

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **NZ Children's Commissioner Judge Frances Eivers to Deliver SNAICC'23 Keynote Address**

SNAICC is pleased to announce that New Zealand's Children's Commissioner, Judge Frances Eivers will deliver the keynote address at SNAICC'23 – the 10<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference this September.

Judge Eivers is a Ngāti Maniapoto woman from Waikato, New Zealand and a passionate advocate for First Nations children. She has held the role of New Zealand's Children's Commissioner since 1 November 2021.

A former family court judge and criminal lawyer, Judge Eivers has seen her fair share of disadvantage and racial disparity in the out-of-home care sector. She believes it is important to have powerful champions for Indigenous children and has been outspoken about closing care and protection units and improving conditions for children in care.

"I'm honoured to be delivering the keynote address at the 10<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference and look forward to making new friends in Darwin. I'm especially interested to learn more about the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and the call for a First Nations Commissioner to serve them.

"My vision as Children's Commissioner has always been 'kia kuru pounamu te rongo – that all children live their best lives.' I'm sure that's a vision that all indigenous people aspire to – and I look forward to sharing some of the ways I have advocated for our mokopuna in Aotearoa.

"This has been about calling for by Māori, for Māori approaches to caring for children, within the context of their close and wider family groups. Integral to this work is listening to and amplifying the voices of young people, which I know is something very important to you at SNAICC, too."

SNAICC Chairperson, Muriel Bamblett thinks it is important to examine New Zealand's experience.

"We are honoured to welcome Judge Frances Eivers to SNAICC'23 – the 10<sup>th</sup> SNAICC National Conference," Ms Bamblett said.

"We are excited to connect with such a passionate advocate for First Nations children and families. We look forward to sharing ideas and finding out more about what Australia can learn from New Zealand's experience."

SNAICC CEO, Catherine Liddle emphasised how valuable Judge Eivers' insights will be for finding a way forward toward establishing a National Commissioner to address the needs of Indigenous children.

"SNAICC and our supporters have been calling for the establishment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People for several years," Ms Liddle said.

"We believe that a National Commissioner dedicated to advancing the rights of our children will be instrumental in the effort to end the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage in our communities and promote better outcomes for future generations."

For more information about SNAICC'23, visit: [www.snaicc.org.au/conference](http://www.snaicc.org.au/conference)

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#### Quick facts:

- **5-7 September 2023** at **Darwin Convention Centre** in Garramilla/Darwin on the lands of the Larrakia people with **1,000+ delegates** expected to attend
- **102 concurrent sessions** featuring a range of presentations, panel discussions, yarning circles and workshops by **100+ organisations, associations and entities**
- **50+ organisations supporting SNAICC'23** through sponsorship, exhibition, donations and services rendered

#### About the speaker:

Her Honour Judge Frances Eivers (Ngāti Maniapoto, Waikato) has served as Children's Commissioner of New Zealand since 2021. From 1 July, the model will change to a Board of up to 6 Commissioners, of which she will be one. Before being appointed Commissioner, Eivers was a Judge in the District Court in Manukau, working extensively with mokopuna in the court system. She has worked as a lawyer in Auckland, Whakatāne, London and Tauranga. In New Zealand, she practised mainly in the Family, Youth and Criminal courts, including working as a lawyer for children and as a youth advocate. Born in Kawerau and raised in Te Teko, she counts herself lucky to have been raised with love in her whānau whānui and to have had a community where "everyone pretty much knows everyone". She is a mother of three sons and counts this as her greatest achievement. She believes that every child is a gift: he mokopuna, he taonga. If every child is treated as a gift, a treasure, then every New Zealander would ensure that the welfare of children is at the heart of every decision that affects them and their families.

For all queries relating to the SNAICC National Conference, please contact SNAICC'23 Event Manager, Devon LaSalle on [conference2023@snaicc.org.au](mailto:conference2023@snaicc.org.au) or 0458 396 816.