

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACCC Childcare report backs calls for major reform

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children has welcomed the ACCC’s recommendations to reform the current childcare system, in particular scrapping the Activity Test and changing the market-driven approach to early education and care (ECEC).

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said the findings of the ACCC’s year-long enquiry found that a one-size-fits-all approach to ECEC does not meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families supports many years of calls for reform.

“The ACCC inquiry is the latest in a significant body of evidence backing SNAICC’s position that current ECEC systems put up particular barriers to affordability and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

“It should be no surprise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are less likely to be enrolled in ECEC services, which has an impact on efforts to improve life outcomes.

“Removing these barriers by reforming the system, and growing and strengthening Aboriginal community-controlled (ACCO) services, will make a huge difference for our children and families.

“SNAICC’s Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families report released last year showed how a new funding model that valued culture, and resourced ACCOs could reduce the number of children going into child protection.

“ACCO services not only provide quality and culturally strong ECEC, they assist families and kin to access support services if and when necessary. They can make all the difference to setting children up for a successful transition to formal education, and close the gaps across a range of social and economic outcomes.

“It is heartening to see the ACCC strongly recognising the importance of ACCO services, directly recommending *maintaining and expanding supply-side support options for ACCOs that provide childcare and additional support services for First Nations children, parents and guardians.*

“SNAICC is working with the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to develop new funding model options for ACCOs that deliver ECEC and other supports to children and families. The ACCC findings reinforce how important it is for governments to work with us to agree and implement new ways to fund and expand ACCO early years services.”

Ms Liddle said the ACCC’s recognition that particular workforce challenges facing ACCO early years services need direct Government support was welcome.

“We know that childcare deserts exist more acutely in regional and remote areas, and the challenges of recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce are exacerbated.

“While recent Federal Government reform is helping, much more needs to be done.”

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