



SNAICC – National Voice for our Children
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation
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MEDIA RELEASE
13 October 2021

CULTURE IS AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR CHILDREN

SNAICC, the national peak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, welcomes the *National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* and calls on governments for greater commitment to Aboriginal-led solutions for our children and families.

"We are pleased the strategy focuses on the rights of the child, as the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up so many challenges for the social and emotional wellbeing of our children.

"Children thrive when they are safe, loved and cared for in their families and communities, and the strategy recognises that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culture is an anchor that strengthens their sense of self and identity," SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said.

Released on Tuesday, the strategy reports that children who have experienced the child protection system are twice as likely to experience mental illness, and those who have experienced out-of-home care are five times more likely.

"Of all the children in Australia living in out-of-home care, 41% of them are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Living away from your family, your mob, your community, has a significant impact on a child's mental health and wellbeing. We need to do more to support families, prevent child protection intervention, and keep our children connected to culture," Ms Liddle said.

The strategy also identifies the need for targeted culturally safe support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes prioritising trauma-informed care for First Nations children in out-of-home care and ensuring access to culturally appropriate early childhood education and care.

"Our Aboriginal community-controlled organisations offer wraparound support services that work closely with our children and families – and are the best solution to combat the impacts of colonisation, discrimination and intergenerational trauma that has led to high rates of child removal.

"Through this strategy, and the next 10-year National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, we look forward to working with governments to prioritise community-led approaches that values the strength of our families and their children so that they can live happy and healthy lives."

Catherine Liddle, CEO SNAICC – National Voice for our Children

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About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and wellbeing.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. Over the past 40 years SNAICC's efforts has resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.

For more information, please visit www.snaicc.org.au and www.familymatters.org.au