

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## NEW PROGRAM SUPPORTS ABORIGINAL CHILDREN TO THRIVE IN NOWRA

A new Aboriginal-led early childhood education and care program aimed at improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's developmental and learning outcomes will be launched today in Nowra, NSW.

The *Boori Milumba* program is tailored to meet the specific individual and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are facing significant family stress and hardship.

A total of 34 children from birth to three years old enrolled at Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre in Nowra, NSW, will participate in the program for three years, receiving five hours each day of high-quality education and care for five days a week at no cost to families.

The support will be delivered by qualified early childhood educators, infant wellbeing consultants and family support workers.

Boori Milumba is funded by the Australian Government and philanthropy and is being undertaken as a collaborative partnership between SNAICC, Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, Parkville Institute, and Social Ventures Australia.

The launch will include addresses from:

- Minister for Early Childhood Education, Anne Aly
- SNAICC CEO, Catherine Liddle
- Parkville Institute, Anne Kennedy interim Chair of Parkville Institute

**Media contact Amanda Duncan, 0423 671 111, or [media@snaicc.org.au](mailto:media@snaicc.org.au)**

*Quotes attributed at the bottom of the page.*



### **SNAICC CEO, Catherine Liddle**

*“Boori Milumba is an exciting project that will deliver positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and early childhood workers.*

*“It’s initiatives like this that show our Aboriginal community-controlled organisation’s ability to close the gap in early education and early years targets and strengthen school readiness for our children.*

*“To have supports that are specifically tailored to the child’s needs that embed culture into practices and offer wraparound support to families is fundamental in delivering positive outcomes for our children and giving them the opportunity to thrive.”*

### **Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Service, CEO Tara Leslie**

*“Boori Milumba will improve Aboriginal children’s developmental and educational progress, school readiness and overall wellbeing by drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom.*

*“This approach will strengthen our nurturing environment that celebrates cultural identity.*

*“It also aims to develop a model and evidence base for effective early childhood interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, developing a model of early childhood education and care that can be used as in other communities.*

### **Emma Sydenham, Director Early Childhood, Social Ventures Australia**

*“SVA has been thrilled to help broker and support this exciting initiative, which has enormous potential for Aboriginal children in the Nowra region - and potentially many others- to thrive, learn within culture, and realise their potential. Together, we’re striving for a future where historical and ongoing injustices are redressed and all Aboriginal children and families thrive, growing up strong, confident and proud in culture.”*

*“SVA is proud to be part of an Aboriginal led collaborative process with such extraordinary leaders. We hope that this initiative will strengthen the evidence and support policy reform for better funding for Aboriginal community controlled organisations around the country to provide a program like Boori Milumba.”*

### **Associate Professor Brigid Jordan AM, BSW, PhD, Executive Director, Parkville Institute**

*“The evaluation of the children’s outcomes after participating in the innovative Boori Milumba program will document the evidence on what is needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children to thrive and start school as confident and successful learners, strong in their culture and identity.*

*“This evidence can inform Federal and State governments on culturally responsive and appropriate policy and funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care services.”*

**Dr Anne Kennedy, Interim Chair of Parkville Institute**

*“Parkville Institute welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Australian government, SNAICC, Cullunghutti Child and Family Service and SVA and in co-developing the Boori Milumba intensive early childhood education and care program for Aboriginal children.*

*The co-developed program holds high expectations for every Aboriginal child’s capacity for learning and to be culturally strong with the support of their families, community and the staff team working in the centre.”*

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Boori Milumba: Cultivating Strong Futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children**

Boori Milumba, meaning "Child Shine" in the local Aboriginal language, is an intensive early childhood education and care program launching in Nowra, New South Wales.

The program seeks to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's outcomes and developmental progress, school readiness, and overall wellbeing. It aims to address the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children facing significant family stress and social disadvantage.

It also aims to contribute to the evidence base for effective early childhood interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Boori Milumba tailors interventions to address individual needs and improve developmental outcomes. The program draws on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom to create a nurturing environment that nurtures and celebrates cultural identity.

34 children from zero to three years old will participate in the program for three years. The children will receive five hours of daily support five days a week, including highly qualified ECEC teachers, infant mental health consultants, and family support workers.

The program is a collaboration between SNAICC, Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, Parkville Institute, and Social Ventures Australia.

#### Impact:

- The program aims to significantly improve the developmental and learning outcomes of participating children.
- The project will build the capacity of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in early childhood services.
- The program will build upon the Aboriginal evidence base for what is working for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in accessing ECEC services and achieving developmental milestones.
- The program serves as a model that can be replicated in other communities.

Overall, Boori Milumba offers a fantastic opportunity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children facing disadvantage. By combining culturally grounded practices with evidence-based interventions, the program has the potential to make a significant impact on their lives and contribute to broader improvements in early childhood services.

#### Key features:

- Up to 34 children from birth to three years old will participate in the program for three years.
- Children receive five hours of daily support five days a week, including highly qualified ECEC teachers, infant mental health consultants, and family support workers.

- Culturally grounded: The program draws on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom to create a nurturing environment that celebrates cultural identity.
- Evidence-based: Inspired by the successful intensive early childhood education and care model, Boori Milumba tailors interventions to address individual needs and improve developmental outcomes
- Focus on outcomes: The program seeks to improve children's developmental progress, school readiness, and overall well-being. It also aims to contribute to the evidence base for effective early childhood interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.