



Australian Government  
National Indigenous  
Australians Agency



**NIAA**



**SNAICC**  
National Voice for our Children

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

20 April 2021

### **GROWING OUR KIDS IN FAMILY AND CULTURE – A NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGY**

The voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families will be instrumental in the development of a new national strategy that will ensure their children have the opportunities for the best start in life.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy will support children to grow up happy, healthy, strong and thriving in their early years by providing a long-term, re-focused approach to policy and investment.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), in partnership with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, are working to develop the Strategy. Today the co-design process opens, and we need your advice to ensure the Strategy meaningfully reflects the views, experiences and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, service delivery organisations and other key experts.

Debbie Mitchell, Group Manager of Social Policy and Programs at the National Indigenous Australians Agency and Co-Chair of the Strategy's Advisory Group said,

“This is a child-focused strategy. It will ensure a long-term approach to refocus policy and investment and enable stronger collaboration and coordination across whole of government, the early childhood system and, most importantly, with families and children.”

SNAICC's Chief Executive Officer, Catherine Liddle, said, “with the right policy shifts and investment in our community-led approaches, the early childhood strategy will empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to bring our children up healthy, strong, and proud in culture.

“The first years of a child's life, from conception to when they start school, is crucial. Healthy development, wellbeing and economic security impacts on our children's opportunities.

“We know that our children thrive when grounded in their identity, language and cultural lore and traditions, and that our people know what is best for their wellbeing.

“The Strategy is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to influence how our policies and services are delivered on the ground.”

An extensive engagement process is underway to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and caregivers a strong voice in developing the early childhood strategy.

SNAICC is partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to work closely with children and families about ways to help our young children to stay strong in culture, and be happy, healthy, safe, and ready for school.

“Giving our communities a voice in the design of the new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy will build better, more responsive services, so that our children can grow up strong.”

– Catherine Liddle, SNAICC CEO

“I encourage families, service providers, academics, researchers and other experts to engage in this consultation. With your shared aspirations, experiences and expertise, the Strategy will make a positive difference to children’s lives.”

– Debbie Mitchell, National Indigenous Australians Agency

To find out more about the process, and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have their voice heard, go to [www.snaicc.org.au/early-childhood-strategy](http://www.snaicc.org.au/early-childhood-strategy)

The development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy supports the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* targets:

- children are born healthy and strong
- children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years
- children thrive in their early years.

## **ENDS/**

For more information please visit [www.snaicc.org.au/early-childhood-strategy](http://www.snaicc.org.au/early-childhood-strategy) or contact:

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### **About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:**

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children 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.

Over the past 30 years SNAICC has achieved key milestones in policy development at state, territory and federal levels and developed 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.

Join us on social media and find out more at [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)