

MEDIA RELEASE

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CHILDCARE PAY RISE WELCOME BUT MORE WORK NEEDED TO CLOSE THE GAP

SNAICC - National Voice for Our Children welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to fund a 15 per cent pay rise for early childhood education and care workers.

CEO Catherine Liddle said the pay rise was an important step in dealing with critical workforce challenges in the sector, that recognises the skills and value of early educators.

“This is commendable step from the Federal Government, however we have seen time and time again that a one-size-fits all approach to this sector does not meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families,” Ms Liddle said.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are less likely to attend early learning and more likely to start school developmentally vulnerable. And the evidence shows that when children start school behind, they struggle to catch up and are more likely to disengage.

“This pay increase isn't the silver bullet to addressing workforce challenges, affordability and accessibility in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early education and care sector.

“The market-based funding model in the ECEC sector is failing our most vulnerable children. It does not meet the needs of our Aboriginal community-controlled centres who deliver wrap around family supports.

“Building sustainable funding for ACCO early years services that recognises their breadth of work and scrapping the Activity Test for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, would go towards creating long-term change in the accessibility and affordability of ECEC services.

SNAICC is calling for:

- A new, dedicated funding model incorporating block and needs-based funding for ACCO ECEC services, that matches resources to wrap-around support needs in each community
- The building and sustaining of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years workforce
- Ongoing funding for ACCO early years services backbone support

“We make these calls in response to what we have heard through extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early years services,” Ms Liddle said.

“Investing in early learning is one way to ensure fewer children end up in the child protection and youth justice systems down the track.

“That means proper investment in ACCO’s, alongside appropriately paying early childcare workers.”

ENDS

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