ATSICPP aims to support the ACT team leaders and case workers to:

- deepen understanding of the scope of the Child Placement Principle
- increase capacity to effectively implement its five elements across the functions of the Children, Youth and Families Division.

In early 2022, SNAICC delivered introductory workshops and training to CYPS staff. Follow up training and support is scheduled for October 2022. We are looking forward to continuing to work with the ACT Government in delivering training over the next few years.

Funded by the ACT Government

POLICY AND ADVOCACY SUPPORT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

In 2022, SNAICC engaged with Northern Territory (NT) Government agencies, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and community stakeholders on a range of issues. Senior SNAICC team members travelled to Darwin and Alice Springs to engage with key stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC); the Office of the Children’s Commissioner; and Ministers and members of the NT Parliament. SNAICC hosted community forums based on the theme ‘Growing up children in Aboriginal family ways’. SNAICC co-hosted these forums with Tangentyere Council (in Alice Springs), Danila Dilba Health Service, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, and CAAPS Aboriginal Corporation (in Darwin), who spoke about their services that keep our children and families safe and connected to culture, kin and community.
In co-designing the Action Plans for Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children, SNAICC worked with TFHC to represent the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities. SNAICC provided TFHC with feedback on the draft Family and Foster Carer Handbook and Safe, Thriving and Connected: 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families, and made a submission to TFHC’s consultations on reforms to the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007.

We look forward to contributing to further reforms in the NT, and working with our NT members to ensure Aboriginal communities and the ACCO sector have increasing influence in child and family law, policy and practice.

GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS

Following on from the survey conducted by SNAICC with the sector about experiences of partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream services, SNAICC developed new resources to support the Genuine Partnerships initiative. Two new information resources have been developed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations engaging in, or wanting to build partnerships, for child and family services delivery, Creating Change through Partnerships; and Applying for Funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Services. These resources are available for organisations and communities to use and can be accessed via the SNAICC website.

SNAICC planned to convene additional training and workshops in 2022, however these were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions and flooding in regional areas. The general interest in the resources and the outcomes reports from SNAICC’s online Partnerships Audit Tool are still being requested. The tool provides a framework for achieving genuine partnership goals and assists organisations to reflect on their partnership and plan to strengthen and develop it.

A number of one-off webinars and presentations about the tools and resources are being delivered and supported.

Funded by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

SAFE AND SUPPORTED NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING AUSTRALIA’S CHILDREN 2021-2031

In 2021-22 SNAICC worked extensively with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to develop and finalise Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031. The National Framework is the national policy framework that guides reform in all child safety and community services systems to achieve better outcomes for children and families at risk.

The new National Framework includes four key focus areas:

1. A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage
2. Addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems
3. Improving information sharing, data development and analysis
4. Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability

The National Framework includes significant commitments that reflect SNAICC’s priorities, including implementation of all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP), delegation of decision-making authority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to ACCOs, and mechanisms for shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders for governance of the Framework.
In 2021 SNAICC led extensive consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations across the country to inform the framework. SNAICC advocated successfully for the decision-making process for the National Framework to incorporate the elements of Priority Reform 1: Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. From a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group under the previous National Framework for Protecting Children, SNAICC has supported the formation of a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group, which has an equal role in decision-making about the Framework with Ministers and departmental Secretaries. The Coalition of Peaks has held up this governance structure as a leading example of how the Closing the Gap Agreement can be used to drive change.

The Leadership Group is chaired by our CEO, Catherine Liddle, and is made up of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts in child and family services. This includes representatives from peaks, service providers, academics, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s commissioners, with the SNAICC policy team providing secretariat support.

The National Framework was launched at the 2021 SNAICC Conference. The final conference plenary discussed key priorities for implementation of the Framework and for the first 5-year Action Plans.

Throughout 2022, SNAICC worked with governments and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group to develop two Actions Plans that will guide the implementation of Safe and Supported. These Action Plans will prioritise addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems and kickstart the collective commitments of governments and other stakeholders to ensure families have what they need for children to grow up safe and supported in Australia. The Action Plans also set out the governance arrangements for the National Framework. SNAICC has worked to maximise the leadership functions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups in this structure.

Funded by the Department of Social Services, Australian Government
THRYVE

The THRYVE Pilot Project was established in 2021 to ensure high impact early childhood and development services are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families across Australia. THRYVE provides direct and tailored support to the sector and represents the collective voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early years services, to facilitate high quality, responsive, accessible and culturally strong supports for our children, families, and communities.

In 2021-2022, THRYVE worked to establish state-wide intermediaries for Aboriginal early years services across NSW, WA and Victoria. During 2021-22, THRYVE engaged with the sector and relevant stakeholders in each jurisdiction to co-design the model, establish governance structures, and identify priorities for each state’s services and key focus areas.

In less than a year, THRYVE has made significant progress with resource development, compliance support, support for remote communities, COVID vaccination partnerships, and advocacy. THRYVE developed a sector based wellbeing policy which early years services can refer to when they are exposed to wellbeing challenges.

THRYVE finalised its governance model to include jurisdictional steering committees, a national steering committee and a national technical advisory group.

THRYVE works to deliver a strong and thriving community-controlled early years sector by facilitating a collective voice for each jurisdiction; building the capacity of service leadership; influencing government policy; providing recruitment and workforce wellbeing supports; connecting services to share knowledge; and supporting grant applications and implementation.
THRYVE NSW

Since its establishment in June 2021, THRYVE NSW continues to raise the bar on delivering high quality support and resources to enable early years services across the state achieve their mission to see all our children and families thriving.

THRYVE NSW has led the development of important resources for services such as compliance resources for the SunSmart program and cultural education supports.

In May 2022, THRYVE NSW held an ‘On Country Gathering’ in Sydney to share and embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing, and being into the way in which we engage. The NSW Department of Health, Education, and Communities and Justice attended and connected with our services, enabling direct advocacy with decision makers and discussions about follow up site visits.

THRYVE NSW was contracted by NSW Department of Education ECE Directorate to undertake phase one in the development of an Early Childhood Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework. The result was a ‘Community Consultations Report’ which will set the foundation for subsequent phases of the framework development.

In December 2021, THRYVE held its first Christmas Toy Drive in Brewarrina, supporting families and communities in NSW.

As part of its objective to provide mentoring, coaching and professional support to services, THRYVE NSW delivered a Grant Writing Workshop to help open up more streams of income and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services.

It has also secured significant amounts of funding for business support and language grants including:

- $150,000 worth of bespoke trauma informed training for the sector that services can contextualise to their localised needs
- $50,000 in philanthropic funding for a learner exchange program

THRYVE VIC

The THRYVE VIC co-design process commenced in March 2022 with the Victorian community-controlled early years services coming together in Melbourne. A state Director was appointed and commenced planning for the second phase of the co-design process and the establishment of the Victoria governance model.

THRYVE WA

The THRYVE WA co-design process commenced in February 2022 with the WA community-controlled early years services sector coming together in Broome. A second co-design workshop in March 2022 worked towards finalising the WA co-design model. The co-design has now been finalised and a Director for the THRYVE WA Project has been appointed.
SPEAKING TO POWER

One of SNAICC’s roles is to ensure the views and voices of our members, children and families are represented at the top levels of decision-making, by advocating to the Government Ministers who are responsible for setting policy directions.

With a Federal election due to be called in 2021/22, SNAICC developed key election asks and distributed a questionnaire to all parties and some members of the cross bench. We asked them to demonstrate their commitment to actions that would create a better start in life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

An election ‘score card’ was developed from the responses, presenting an unbiased snapshot of what the major parties were promising Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children, families and organisations.

We were excited to see early years reform play a major role in the election in its final days, and we welcomed commitments from new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to make early learning and childcare a priority for his Government.

While we very much welcomed broad commitments to issues such as universal access and more affordable child care, we reiterated these mainstream reforms must take into account the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC maintains active interactions with the relevant Federal Members and Ministers and supports our jurisdictional peak members in their advocacy work to governments.

We look forward to working with the Albanese Government to reform the early education, family services and out-of-home care systems to better support our children and families and continue to brief Federal Ministers around our six key priorities for reform.

REFORM PRIORITIES

1. Investing in prevention and early support services for families through a new national program for ACCO-led integrated family support services
2. Legislating authority for a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children
3. Reforming the federal child care funding model to increase access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to culturally appropriate education and care
4. Establishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood intermediaries in every state and territory in partnership with SNAICC to build the community-controlled early years sector
5. Planning and investment to build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce for child and family service delivery across the country
6. Long-term core funding to SNAICC to give future certainty as the national peak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to engage in shared decision-making with governments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
A PLACE FOR CULTURE

A Place for Culture is SNAICC’s training program to strengthen understanding of culture for people working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The purpose of this cultural competence package is to equip participants with knowledge of cultural safety, and the basic capabilities to interact in spaces comprised of people of different cultures, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This education package contains aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture, knowledge, understanding and ways of living to provide context and contrast for participants. It is worth noting that cultural competence training is not an Aboriginal ‘history’ lesson, nor is it a one stop shop to perfect performance. The package is meant to be the start of what we believe will be a rich and rewarding journey.

SNAICC developed a new online platform for the training module ‘Foundations of Cultural Competence’ to improve participants experience in the first module of the A Place for Culture Program. It took considerable time to research and finalise the appropriate platform and customise it for SNAICC’s cultural competence program.

The development of the new online platform has occurred simultaneously with a review of the program content. The program will be updated in accordance with the findings of the review.

SNAICC is excited to be delivering the updated program in 2022-23.

Funded by Department of Social Services, Australian Government

THE JOURNEY TO BIG SCHOOL

SNAICC works to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children transition effectively to formal schooling through a program focused on the development of local networks, relationships, leadership and transition support plans.

Through Journey to Big School, SNAICC aims to initiate the establishment of knowledge and information exchange pathways between community based early childhood education and care services, mainstream education services and communities and families to allow schools to set realistic educational expectations for children and provide any specific support that children may need to successfully transition to ‘big school’.

Like A Place for Culture, the Journey to Big School has undergone an internal review to identify gaps and opportunities. The program will be updated in accordance with the findings of the review.

Continued work is being done to investigate the full transfer of workshops and modules to an online format. SNAICC is excited to re-boot the program delivery via online and face to face sessions in 2022-23, making it more accessible and engaging.

Funded by Department of Social Services, Australian Government

HALLS CREEK LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Working closely with communities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children leads to better outcomes. Since 2015, SNAICC has been working with the Halls Creek community in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia.
Delivered in partnership with the Wunan Foundation, SNAICC supports children and families to successfully transition into primary school with the support of early years services in the community.

Limited face-to-face training and contact support was possible due to COVID-19. SNAICC continues to provide support externally as needed and includes the recruitment and support for local staff on the ground in Halls Creek.

Project Planning is underway for a more focused and detailed list of activities and supports identified by the local community for the remainder of 2021 and will incorporate details for 2022 also.

Funded by the Department of Social Services, Australian Government

WEBINARS

Throughout 2021-22, SNAICC hosted quarterly webinars, inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to discuss their programs and share what works best for our communities.

In March 2022, we launched 11 profiles on programs that demonstrate how Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are achieving positive results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, including supporting these children to be kept safe from harm, uphold their right to grow up within their own family and community, and access critical health and early education services.

The webinar launch included presentations from some of the profiled programs, including: Kristie Watego (General Manager), Family Health and Wellbeing, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (QLD); Faye Worner, Birthing in Our Community; Lisa Wellington (Program Manager), Waminda - South Coast Women’s Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation (NSW); and Sheryl Hicks, Program Manager, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation (WA).

1,000 people attended the ‘Best practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led early intervention programs webinar’, with the YouTube video receiving over 1,200 views.

In the June webinar three Aboriginal organisations discussed the strengths and challenges of their work supporting children, families and communities. We were joined by:
• Central Australian Aboriginal Congress;
• Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency;
• SNAICC’s THRYVE NSW program.

Approximately 300 people attended the live SNAICC Webinar - what’s working best for our communities, with the YouTube video receiving over 400 views.

SNAICC has received huge support and demand for these webinars and intends to host more to inform the sector and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.
Over 2021-22 SNAICC undertook a review of its HR framework to ensure it aligned with contemporary practice. This work included the development of a SNAICC Capability Framework and a review of our salary structure.

We also undertook an organisational restructure to accommodate our ever-growing teams.

In July 2021 SNAICC was a team of 16 staff. By June 2022 we had a team of 23 staff, with 19 new roles on the recruitment horizon.

Recruitment has been a particularly strong focus over the year and into 2022-23. The combination of a challenging recruitment environment, our newfound love of working remotely, and the ever-expanding locations for service delivery, has resulted in a range of hybrid work arrangements for staff. SNAICC now has staff spread across 5 states and territories.

We moved into our new head office in November 2021 after Melbourne’s extended lock down and continue to enjoy the inner-city culture of Collingwood.

As of June 2022, our overall Aboriginal employment rate was at 43%.
THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

SNAICC extends our gratitude for the generosity and support of the following organisations and individuals that funded and supported SNAICC’s work in 2021–22.

**SNAICC AND FAMILY MATTERS SUPPORTERS**

- Emily Traer, Traer E A & Lin
- Gloria Bondfield, Life Without Barriers (Woona)
- Rachel Riley
- Allan C Daw
- Arlene T Dang
- Chloe MacDonald
- Christine Lindahl
- Craig Anthony Limkin
- Dr Bruce Kevin Proctor
- Dr Rachel Jean Mudge
- Edward Craw
- Elissa Anne Hullah
- Ella Hunter
- Fiona Mensah
- Georgia Kate Towler
- Gillian Farrell
- Greg Pagendam-Turner, Haecceity Pty Ltd Networx
- Ian Joseph
- Jan Alison William
- Jennifer McConachy
- Joanne Taylor
- Karen Struthers
- Karli Walas, Loumabelle Pty Ltd
- Kim Wright
- Krissy Suzanne O’Toole
- Laura Johnston
- Lindon McKenna, OWA Social Club
- Malcolm Lambert
- Marnie Kikken
- Martin Murley
- Michael Smitheram
- Michelle Evans, A M Lovekin and M M Evans
- Michelle Wood
- Patrick James Hislop
- Ross Carter
- Sarah Jayne Ventress
- Suzanne Rienks
- Tanya Boswood
- Yarrow Andrew

**PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS**

- ACF C Blackstock
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Besen Family Foundation
- Cages Foundation
- GNS Ceramics Pty Ltd
- John Wardle Architects
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- The Antipodean Family Foundation
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- The Samuel Nissen Charitable Foundation

**PARTNERS**

- Charles Darwin University
- Griffith University
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Lowitja Institute
- Monash University
- Social Ventures Australia
- The University of Melbourne
- Wendy Brooks & Partners
MAJOR SPONSORS

AbSec - NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation
ANTaR
Australian Childhood Foundation
Australian Communities Foundation
Australian Red Cross NSW
BHP
Centacare (Brisbane)
CentaCare Family and Relationship Services
Coolabaroo
Essential Media
Every Child campaign, Benevolent Society
Gandel Philanthropy
Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research University of Technology Sydney

Kari
Key Assets
Life Without Barriers
Life Without Barriers (Newcastle NSW)
Moorditj Gurlongga Association and Coolabaroo Neighbourhood House
Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)
Reconciliation Australia
The Benevolent Society
Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency (VACCA)

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

ACT Government
Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government
Department of Social Services, Australian Government

Government of South Australia
National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
Northern Territory Government: Territory Families
National Office for Child Safety, Australian Government
# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT 2021–22

## INCOME

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<th>Income</th>
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<td>Government grants</td>
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<td>Government incentives</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<td>Donations and sponsorships</td>
<td>1,146,116</td>
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<td>National Conference Income</td>
<td>522,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultations, training and resource sales</td>
<td>139,897</td>
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<td>Interest income</td>
<td>3,272</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
<td>60,341</td>
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<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
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## EXPENDITURE

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<td>Office and administration expenses</td>
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<td>Printing and design expenses</td>
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<td>Consulting and professional fees</td>
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<td>National Conference expense</td>
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<td>Travel expenses</td>
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<td>Other expenses</td>
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Net income (deficit) before income tax  584,162

Income tax expense  584,162

Net income (deficit) after income tax  584,162

## BALANCE SHEET

### ASSETS

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<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
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<td>Cash &amp; cash equivalents</td>
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<td>Trade &amp; other receivables</td>
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<td>Prepayments</td>
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<td>Right-of-use assets</td>
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<td>Plant and equipment</td>
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### LIABILITIES

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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
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Net Assets  1,987,562

Equity

Retained surpluses  1,987,562

Total Members' Equity  1,987,562
**SOURCES OF SNAICC INCOME**

2021–22

- **Government Grants & Incentives (Federal)** - 47%
- **Government Grants & Incentives (State/Territory)** - 9%
- **Non-Government Grants, Sponsorships and Donations** - 27%
- **National Conference income** - 12%
- **Consultancy, Training and Resource Sales** - 3%
- **Interest and Other Income** - 2%