

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

14 May 2024

### **FEDERAL BUDGET IMPACT ON CLOSING THE GAP FOR CHILDREN**

Additional early years funding announced in the Federal Budget will support efforts to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children welcomed Budget 2024-25’s focus on education, with initiatives targeted towards new policy developments and program delivery.

“SNAICC is receiving dedicated funding for the first time, as is our sister peak, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC),” SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said.

“A total of \$29.1 million over 4 years, with \$8.7 million per year ongoing, is earmarked for SNAICC and NATSIEC to partner with Government on issues impacting our children in early childhood and education.

“This will give us important ongoing stability, enabling us to continue bringing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to the development of policies and programs that affect them.

“The commitment to a wage rise for hard-working early childhood educators is also welcomed. “We are also pleased to see \$5.9 million over two years allocated to a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner.

“This backs up the commitment made by the Prime Minister in February to stand-up the Commissioner, which can oversee efforts to turn the tide for our children ending up in the child protection system.”

Ms Liddle said while the Budget contained welcome new funding, she was concerned at that some important early childhood initiatives were not included.

The Early Years Support program delivers critical tailored supports to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) in early childhood education and care.

A 3-year, \$9 million dollar pilot program operating in three states, funding is due to cease in December.

“We are also disappointed that the Government has missed key opportunities to change the way they do business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through investing in Aboriginal-led decision making and partnerships.

“This was a key recommendation of the Productivity Commission’s review into the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

“As an example, investment of \$14.3 million in line with the Early Years Strategy does not make any mention of allocating a proportion of this money for ACCOs.

“Investing in the early years sets our children and families up to thrive.

“An investment in removing the activity test, a barrier to vital early education services for our children, is also missing from this Budget.

“Get the early years right and we will not have to spend ever increasing millions on broken child protection and youth detention systems.

“Closing the gap starts with our children, and is where investment has the most impact.”

For all media queries, please contact Mandy Taylor on 0414 634159 or [media@snaicc.org.au](mailto:media@snaicc.org.au).