

MEDIA RELEASE

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WA ROADMAP HANDED OVER TO REDUCE THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

A landmark strategy to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care in Western Australia has been handed over to the WA Government.

SNAICC - National Voice for our Children worked with local Aboriginal communities and organisations, and alongside the WA Government, to develop a 10-year Roadmap to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care.

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said more than 200 stakeholders from across the state contributed to the Roadmap, including individuals and family members with lived experience.

“We would like to thank everyone who shared their stories with us to develop this important strategy, and to the WA Aboriginal Reference Group for their guidance,” Ms. Liddle said.

“SNAICC worked with Aboriginal community organisations on the ground to make sure local voices were heard and that local expertise informed this strategy.

“From the Kimberley in the north, through the Pilbara and Gascoyne, the Goldfields, Western Desert and to Noongar Boodja in the south, key themes emerged from stakeholders to point the way forward.”

These themes include:

- Improving access to support services for Aboriginal families and children, to prevent further engagement with child protection systems
- Recognition of Aboriginal leadership at regional and state-wide levels through new peak bodies for children and families
- Aboriginal community-controlled (ACCO) services are the preferred agencies to support families and children involved with child protection
- Family, extended family and community have a leading role in decision about children
- Recognise that systemic racism, and the experience of racism by individuals, plays a role in child protection systems
- The need for urgent reforms to transform departmental out-of-home care and child protection practices

“Stakeholders told us that too often children were being taken from family and ending up in worse situations than they were before removal,” Ms. Liddle said.

“What came through loud and clear was the need to involve Aboriginal children, families, and communities every step of the way when decisions are being made about the safety of our young people.

“Developing and strengthening ACCO services will be key to the WA Government meeting its commitment to reducing the over-representation of children in out-of-home care.

SNAICC looks forward to the WA Government’s formal response to the Roadmap.

The Roadmap is Western Australia’s plan to drive change so the State meets its commitment under the Closing the Gap Agreement to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031.

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