SNAICC
ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 2022-23 | © SNAICC November 2023
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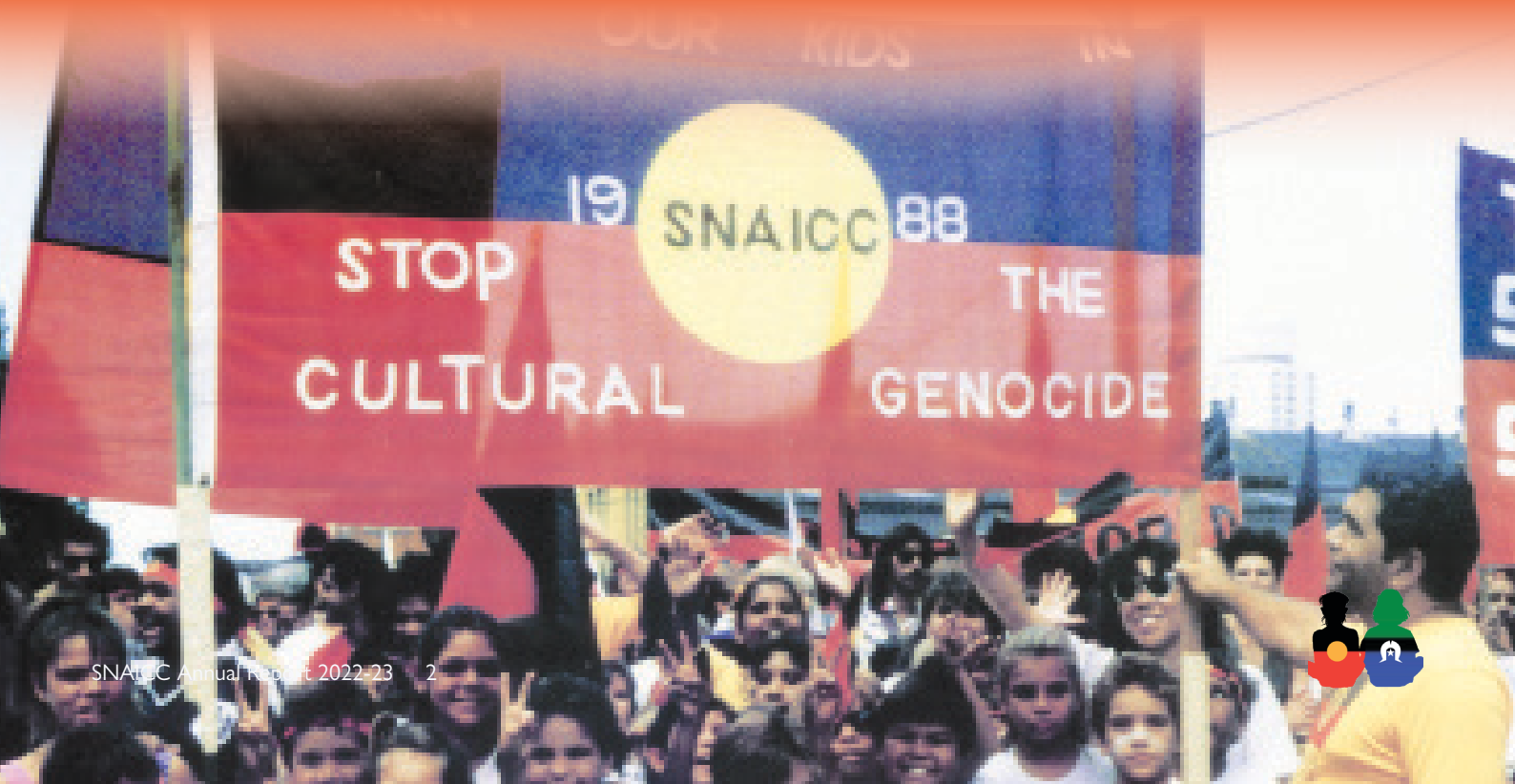
ABOUT SNAICC

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.









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.

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.

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.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



It has been extraordinary to be a part of SNAICC this past year. I am extremely proud of everyone who has contributed to the incredible growth of the organisation and the impact SNAICC has had in delivering our strategic priorities.

As the voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, SNAICC continues to push for and drive policy reforms that are designed for and by our communities, such as the Early Childhood and Development Policy Reform. SNAICC is also working on the establishment of a peak body in South Australia to be a community voice for our children and the development of resources and training to support our communities through our Sector Development and Connected Beginnings teams.

Our strong partnerships with decision-makers, stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been instrumental in our progress. It is through these partnerships that we are able to drive positive change and amplify the voices of our children.

During the last year, SNAICC has continued to highlight what is happening on the ground for our children and families and the community-led solutions that work for our communities. The Family Matters 2022 Report was launched in November 2022 with more than 80 stakeholders attending the launch, including Ministers, Members and Senators from across the political spectrum. The key message from the report is clear – Aboriginal community-controlled organisations around the country are demonstrating the unacceptable trend of increasing child removals can be halted when local communities are empowered and resourced.

I want to reflect on the significance of this year, especially on the journey towards the Voice to Parliament referendum. The challenges have been great, but so has our determination to ensure that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. Our work is far from over and we are excited for the path ahead.

SNAICC's public profile is such that our CEO is in constant demand. This too adds to SNAICC's ability to provide a skilled and informed commentary on a broad range issues impacting on our children and families.

Together, we will continue to advocate for our communities and make a meaningful difference in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Australia. A special thanks to our members, the SNAICC Board and team, and our many supporters who work tirelessly to achieve better outcomes for our children.

Muriel Bamblett
Chairperson



CEO'S MESSAGE



Werte,

This last year has been one of our biggest yet at SNAICC, it is awe inspiring to reflect on the work of our team over this past year and witness the difference we are making on the ground. It has been so rewarding to see our team almost double during 2022-23, taking on new projects, building more connections and working with communities throughout Australia.

Our increased capacity means more backbone supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, more dedicated policy and research into what delivers the best outcomes for our children and families and more community and sector voices reaching decision makers through our strong campaigns and advocacy work. The work doesn't stop when it comes to our children and families, and we couldn't be more determined to do what we need to do to help create a future where they can thrive.

It has been a very important year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. SNAICC has continued to raise the bar even higher when it comes to ensuring the voices of our children and families are heard at the highest levels of government. Through innovative campaigns and strategic communications developed for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, Family Matters, THRIVE BY FIVE and the Voice to Parliament, we have been able to cut through the noise and bring the voices of children and families to the forefront of national discussions.

During 2022-23, we spent as much time as possible on Country with our communities and services. We have had an incredible year learning, listening, and connecting with mob on the ground through gatherings, community forums and workshops. The value of coming together in person has been vital to strengthening the sector voice and listening to what our services need to continue to deliver culturally safe wrap-around services. The time we spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations helps us develop the tailored supports, resources and solutions they need to deliver the best outcomes for our children and families.

In February 2023, we saw the release of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2022-2026 under Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children in Canberra. SNAICC has been a key partner in developing the Safe and Supported Framework and the first of the two action plans see all Australian Governments supporting Aboriginal-led solutions in child development, safety and wellbeing for children and families. This is a huge step to ensure that their safety and wellbeing is being supported and prioritised by all governments.

These outcomes would not be possible without the incredible work of everyone at SNAICC, our members and supporters. Your dedication and unwavering support has been the driving force behind our achievements. Thank you for your exceptional contributions, and I look forward to another year of working together to ensure our children thrive.



Catherine Liddle
CEO



SNAICC GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

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

Candice is a proud Aboriginal woman with strong family connections to Yarrabah in Far North Queensland. As the inaugural Director of the Centre of Excellence at the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd (QATSICPP), Candice provides significant leadership in the design, delivery, management, and evaluation of projects to improve child and family wellbeing across Queensland. This includes co-authoring research and leading the evaluation and action research agenda. At the heart of Candice's work is ensuring that the voice and choice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is heard and respected in child protection reform.



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 founding in 2007. She is the Chair of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), 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 governments and is well known as a health ambassador.



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.



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.



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, and 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. In 1994 Joanne was Awarded Western Australian of the Year – 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). Joanne is currently a Board Member of SNAICC , Campaign member of Family Matters and Trustee to the Wongatha Peoples Education and Recreation Trust.



Wendy Moore, Board Member

Wendy Moore is a proud Palawa woman from lutruwita/ Tasmania. Wendy has family connections to the Furneaux Islands, specifically Cape Barren and Flinders Island. Wendy's family are the inspiration and motivation for the work she does in advocating and supporting positive changes for Aboriginal children and youth in lutruwita/Tasmania.

Wendy is a qualified social worker, who has worked at the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for 18 years. She is currently employed as the Statewide Family and Children's Program Manager and recently spent 12 months working on the Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry into child sexual abuse in government institutions.

Our Council Members



Walter Shaw, Tangentyere Council Inc, NT



Emma Beckett, Muloonbinba Aboriginal Corporation, NSW



Rob McPhee, Danila Dilba Health Service NT

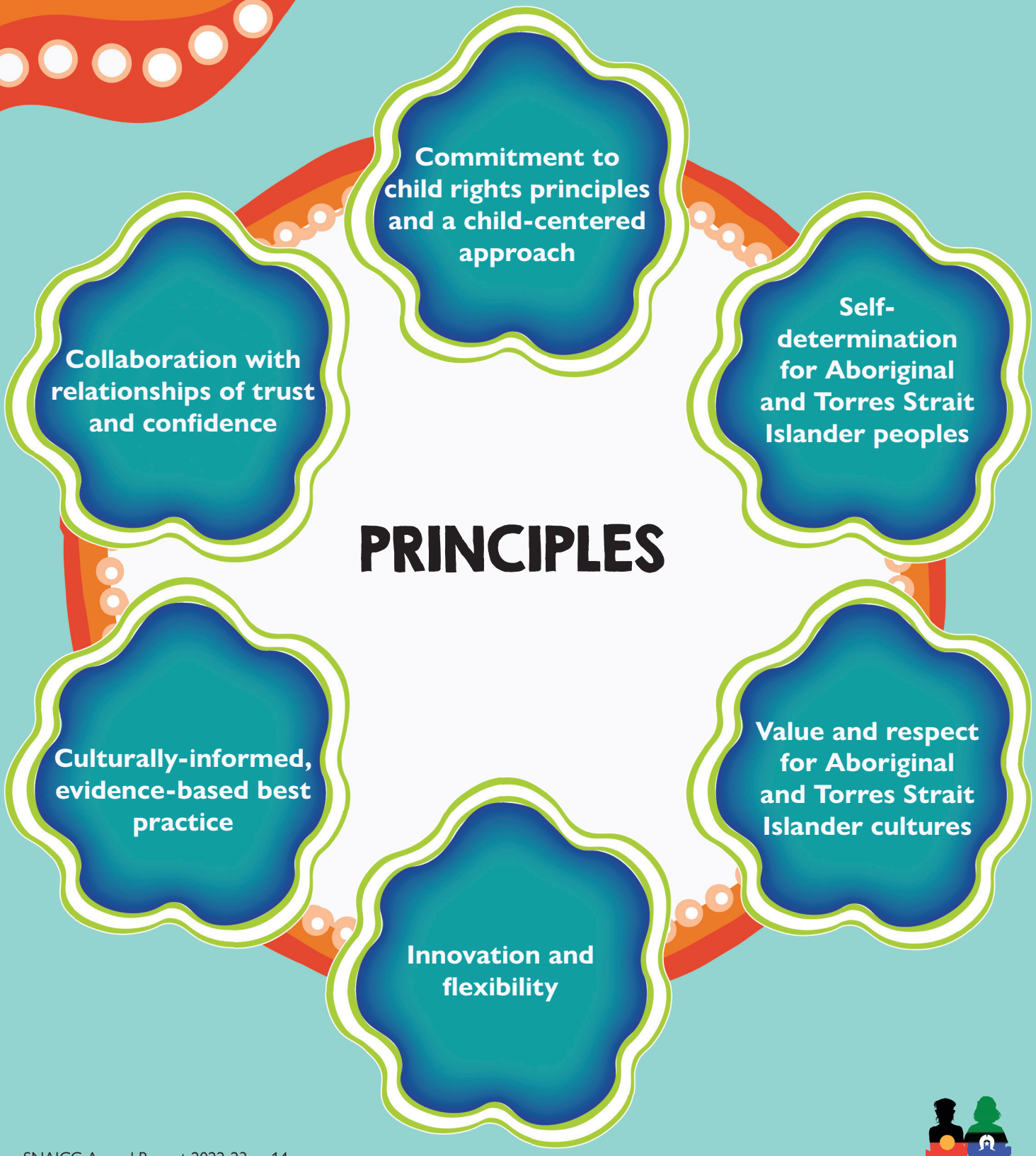


Neville Atkinson, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI), VIC

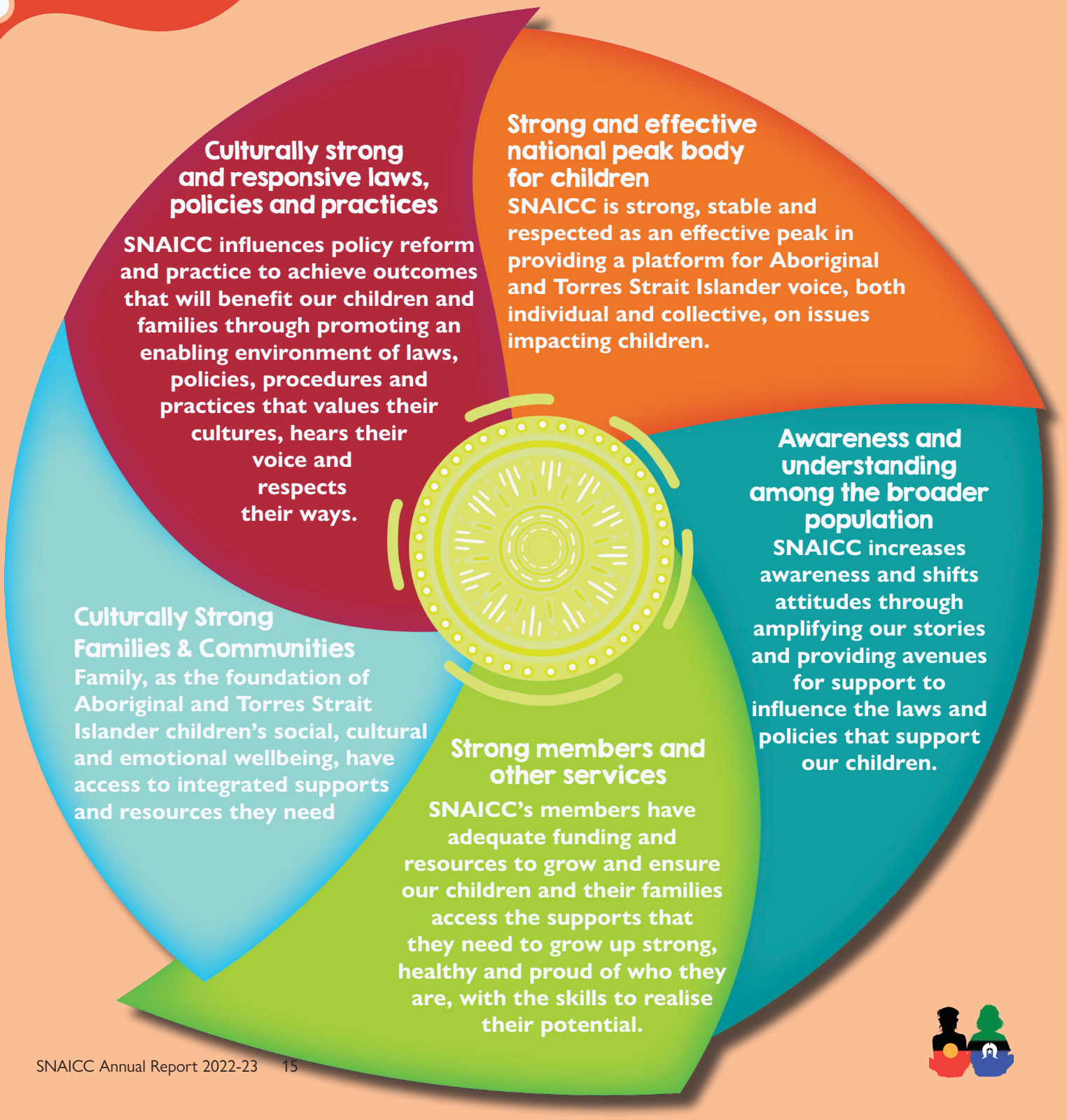
The SNAICC Council includes additional representatives from SNAICC member organisations in each state and territory.

The SNAICC Council provides strategic and policy advice and is structured to bring cross-sector state and territory experience and knowledge and foster interstate information exchange and engagement.

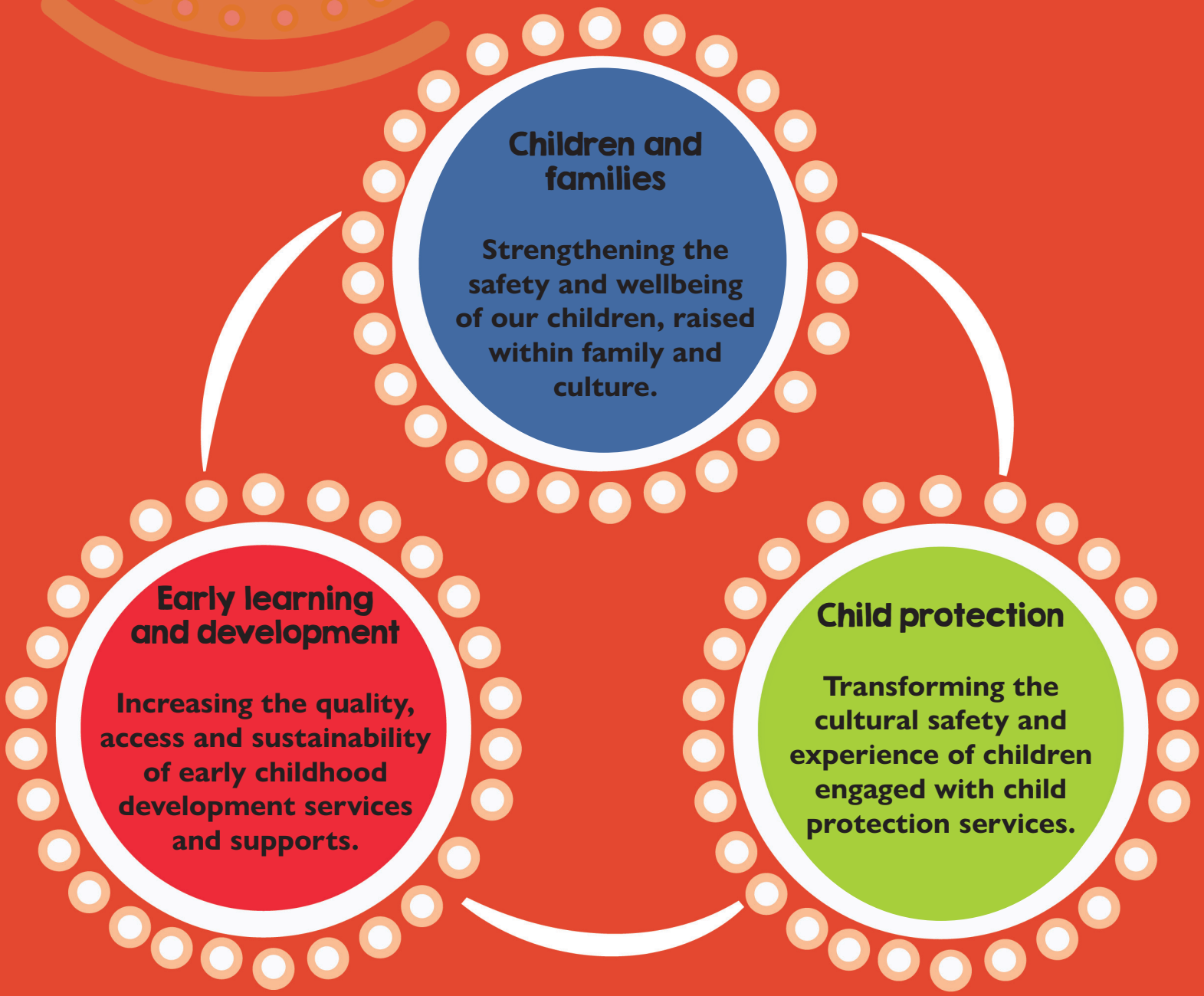
OUR WORK


Commitment to child rights principles and a child-centered approach
Self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Value and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
Innovation and flexibility
Culturally-informed, evidence-based best practice
Collaboration with relationships of trust and confidence
PRINCIPLES

TARGET OUTCOMES



FOCUS AREAS


Children and families
Strengthening the safety and wellbeing of our children, raised within family and culture.
Early learning and development
Increasing the quality, access and sustainability of early childhood development services and supports.
Child protection
Transforming the cultural safety and experience of children engaged with child protection services.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services are at the heart of delivering the best outcomes for our children and families. Research highlights the unique value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices, the importance of Indigenous-led solutions to improving outcomes, and impact of cultural identity to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

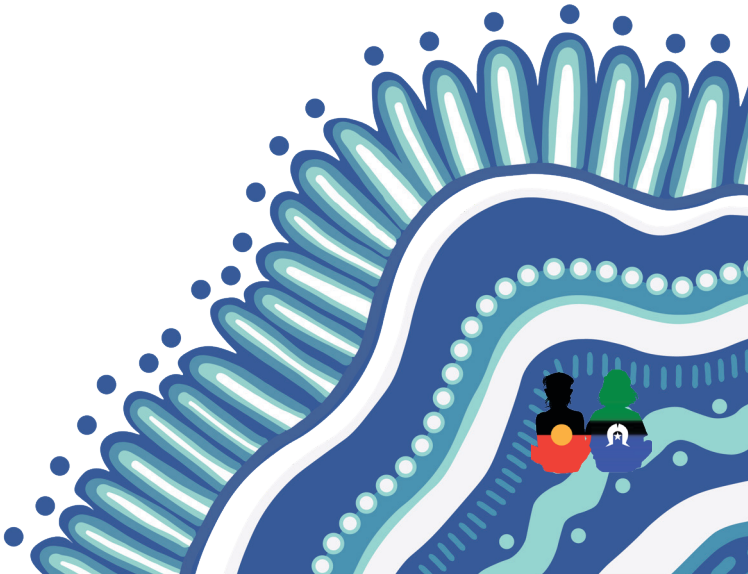
Yet, these strengths are undermined by an ever-deepening crisis of child removal that breaks families apart and disrupts the social fabric of communities. Creating real and lasting change means investing in early intervention and prevention to better support and heal families experiencing vulnerabilities. This means engaging in proactive measures to redress poverty, trauma from the Stolen Generations and its ongoing impacts, and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the policy decisions that directly impact their lives.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY 2022

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (Children's Day) is Australia's national day to celebrate the strengths and culture of our children and their ancestors. It is an opportunity for all Australians to show their support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, as well as learn about the crucial impact that family, culture, and community play in the life of every child.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children has been coordinating Children's Day for more than 30 years, each year Children's Day continues to grow and be bigger than the last.

Children's Day is celebrated every year on the 4th of August as an important date that 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.



In 2022, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day:

- **engaged with children, communities, and organisations across the country to hold events and celebrate the cultures and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children**
- **distributed 15,000 Children's Day bags with resources that sold out within three days**
- **distributed 3,500 posters, free of charge, to communities across Australia**
- **SNAICC attended Children's Day event at Yappera Children's Service in Thornbury, Melbourne, Victoria**
- **engaged Thomas Mayo as the Children's Day ambassador**
- **attained a highly successful and engaged social media campaign and presence**
- **received strong media coverage**
- **strengthened community perceptions and pride in culture and families.**



MY DREAMING, MY FUTURE

This year's theme was 'My Dreaming, My Future', recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's connection to culture and their songlines.

"Every child is born into a story. That story comes from their family's history and ancestral connections. The Dreaming. That child must then shape that story into their own. Through created opportunities, whilst finding their place within family, community, and in society. Their Future." SNAICC staff member.

"My dreaming, my future is circular and endless, interconnected in the hearts and souls of my ancestors. My story and songlines are me, it is ancestors, my country and all that I belong to, and the future of my children and their children until eternity." SNAICC staff member.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born into stories of their family, culture, and Country. They carry with them the songlines of their ancestors and culture, passed down by generations. Their Dreaming is part of our history, while their futures are their own to shape.

On Children's Day, we asked children what Dreaming means to them, learning how they interpret this in their lives and identity, and hearing what their aspirations are for the future.







NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY 2022

IMPACT

15,000+
Bags sold in less than three days

3,500+
Posters delivered

188K+
People reached though social media content

SUPPORTING A STRONG SECTOR

STRONGER ACCOS, STRONGER FAMILIES

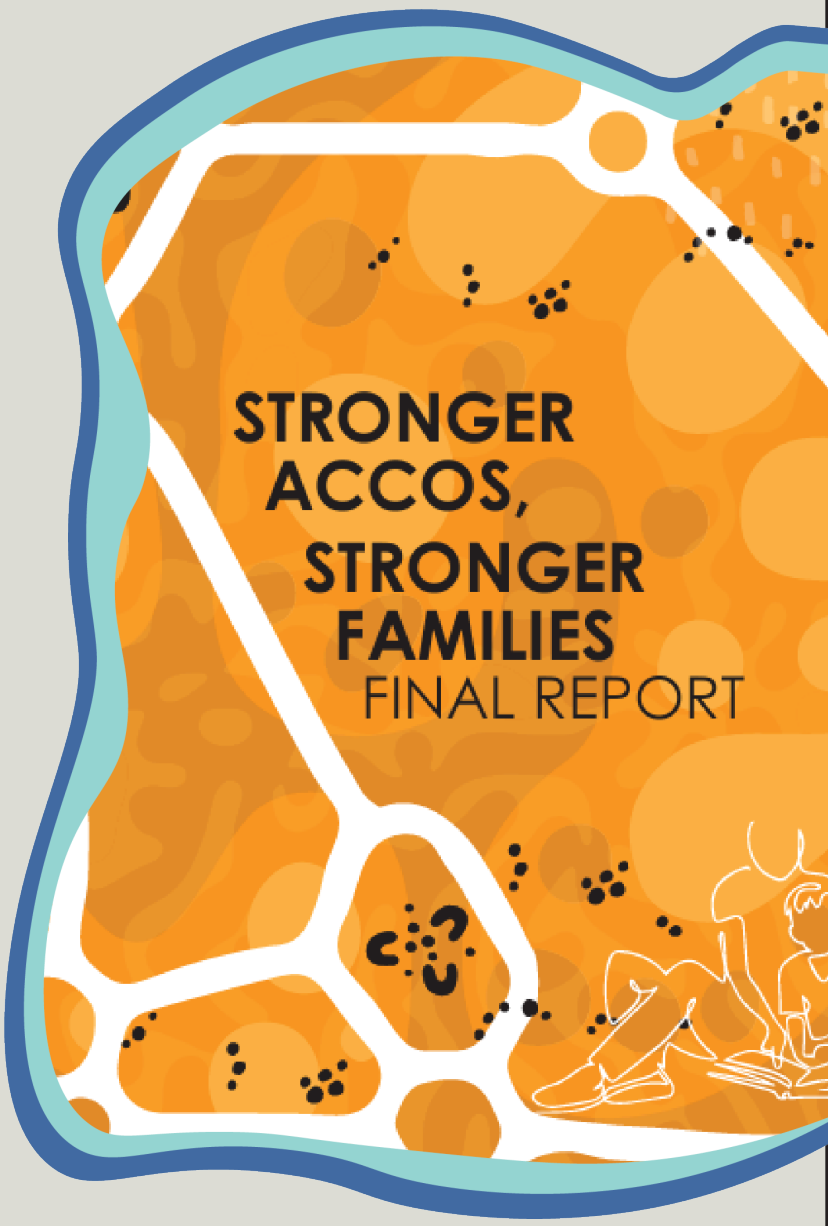
In 2022, the Department of Social Services (DSS) engaged SNAICC to deliver part 1 of the ***Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families*** initiative, which aims to increase the number of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) delivering services under the Commonwealth Government's Family and Children Activity funding initiative.

This research project, led by SNAICC, involved consulting with ACCOs on how DSS can reform funding to work better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities and about what makes their services best placed to support Aboriginal and Torres children and families. The report found that government approaches to funding services do not support ACCOs to deliver services and create a number of challenges including:

- Decisions about what families and communities need and what programs to fund, made in a top-down way without proper shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Competitive grant processes disadvantage ACCOs because large non-Indigenous NGOs have economies of scale that enable them to offer lower cost services and the organisational infrastructure to dedicate resources to grant writing and management.
- Reporting and data need significant reform to make it useful for ACCOs and reduce duplication.
- Funding needs to cover the true cost of delivering services including core operational functions to support service delivery.
- Partnership funding models often result in non-Indigenous organisations taking advantage of ACCOs.
- Funding needs to be sustainable and their must be better long term workforce development support to get the best outcomes for children and families.

Based on the findings SNAICC made 6 primary recommendations to fundamentally reform funding for children and family services.

- **Recommended Action 1: Embed community- led decision-making at every stage of funding development and allocation.**
- **Recommended Action 2: Prioritise ACCOs as providers of children and family services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.**
- **Recommended Action 3: Invest in the growth, development, and sustainability of ACCOs through core-functions funding.**
- **Recommended Action 4: Reduce administrative burdens across the system.**
- **Recommended Action 5: Increase investment in and support for ACCO-led research and evaluation.**
- **Recommended Action 6: Build government capacity to work better with ACCOs.**



SNAICC is continuing to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations and is ensuring accountability for government by oversighting implementation through Safe and Supported and the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY PARTNERSHIP

In 2022, the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (the Partnership) was established as a shared decision-making mechanism under Priority Reform 1 of the ***National Agreement on Closing the Gap***. The Partnership is co-chaired by SNAICC and the Commonwealth Department of Education and includes members from all state and territory governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members. All members have equal decision-making power, with decisions made by consensus.

The Partnership aims to lead a nationally joined-up approach to policy reform in child safety, wellbeing, and early years development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. To deliver on this aim, the Partnership has agreed to the following six priorities for progression in its first year:

- Commission research to develop funding model options for ACCOs that deliver early childhood education and care (ECEC), including integrated early years services.
- Increasing the base entitlement to 30 hours per week of subsidised ECEC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-5.
- Commission research and evidence development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led models of family support to prevent entry into out-of-home care.
- Progress a cross-sector project to identify the collaborative efforts required to break down siloes and address social determinants of tertiary systems intervention for children and families.
- Establish a fully empowered and legislated National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner.
- Oversee and require regular reports on progress to implement the outcomes and recommendations of the Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families review.

In 2022-23, the Partnership held three meetings and has come together a number of times out-of-session to progress these priorities and to contribute to broader strategic reform such as the development of the draft ***National Vision for ECEC***, the ***Productivity Commission Inquiry into ECEC*** and the ***Productivity Commission Closing the Gap Review***.

Over the next year, SNAICC will continue to lead and support the Partnership in delivering these priorities and developing recommendations to Joint Council that aim to improve the policy landscape and positively impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY REFORM

In 2022-23, SNAICC led and contributed to a significant number of policy and strategic reform initiatives to improve early childhood education and development outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC made submissions to the Commonwealth Government's draft ***Early Years Strategy*** and the draft ***National Care and Support Economy Strategy*** with recommendations centering on the need to abolish the Activity Test, build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector and invest in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years workforce.

SNAICC also led consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and leaders to inform the development of the draft National Vision on ECEC. SNAICC recommended that the National Vision align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, specify that children's development and wellbeing is the central goal of ECEC, highlight the importance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector in delivering high quality ECEC and explicitly acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are stewards of the ECEC system as it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

In late 2023, SNAICC was engaged by the Commonwealth Department of Education, on behalf of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership, to undertake a research project on to deliver a research project on funding model options for ACCO delivery of ECEC and integrated early years services. This project was initially designed and proposed by SNAICC in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years service providers across the country. It is grounded in decades of leadership from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and community-controlled services and builds on the deep foundation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural child rearing practices that have raised children strong in their cultures and communities for thousands of years.

This project aims to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to access high quality, culturally safe ECEC services that meet their developmental and wellbeing needs through needs-based funding model options that support the viable operation of ACCOs providing ECEC and integrated child and family services.

SNAICC's research, consultation and analysis is underway and the findings and recommendations will be provided to the Partnership in late 2023, with the final report submitted in early 2024.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PEAK BODY

SNAICC is facilitating the establishment of a South Australian Peak Body for Aboriginal Children and Families, through a community-led process in partnership with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON). The purpose of the Peak Body, as agreed by South Australian Aboriginal stakeholders, is 'to be a community voice for Aboriginal children in South Australia, working to ensure that they grow up strong in their families and connected to community, culture and Country'.

In 2022, SNAICC worked with the community in South Australia to complete a state-wide design process for the Peak Body that will form the basis for its establishment. A full report of the design process and outcomes was published in August 2022.

SNAICC and SAACCON are working together to make sure the Peak is community driven and fully represents the Aboriginal child and family sector, by ensuring that there is the right governance in place to oversee an independent, Aboriginal-led establishment process. The first step in the design process is to appoint South Australian Aboriginal experts and leaders to a Steering Committee, who will guide and oversee establishment activities, including community engagement activities to drill down into the governance and membership structure.

SNAICC is proud to be working to support the development of a peak body that is truly representative, grounded in self-determination and independent from government. South Australian community stakeholders and Aboriginal organisations have called for a Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in South Australia for many years. SNAICC's work builds upon these longstanding community aspirations for the Peak to elevate and amplify the strength, care and hope that South Australian communities have for their children and families.

Work on the new Peak Body aims to see it established around July 2024.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PEAK BODY FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, SNAICC has been focusing on the importance of building and investing in a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family workforce, particularly in relation to the early years sector. In 2022-2023, SNAICC undertook a needs analysis of the early years workforce, with a focus on identifying national barriers to the provision of culturally safe, comprehensive ECEC services that meet the needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The needs analysis will inform an ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy,*** which will be released in 2024.

In 2022-23, SNAICC also led and contributed to a range of initiatives to strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years workforce, including:

- Attending the Joint Workforce Crisis Summit for Early Education hosted by the United Workers Union and Early Childhood Australia to advocate for salary increases and improved conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years workers.
- Meeting regularly with ministers to highlight the importance of the ACCO early years workforce and advocate for strengthening the sector.
- Identifying, documenting and promoting good practice examples of service-led approaches to training, professional development, and leadership.
- Progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years workers; and
- Supporting early years ACCOs and community members to use qualification pathway opportunities from state programs and incentives in SNAICC Early Years Support jurisdictions.

SNAICC has also been working closely with ACCO early years services to support them to understand their regulatory obligations under the National Quality Framework (NQF), including securing funding for and commencing development of a training, mentoring and a resource package to support ACCOs to transition to and meet the NQF standards. SNAICC continues to advocate for eligible ACCOs to be able to choose whether to transition to becoming an NQF-regulated service.

CHILD PROTECTION

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. Where ACCOs are being given authority in child protection, where families have a voice in decision-making, and where there are accessible, culturally safe child and family services and supports, there are better outcomes for children and families. Change also requires redressing the systemic biases within child protection against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

FAMILY MATTERS REPORT 2022

The Family Matters Report each year tracks how governments across the country are responding to the challenge of ending the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander children in out-of-home care. The Report promotes transparency in child protection systems and influences change.

In November 2022 SNAICC released the seventh edition of the ***Family Matters Report***, at an event at Federal Parliament House in Canberra. The launch was opened by SNAICC Chair and Family Matters National Leadership Group member Muriel Bamblett. Michael Currie, a member of the Leadership Group, also spoke at the launch. Minister for Indigenous Australians the Hon. Linda Burney also spoke to the findings in the Report.

The Report found that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care had grown from the previous year, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being 10.4 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children, making up 42% of children in out-of-home care.

The Report featured a chapter on removal of infants at birth from women in prison. There is a lack of transparency around the experiences of women in these circumstances, despite increasing over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women driving removal of their children. The Report also highlighted effective practices for self-determination in child protection, including commissioning of services led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and transfer of authority for child protection decisions to ACCOs.

The Family Matters Report continues to gain attention and influence change. The 2022 Family Matters Report was tabled in the Victorian Yoorrook Justice Commission hearings on child protection and criminal justice in December 2022, influencing the Commission's Report, finalised in August 2023.

SNAICC thanks the National Family Matters Leadership Group and all of the supporters of the Family Matters report for continuing to promote transparency and change in child protection.



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children

FAMILY MATTERS
Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

22,297 CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

42% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

BUT ONLY **5%** OF ALL CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA

10 x MORE LIKELY TO BE LIVING IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE THAN NON-INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

2013 **53%** ↓ 2022 **40%**

LESS THAN HALF ARE LIVING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CARERS

LESS LIKELY TO BE REUNIFIED WITH BIRTH PARENTS THAN NON-INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

79% IN LONG-TERM 'PERMANENT' CARE

80% OF ADOPTIONS OF OUR CHILDREN IN THE LAST 5 YEARS WERE TO NON-INDIGENOUS PARENTS

A RECENT SPIKE IN ADOPTION

42 (2016–2021) ↑ 25 (2010–15)

ADOPTIONS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILIES

10 x MORE LIKELY TO ACCESS SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

FAMILIES EXPERIENCE **INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA** FROM THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

EXPERIENCE **LOWER EMPLOYMENT RATES** AND **LOWER LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

2 x MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A **LOW BIRTHWEIGHT**

1.3 x EXPERIENCE HIGHER RATES OF **CHILD MORTALITY** THAN NON-INDIGENOUS BABIES

67% LESS LIKELY TO ATTEND **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE** THAN NON-INDIGENOUS CHILDREN
0-4 YEARS

2.5 x MORE LIKELY TO BE **DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE** IN TWO OR MORE DOMAINS BY AGE 5

A CYCLE OF POVERTY

2022 FAMILY MATTERS SNAPSHOT DATA

THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

CLOSING THE GAP NEW TARGET

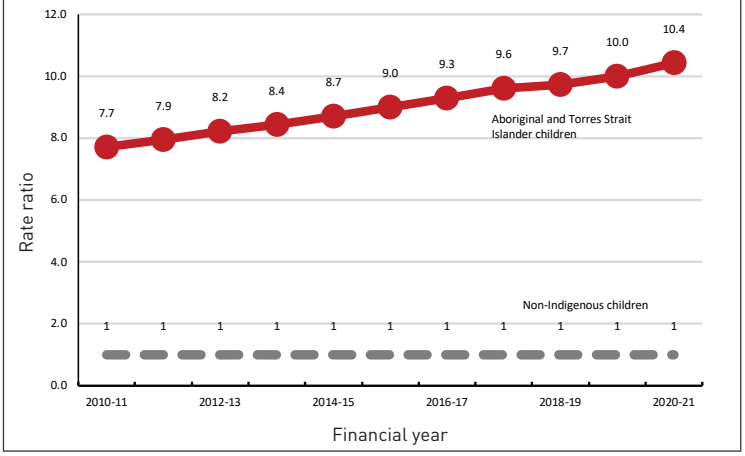
BY **2031** **REDUCE** → BY **45%**

THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF OUR CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

TURN THE TIDE

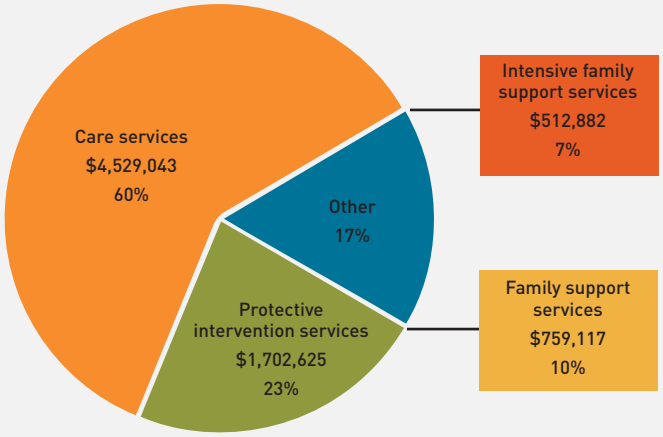
PROJECTED TO **INCREASE BY 50% BY 2032**

10-year trend of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care



FAMILY SUPPORT vs REMOVAL

83.1% spent on intervention services and out-of-home care, but only 16.9% spent on support services



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 the over-representation of our children in out-of-home care

BLOCK	BUILDING BLOCK 1	BUILDING BLOCK 2	BUILDING BLOCK 3	BUILDING BLOCK 4
	Access to universal and targeted services	Participation and control in decision-making	Culturally safe and responsive policies and practice	Accountable governments and services
SOLUTION	Invest in community-controlled organisations to provide culturally safe early intervention and prevention services	Establish resourced legislative roles for participation of community-controlled organisations in all child protection decisions	Permanency planning that supports Aboriginal child rights. Invest in Aboriginal-led family reunification programs	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
EXAMPLE	Aboriginal-led early intervention and prevention services and holistic integrated early years services such as MACS and ACFCs	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)	Keeping families together sooner, more often, and for longer, through community-led family reunification programs (eg Qld and Vic.)	Aboriginal commissioners for children in each state and territory (SA, Vic., Qld) and deputy guardian (NSW)

2022 REPORT CARD SNAPSHOT

	HEADLINE INDICATOR Over-representation in OOHC (rate)	BUILDING BLOCK 1 Universal and targeted services	BUILDING BLOCK 2 Participation, control in decision-making	BUILDING BLOCK 3 Culturally safe and responsive systems	BUILDING BLOCK 4 Accountability
ACT	13				
NSW	10.5				
NT	13.8				
QLD	8.8				
SA	11.1				
TAS	4.9				
VIC	17.3				
WA	18,2				

KEY Very poor Poor Promising/improving Stronger practice/outcomes

ACT 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 2023 with two training workshops being delivered in May and October of this year.

Training on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) aims to support the ACT team leaders and case workers to:

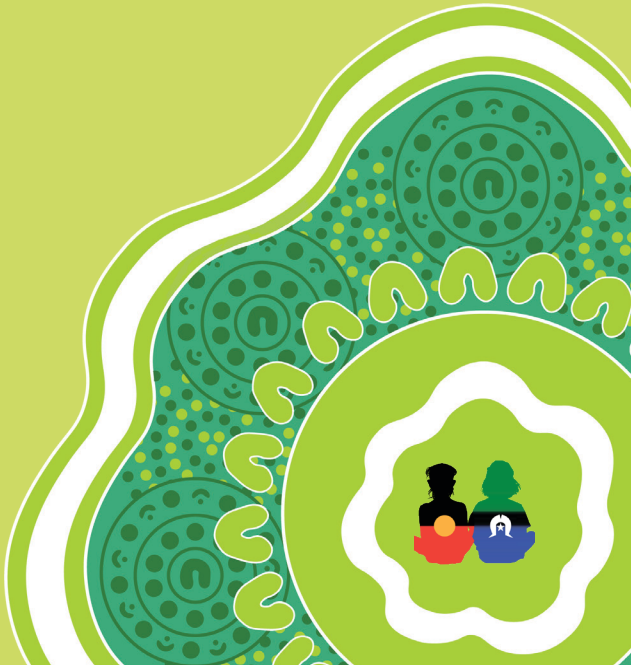
- deepen understanding of the scope of the Child Placement Principle
- increase capacity to effectively implement its five elements across the functions of the Children, Youth and Families Division.

The SNAICC training team continue to support and deliver this training in Canberra, and plans are underway for the continuation of the delivery in 2024 and beyond.

WA ROADMAP

Over 2022-23 SNAICC 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 out-of-home care. 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 over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031.

The case for change in WA is compelling. WA has the highest rate of over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care of any state or territory, and the lowest proportional spending on family support. In 2021, 57% of children in care in WA were Aboriginal.

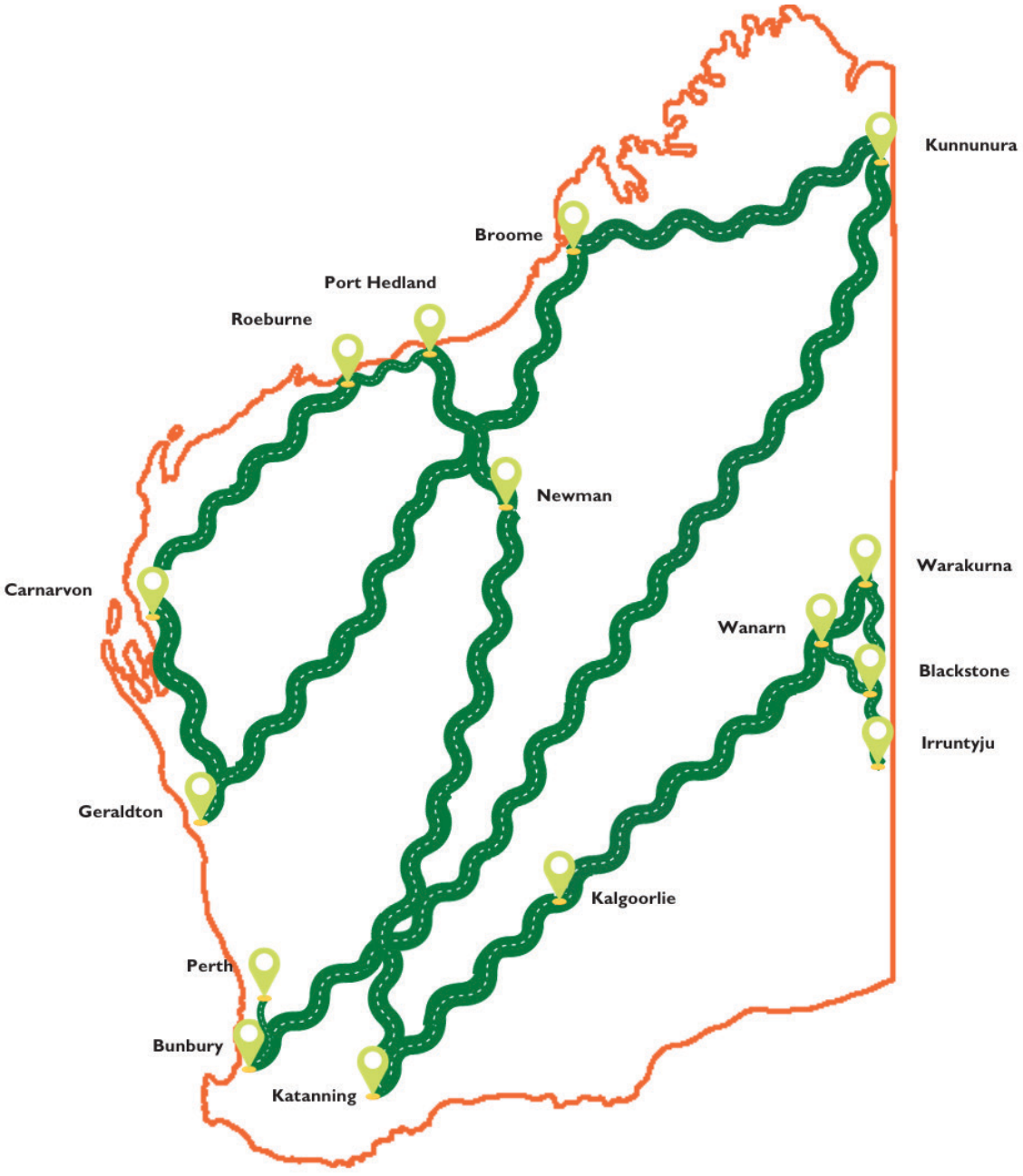




SNAICC engaged in extensive consultation across WA to inform development of the Roadmap. More than 200 stakeholders contributed their knowledge and experience, including individuals and family members with lived experience. SNAICC facilitated a central design forum in Fremantle, where Aboriginal community representatives from across WA met with senior members of relevant government departments to discuss and agree on priorities for the Roadmap, as determined by community members. What SNAICC heard from Aboriginal community representatives in consultations and forums has formed the basis for the Roadmap.

A major theme that underpins the Roadmap is the need to involve Aboriginal children, families, and communities every step of the way when decisions are being made about the safety of Aboriginal children and families. Other themes include the need for recognition of Aboriginal leadership through state and regional peak bodies for children and families; and increased funding to ACCOs to deliver services for their communities.

The draft Roadmap has now been handed over to the WA Government for review and approval, with the hope that it will spark real change for Aboriginal children in out-of-home care in WA. SNAICC will continue its advocacy and support for Aboriginal children in WA.



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

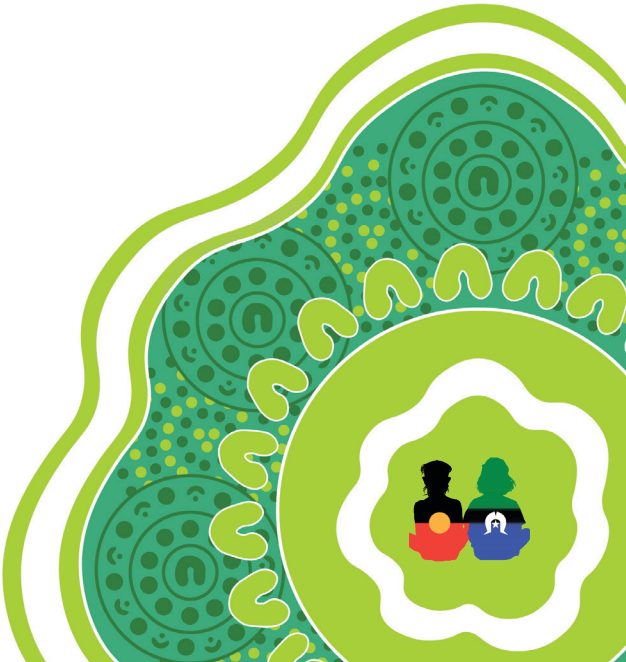
In 2022-2023, SNAICC continued its work to pursue implementation of ***Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031.*** The Framework establishes how all governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and the non-government sector will work together to ensure children and young people grow up safe and supported, free from harm and neglect.

SNAICC supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group ('Leadership Group'), which is made up of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts in child and family services. Our CEO Catherine Liddle chairs the Leadership Group.

SNAICC worked closely with the Leadership Group and governments to develop two Actions Plans that will guide the implementation of Safe and Supported, including a stand-alone Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The First Action Plan addresses the needs of all Australian children. Alongside it is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan, which focuses on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This is the first time in national child protection policy that a specific Action Plan has been developed with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people.

This was achieved due to SNAICC and the Leadership Group advancing the Partnership and Shared Decision-Making provisions in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and working to achieve equal decision-making between governments and the Leadership Group.



The Action Plans were launched in January this year.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan includes commitments to transfer authority of child protection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, investment in the community-controlled sector, workforce development, data sovereignty, and full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to the standard of active efforts. Progress is also being made in strengthening the advocacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioners, including the establishment of a National Commissioner.



PROJECT BIRD (BELIEVE, INQUIRE, RESPOND TO DISCLOSURE)

SNAICC, in partnership with Yamurrah, are co-designing with First Nations experts a trauma-aware, healing-informed and culturally appropriate national training package and resources to improve culturally safe responses of the primary health care system for First Nations victim-survivors of child sexual abuse.

SNAICC and Yamurrah identified a working title of Project BIRD in recognition that training will address upskilling the health sector to Believe, Inquire and Respond to Disclosures of child sexual abuse.

The project commenced with creation of a BIRD Research Report that examines current approaches, literature, legislations and relevant training across Australia and has formulated key understandings, insights and recommendations that will guide the development of the BIRD training package and resources.

SNAICC and Yamurrah are using a co-design approach to develop the training package and resources with people who are likely to receive or to be impacted by the training. This includes people with lived experience and key stakeholders who hold certain expertise that relate to content in the modules.

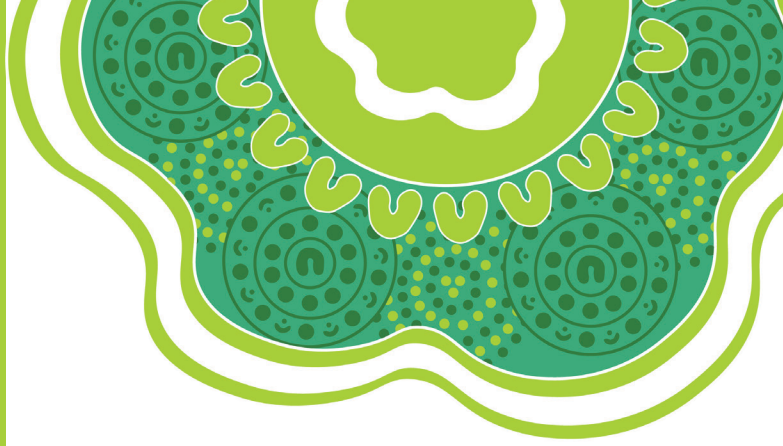
In June 2023, a national two-day scoping workshop was held to inform initial training and resource development. Following on from this initial workshop, ten module workshops and two focus groups will be held to refine content and ensure specialised content areas are informed by relevant expertise and evidence.

The project is informed by a national reference group, consisting of First Nations experts in child sexual abuse and / or trauma-informed care. Key stakeholders will be engaged as key collaborators to the design and development of the training packages and resources.

The development of the BIRD training package and resources is funded under the auspice of the First National Action Plan of the ***National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse*** by the National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA). Once training and resources have been developed, NIAA have committed to procure a two-year pilot of the training delivery and evaluation.



NATIONAL AGREEMENT WITH LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS



The Life Without Barriers (LWB) Board committed to progressively step away from the provision of out-of-home care (OOHC) services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by 2031. LWB has also committed to working with the leadership of SNAICC and the National Coalition of Peaks to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC by 2040.

Both organisations recognise the value that a partnership, drawing on the experience and expertise of each, could deliver to the communities they operate in. In the spirit of that partnership, LWB and SNAICC agreed to work together to achieve the joint goals of:

- progressively transitioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (where safe, appropriate and supported to do so) in LWB's OOHC programs –
- back to family or kin, or
- to OOHC programs run by ACCOs.

This includes advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure they have the resources and supports required to progressively take over and manage the care of these children over the next 10 years.

- Supporting the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and uniting non-Indigenous organisations in the call for policy, practice, and legislation to embed the principles of self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, including exercise of legislative authority, a focus on family strengthening, and progress towards the goal of ending government removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Hearing and responding to the voices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who receive services from LWB.

SNAICC and LWB have completed the first year of this collaboration in 2023 and look forward to finalising the details in the second-year collaboration agreement for priorities and focus areas for 2024.

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring the highest quality ECEC services and other critical supports for our children and families is essential, requiring high levels of cultural safety within mainstream services, and increased availability of Aboriginal community-controlled services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC services are particularly important as they work from the strengths of children's culture to build and reinforce positive self-identity while supporting the wellbeing of children and families experiencing vulnerability in the community. These services prioritise access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children not accessing, or unlikely to access, mainstream services, and through their unique features overcome many of the identified service access barriers our families experience. They are holistic and responsive to child and family needs, including integrated language development, speech and hearing supports, as well as broader health, family support, capacity building and early intervention.

CONNECTED BEGINNINGS

The Connected Beginnings (CB) program aims to improve access to existing early childhood, maternal and child health and family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, to ensure they are safe, healthy, and ready to thrive at school by the age of five. SNAICC came on board as the Department of Education's Connected Beginnings Community Partner in July 2022 in response to feedback from existing sites on the need for greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and leadership in the program.

SNAICC plays a key role in both the establishment of new sites and providing support for existing sites in their ongoing implementation of community-led and culturally safe early childhood projects.

We engage with communities to assess their readiness to implement the collective impact CB project model and work alongside those communities as they plan programs that are tailored to families' needs and build on strengths of local early childhood education and health services. We liaise between project-leads ('backbone' organisations) and the Department of Education, in relation to budget, contractual obligations and reporting, and provide assistance with tasks such as the development of community action plans. Support is available to new and pre-existing CB backbone organisations on an ongoing basis. SNAICC also facilitates connection and sharing of information between sites through networking activities such as the quarterly Community of Practice, the First Nations' Working Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and an annual National Gathering.

In addition, the Department of Education has commissioned SNAICC to develop a framework to guide the transition of the leadership 'backbone' functions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) in those project sites which have previously been led by non-Indigenous organisations. This framework, developed with input from ACCO and non-Indigenous CB backbone organisations, has been refined with CB transition sites in Port Augusta and Ceduna and will be applied in all sites that currently have a non-Indigenous backbone.

The hard work is producing results. SNAICC has supported the establishment of CB in ten communities in its first year as Community Partner, bringing the current number of CB projects to 40 and increasing the total number of children who benefit from greater access to integrated services to more than 16,000.



FIRST CONNECTED BEGINNINGS ANNUAL GATHERING

On 17-18 November 2022, SNAICC conducted its first National Gathering for CB sites in Meanjin/Brisbane. This Gathering, which will be conducted annually, aims to build capability through collaboration and by providing opportunities to build networks between backbone organisations and other stakeholders.

The event attracted over 160 delegates from across the country, representing all new and existing education CB sites and most health CB sites. Speakers included the Minister for Early Childhood Education and Youth, Anne Aly and the Hon. Senator Malarndirri McCarthy. Participants built connections whilst sharing experiences and ideas with other CB sites and expanded technical skills in areas such as data management and evaluation with specialist organisations Clear Horizon and Seer Data. It comes as no surprise that delegates rated the Gathering highly, and their feedback is informing the planning for the CB National Gathering 2023.



CCCFR

The CCCFR expansion program aims to establish new ECEC services in mainly remote and very remote areas to increase participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in culturally appropriate ECEC.

SNAICC came on board as the Department of Education's Community Childcare Fund-Restricted (CCCFR) Expansion partner in 2022. Together with the Department of Education, SNAICC works with providers to establish community led, high quality, safe and culturally appropriate child-care services that reflect the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

The SNAICC team engaged in project initiation and planning which included the onboarding of a CCCFR Expansion Program Senior Project advisor and Project Officer. In addition, the team created resources and assets to effectively scope, manage and report the expansion project progress.

SNAICC and the Department of Education co-chaired three CCCFR Expansion Program Expert Advisory Group (EAG) meetings. During this time the EAG developed a funding approach and endorsed four providers from Phase 1 sites to enter grant agreements -

- Wunan, Kununurra Western Australia
- Napranum, Mission River Queensland
- Puuya, Lockhart River Queensland
- Julailkari, Tennant Creek Northen Territory.

SNAICC works with CCCFR expansion sites to provide tailored foundational support to support the establishment of quality and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led education and care services that effectively address the needs of their communities. Examples of support include assistance in becoming regulated under National Law, developing place-based workforce strategies, and facilitating Aboriginal community involvement in childcare initiatives. In addition, the SNAICC team have led two (virtual) community of practice discussions for participants to reflect and share what 'quality education and care looks like for their community and the important role community voice plays in the development of a quality ECEC service.

SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT

SNAICC Early Years Support (EYS) 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. SNAICC EYS 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 2022-23, SNAICC EYS undertook a major rebranding to better leverage the SNAICC brand and successfully established fully operational state-wide intermediaries for Aboriginal early years services across NSW, WA and Victoria. SNAICC EYS has gone from strength to strength during this time, making significant progress on resource and workforce development, compliance support, support for remote communities, funding and advocacy.

During 2022-23, SNAICC EYS National undertook an evaluation to engage with the sector and relevant stakeholders, ensuring that SNAICC's service offering is adapted to meet the needs of the sector as they emerge and change. Based on evaluation feedback, the key priorities for SNAICC EYS National are:

- Direct support - further intensifying support on the ground and adapting offerings to suit services' specific needs & developing more tailored solutions to optimise support.
- Data collection & reporting - based on the Deloitte feedback, SNAICC EYS National has pivoted and begun a data collection and digital project to ensure the required data is captured for evaluation reporting and advocacy.
- Knowledge sharing - Deloitte feedback also indicated the opportunities to share knowledge across networks, exchange resources and build relationships across jurisdictions for the ECEC sector.

To achieve the outlined strategic priorities, SNAICC EYS National is currently working on a number of projects to streamline data collection, knowledge sharing and tailored supports. It is currently rolling out the Padlet communication platform to instantly share resources and information with services.

SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT REBRAND

The THRYVE pilot program was rebranded to SNAICC Early Years Support in July 2023. This was decided following feedback from independent evaluators and some sector partners who advised there is some confusion in the sector about the branding. In particular, that it is not immediately clear that the THRYVE pilot is part of SNAICC, and there are a number of other organisations, programs and campaigns that use the term 'thrive'. The leadership, advocacy and reputation of the Peak can be better leveraged to achieve the aims, identity and aspirations of the pilot.

SNAICC EYS continues to support and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early years services to deliver high quality, responsive, accessible and culturally strong supports for our children, families, and communities, and to provide support and representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander early education and care centres in NSW, Victoria and WA.

SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT VIC

This is the first full year of operations for the SNAICC EYS team in Victoria. In 2023, SNAICC piloted and implemented a new service model that was co-designed by our members in the second half of 2022. The core domains of the service model are:

- Knowledge Sharing
- Workforce Development
- Advocacy

In less than a year, the VIC division of SNAICC EYS has grown significantly and now supports quality education, advocacy, and workforce development within the Aboriginal community-controlled early years sector throughout Victoria. The team has made incredible progress and is tracking to successful delivery of its initial plan at the conclusion of 2023. The numbers below demonstrate the scale of work undertaken and delivered in 2022-23:

- 32 site visits
- 10 Leaders Network Meetings
- 13 Professional Development Events
- 4 Leadership Snapshots
- 10 State Steering Group Meetings
- 2 statewide Leadership Events

Some other highlights include:

- 8 CCCFR/ACCO Funding Model consultations
- New service opened doors in 2023
- New service to open doors in 2024

Working with our members to identify their needs is what drives real progress. SNAICC EYS VIC has spent the past year being present on the ground, listening to our members and developing the tailored supports they need to deliver culturally safe education and care for our children. Feedback from services has shown a positive trend in services having more support to deliver their services. One valuable piece of feedback received was:

'I don't always pick up the phone when they call, because sometimes I am busy. But when I call them, they are always there for me. That lets me know I am supported and that I am not alone.'

Centre Director - Victorian ACCO Early Years Service

SNAICC acknowledges our members and the incredible work they do for our children, families, and communities to ensure they can access culturally safe early education and care.



SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT WA

SNAICC EYS WA became fully operational in 2023 and is currently servicing eight early years services in WA. The WA team has made significant progress in the past 12 months, building meaningful connections and strong partnerships with local communities and the ECEC sector in WA to understand their needs in order to tailor the supports they need to thrive.

SNAICC EYS WA has developed an Early Years Support Engagement Strategy for WA which sets out actions across 2023-25 to ensure its strategic priorities are responding to the needs of the services it supports. It is centered around three key priorities:

- Services are accessible and tailored to the WA Aboriginal community
- Greater awareness within the WA Aboriginal community of SNAICC EYS as an organisation and the services it provides
- Stakeholders and Aboriginal community members are represented, and their collective voice and feedback drives strategic priorities.

As part of its Engagement Strategy, SNAICC EYS WA has been making connections with communities that already operate an ECEC service and those that are looking towards establishing a new ECEC service within WA. Through community activities and celebrations centered around children and families, the team has developed an understanding of the aspirations and needs of ACCO-led ECEC services current and emerging.



SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT NSW

NSW EYS achieved a significant milestone by forging a partnership with the NSW Department of Education (DoE) to collaboratively provide culturally safe backbone support to our ACCO community pre-schools across the State. Our backbone support includes program design and delivery, workforce planning and development, strengthening business support governance, compliance, and providing collective voice on critical issues for the sector.

This collaboration emphasises our commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, propelling the advancement of a more robust ACCO ECEC sector.

This partnership is designed to fortify the capacities of 29 ACCO community pre-schools. The prospect of an expanded ACCO ECEC network signifies a collective leap forward in ensuring culturally safe, inclusive, and high-quality education and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children accessing early years services in NSW.

Our advisors have prioritised on-site visits to our 46 ACCO ECEC services, fostering direct engagement with centre directors and enabling tailored support around professional development, regulatory compliance through a Community of Practice / yarning circles, and providing tailored support direct to centres. We supported two centres to complete our educational leader exchange initiative and will support three more. Focusing on continuous quality improvement through assessment and rating evaluation process and actioning planning, supporting centre philosophy from the heart, and curriculum planning with critical reflection practices using the National Quality Framework.

Insights garnered from some of our participating centres and their communities has been instrumental in shaping crucial discussions around sector reviews, including NSW IPART, CCCFR, and ACCO funding models.

The team has expanded over the past 10 months to include three Senior Advisors, an Administration and Operations Coordinator, and a Resource and Communications Officer, bolstering our support capabilities.

Dedicated efforts have been directed towards creating resources, focusing on compliance tools and cultural education supports. The introduction of the NSW Deadly Cards serves as a testament to this promoting critical reflection practices aligned with the National Quality Framework, Early Childhood Theorists, and Aboriginal pedagogy. This resource is poised to elevate and refine teaching practices within the NSW Early Years ACCO sector and strengthen and refine teaching practices.

The implementation of Padlet as a communication platform has been a top priority, enabling seamless content sharing, updates, and the provision of communication materials to enhance service delivery.

In our unwavering pursuit of this mission, NSW EYS remains resolute in its commitment to providing comprehensive support and resources, empowering early years services across the state for the betterment of all children and families.

The NSW team continue to strive towards achieving its strategic priorities and objectives and targets for the ACCO ECEC sector including, increasing the proportion of Aboriginal children enrolled in early childhood education, supporting current ACCO services with business advocacy to expand, and strengthening the ACCO educator workforce.

SNAICC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT NSW GATHERINGS

Our gatherings for 2023, held in March and October, facilitated an exchange of Aboriginal culture and wisdom, networking, and strengthening ties with key stakeholders from the NSW Department of Education, Communities and Justice, and other NSW sector partners.

These events have emerged as pivotal occasions for networking, idea exchange, and relationship building among like-minded individuals; which strengthens professional development and alliances.



A PLACE FOR CULTURE

A Place for Culture is SNAICC's cultural competency training for non-Indigenous early years services. It is a blended learning experience of completing online training about cultural diversity and reflection on one's own personal beliefs and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Participants also attend in-person training to identify both personal and organisational actions that will contribute to a more culturally safe and responsive learning environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The learning program is being revised by the Sector Development team and will be trialled in late 2023.

THE JOURNEY TO BIG SCHOOL

SNAICC has developed a Journey to Big School package that is designed to strengthen and support current and new community-led initiatives in local communities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families as they transition to full time formal school.

The revised package offers face-to-face workshops and online yarning circles that are facilitated by SNAICC in partnership with services, schools, and communities. These workshops and yarning circles are offered over a period of 3-4 months to provide adequate time to share knowledge, identify and strengthen local networks and relationships, and collectively design local transition action plans.

PARKVILLE PROJECT

In April 2023, SNAICC facilitated the first workshops in Victoria in the Latrobe and Wellington region. Online yarning circles were held in May and June 2023 with the second face-to-face workshops planned for July 2023. Discussions and planning for locations in Western Australia, Queensland and NSW have commenced.

To support the facilitation of the Journey to Big School package, a suite of resources has been developed. These include a resource for schools and one for services including ECEC services and family services, with a family resource under development.

SNAICC will continue to review and revise the Journey to Big School package in the second half of 2023 to identify gaps and strengthen the approach.

The Parkville Project is a partnership between Parkville Institute, Social Ventures Australia, and SNAICC. After securing funding from the Federal Government and philanthropy, the project partners sought to identify and invite a suitable ACCO ECEC in New South Wales to be engaged and be part of this project. Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre in Nowra was successful and has taken on this work and become part of the partnership.

The overarching objective of this project is to conduct an Aboriginal service-led co-development process to develop a locally grown intensive ECEC model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that brings together community knowledge and practice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom, and relevant insights and learnings from the Early Years Education Program and meets the needs of children living with significant family stress and social disadvantage.

SNAICC works closely with Cullunghutti to ensure that all elements of this project are co-developed and co-designed with a strong cultural lens to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing are central. Whilst we are in an early establishment phase, Cullunghutti will trial the co-developed program and children will have a place in the program for three years at no cost to families.

A formal research evaluation of the program is included as part of this project, and this is being led and implemented by Melbourne Institute and SNAICC, to learn, grow and build the evidence base for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander developed, owned and managed programs for our children.

Another key opportunity and outcome of the project is to explore potential for replication and scaling with other interested Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationally, as well as learnings and implications for policy and practice.

The official launch and opening of the project in Nowra is planned for the beginning of 2024.



OUR PERFORMANCE

SPREADING THE WORD

During 2022 and 2023, SNAICC has continued to leverage and grow its social media platforms to highlight important sector issues, the Voice referendum and key campaigns and 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, webinar series, quarterly newsletters, the SNAICC website and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube.

In 2022-23, engagement with SNAICC's social media platforms increased dramatically and represents the biggest year-on-year increases for Instagram. Instagram reach has increased rapidly by over 312%, which was achieved through strategic social media planning, delivering strong campaigns and heightened media awareness of SNAICC.



7,884

New LinkedIn followers, an increase of over 50% in 12 months

360,000

X (formerly Twitter) Impressions

260,000

Facebook profiles reached

312%

Increase in intagram profiles reached

SPEAKING TO POWER

As the Peak Body, one of SNAICC's responsibilities is to make sure the priorities and views of our members and sector are heard by the Federal, State and Territory Governments.

We do this through a range of mechanisms - by engaging directly with member of governments, supporting jurisdictional peaks in their engagement and advocacy and campaigning on specific issues identified by members as their priorities.

In 2022, SNAICC welcomed commitments from the new Albanese Government making early learning and childcare a priority.

SNAICC moved quickly to establish strong relationships with key Ministers and elected Members, including Minister for Indigenous Australians the Hon Linda Burney, Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare, Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly and Minister for Social Service, the Hon Amanda Rishworth.

As well as maintaining active interactions with relevant Ministers, we have met and continue to seek to raise our priorities with the Opposition and Independents. We have also been engaged in advising and participating in key Government inquiries such as:

- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Childcare Inquiry
- Productivity Commission inquiry into Early Education and Care
- The South Australian Royal Commission into Early Education and Care
- Senate Select Committee on Work and Care
- Federal Budget submissions in Oct 2022 and May 2023

SNAICC played a key role in the August 2022 Federal Jobs Summit, urging the Federal Government to address barriers such as access to childcare that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from engaging in employment and training. We also continue to play a strong role in discussions about strengthening our sector's workforce and recognising the particular needs of the early education and care sectors.

The report from the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care included a number of recommendations made by SNAICC, including an immediate increase in long term funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care services, and the removal of activity tests required of families to receive childcare subsidies.



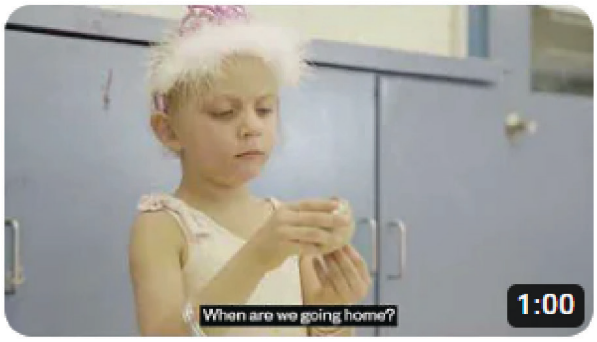
SNAICC welcomed the Federal Government's reform of the Activity Test. These reforms extended the hours of subsidised early education and care available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, enabling access to 36 hours of subsidised childcare a fortnight from July 2023, an increase of 12 hours a fortnight. We acknowledge this as a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and removing barriers such as the Activity Test remain a priority.

As part of our submission to the Senate Committee, the Voice from Ti Tree video series was made available to Senators. This video series has been the centrepiece of many presentations and advocacy opportunities, giving residents in a remote community the opportunity to talk about the impact the lack of early education and care has on their lives. We extend our thanks to the Thrive by Five campaign for their support in producing these videos and others that have given a direct voice to our centres, families, workers and children.

We recognise the Albanese Government has already announced initiatives such as reforming the Activity Test so all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can access 36 hours of subsidised childcare a fortnight from July 2023.



Voices from Ti Tree - Every Child Should Have Access to Early...



Voices from Ti Tree - The Four Year-Old Who Goes To Work Every Day



Voices from Ti Tree - Challenges of childcare deserts

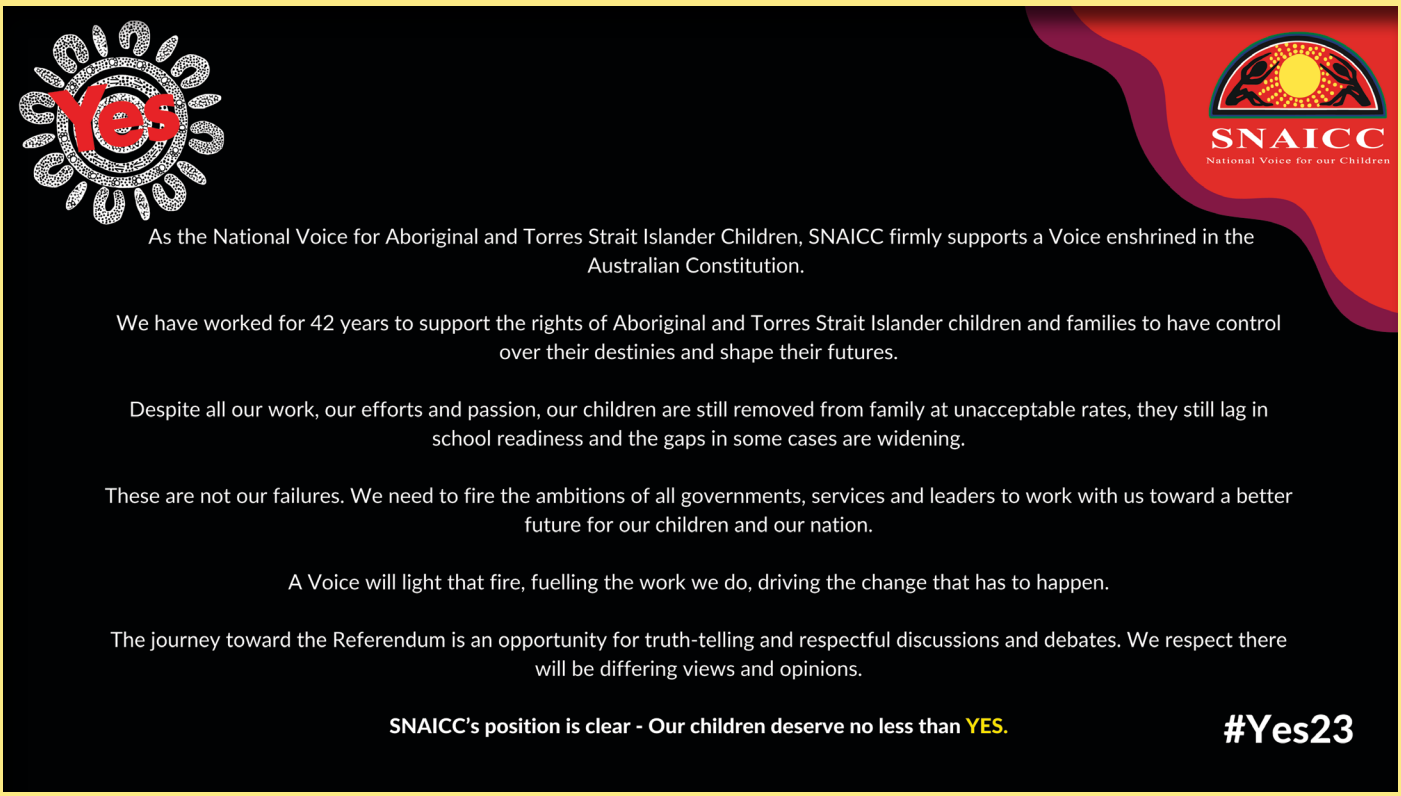


Scrap the Activity Test

The SNAICC Board took a strong stand in support of the Voice to Parliament. Our Chair and CEO and other Board members were active in promoting the positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that could result from a Voice. The SNAICC call of "our children deserve no less than yes" was taken up widely by supporters.

We look forward to continuing work with all governments to reform the early education, family services and out-of-home care systems to better support our children and families. SNAICC aims to amplify the voices of our children and our sector at every opportunity.

SNAICC continues to proactively advocate for reform and priorities identified by our members and sector, supported by strong evidence, that will drive change and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



WEBINARS

Over the past year, SNAICC has placed strong importance on strengthening the sector and offering accessible learning for our members. SNAICC continues to expand its webinar offerings, achieving great success and high engagement and demand for webinars.

SNAICC has focused on co-hosting webinars with member organisations and ACCOs to showcase what's been working on the ground for Community.

Our Virtual Town Hall and Safe and Supported Webinar were highly successful. Both reached maximum registrations and had high engagement throughout and post-event via YouTube.

Webinars and video content continue to be popular for SNAICC audiences and instrumental in conveying our key messages and sharing learnings from the sector.



SNAICC and the Caring Society webinar

Catherine Liddle and Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Caring Society of Canada, discuss how the Caring Society started, how they took on the Canadian Federal Government for racial discrimination over the treatment and removal of First Nations kids from their homes, the impacts of choosing to not be government funded, and involving children in social justice campaigns.

The Family Matters Report 2022 Webinar, investigating the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. Catherine Liddle, Family Matters Co-Chair; CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children Dr Paul Gray, Family Matters Co-Chair; Associate Professor, University of Technology Sydney (Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research) Jade Lane, Project Manager Aboriginal Family Preservation, AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation; Chair, Gomeroi Narrabri Aboriginal Corporation The Nugel (Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care) team, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency James Beaufils, Research Fellow and PhD candidate, University of Technology Sydney (Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research/Faculty of Law) Dr Tatiana Corrales, Research Fellow, Monash University (Health and Social Care Unit – in collaboration with Monash Health) discusses supporting social and emotional wellbeing for children and families, achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination in child protection, and tackling the intersection between child protection and carceral justice Speakers.



The Family Matters Report 2022 Webinar



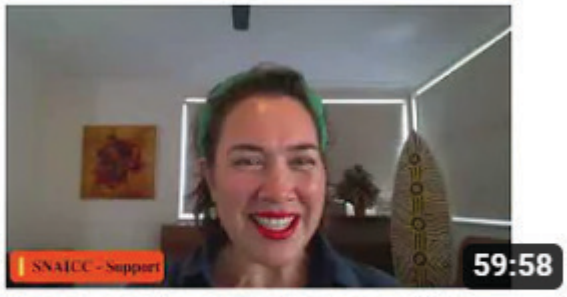
SNAICC Webinar - Tangentyere Council 'Girls Can Boys Can' Project

SNAICC also held a lunchtime webinar inviting Tangentyere Council to talk about their Girls Can Boys Can Project.

SNAICC held a virtual town hall event to discuss the barriers that our children and their families face in accessing ECEC, in the lead up to the Federal Budget 23.

Key attendees include Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney and Minister for Early Childhood Education and Youth, Dr Anne Aly.

SNAICC was supported by Essential Media in organising the online event.



Virtual Townhall: ECEC Access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island...

SNAICC hosted a webinar on Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031, to inform the sector on how it will work to reduce child abuse and neglect and its intergenerational impacts.

Catherine Liddle, SNAICC CEO, Garth Morgan, QATSICPP CEO, and Jamie Crosby, Families Australia CEO spoke to how the two Safe and Supported Action Plans are being rolled out and the impact for our sector and communities.



SNAICC Safe and Supported webinar

SNAICC CONTINUES TO GROW

SNAICC continued its growth in 2022-23 with staff numbers more than doubling, climbing from 24 to 53. We now have a dedicated People and Culture Manager strengthening our approach to human resources management.

In addition to SNAICC's Melbourne office, we have three offices in regional areas: Mildura (VIC), Wollongong (NSW), and Broome (WA). The regional offices serve as strategic bases for support to the early years sector, as well as SNAICC's broader sector engagement and partnership building initiatives. Post COVID, like many organisations, we have embraced more flexible working arrangements and have 10 staff working from home.

SNAICC's team is made up of highly qualified, skilled, knowledgeable and dedicated professionals all working together to promote the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. SNAICC's vision and purpose unites the team to continue to advance the rights of our children. With such a high-capacity team, SNAICC is able to deliver on strategic priorities, supporting our sector and influencing policy reform at high government levels, and working to build capacity at local levels with our membership organisations across the country.

As a national peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, SNAICC is committed to strengthening its First Nations workforce base. We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate of 43% across the organisation, with 53% of our people leaders from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

SNAICC is committed to being an employer of choice, creating a nurturing, supportive, inclusive, and culturally sensitive work environment.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

SNAICC extends its gratitude for the generosity and support of the following organisations and individuals that funded and supported SNAICC's work in 2022-23.

SNAICC Donors

Daniel Viero
Rachel Riley
Rebecca Robertson
Roy Morgan Research
Rachel Coley
Amy Beth Honda
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Cages Foundation
The Ian Potter Foundation
The William Buckland Foundation
Lottery West
The Ross Trust

Partners

Lowitja Institute
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Social Ventures Australia
Life Without Barriers

Government Funders

Community Services Directorate, ACT Government
Department of Education, Australian Government
Department of Social Services, Australian Government
Minister of Child Protection, South Australian Government
National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA), Australian Government
National Office for Child Safety, Australian Government
National Territory Government - Territory Families
The Productivity Commission
The Australian Institue of Family Studies
Department of Communities, Western Australian Government

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 22-23

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT 2022-23

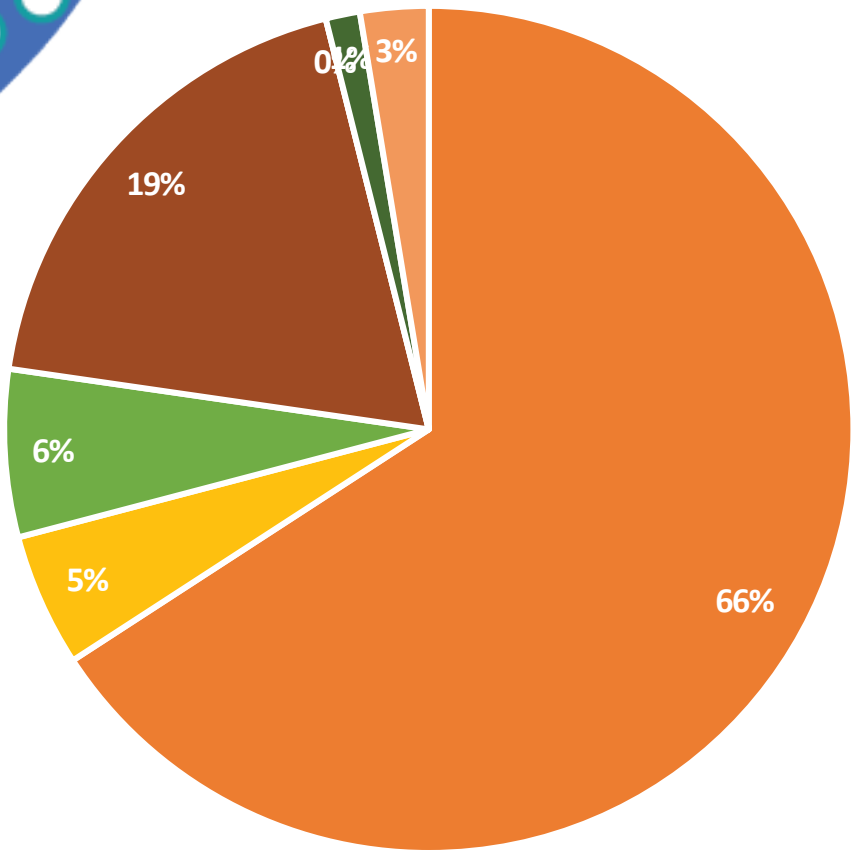
INCOME	$
Government grants	9,044,745
Non Government grants (philanthropic) and donations	2,220,999
Consultations, training & resource sales	152,502
Interest income	275,250
Other income	29,828
Total income	**11,723,324**

EXPENDITURE	
Employee benefits expenses	4,864,041
Office and administration expenses	626,853
Printing and design expenses	206,033
Consulting and professional fees	2,053,808
Travel expenses	693,370
Other expenses	160,588
Total expenses	**8,604,693**
Net income/(deficit)	**3,118,631**

BALANCE SHEET
As at 30 June 2023

ASSETS	$
Current assets	
Cash & cash equivalents	20,342,857
Trade & other receivables	1,241,441
Prepayments	449,387
Total current assets	**22,033,685**
Non-current assets	
Right-of-use assets	151,699
Plant and equipment	198,336
Total non-current assets	**350,035**
Total Assets	**22,383,720**
LIABILITIES	
Current liabilities	
Lease liability	128,071
Trade and other payables	2,274,216
Deferred income	14,294,477
Employee benefit provisions	540,123
Total current liabilities	**17,236,887**
Non-current liabilities	
Lease liability	40,640
Total non-current liabilities	**40,640**
Total Liabilities	**17,277,527**
Net Assets	**5,106,193**
Equity	
Retained surpluses	5,106,193
Total Members' Equity	**5,106,193**

SNAICC SOURCES OF INCOME 22-23



- Government Grants & Incentives (Federal) - 66%
- Government Grants & Incentives (State/Territory) - 5%
- Fee For Service - 6%
- Non-Government Grants, Sponsorships and Donations - 19%
- National Conference Income - 0%
- Consultancy,Training and Resource Sales - 1%
- Interest and Other Income - 3%



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