

MEDIA RELEASE

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Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children calls on government to take action this National Child Protection Week.

The Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, SNAICC, National Voice for our Children, is calling on government and the out-of-home care (OOHC) sector to take substantial action to keep children safe and turn around the rising tide of family separations.

Current trends indicate that the National Agreement on Closing the Gap's Target 12 (to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031) will not be met.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC said the statistics around First Nations children in OOHC indicate a completely unacceptable trend towards an increase in both the number and over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.

“The 2023 Family Matters report found that there were 22,328 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (OOHC), with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children 10.5 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children,” Ms Liddle said.

“We do not want the 2024, and subsequent reports to follow the same trend.”

“This year's child protection message is ‘Every child in every community needs a fair go’ and the current outcomes around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in OOHC show that gap widening, not closing.”

SNAICC is urging government to take action to turn the tide and act on the large evidence base backing community designed and led initiatives.

“We are yet to see enough action from government to transform our child protection systems. By investing in community-led solutions, we can reverse the trends we have seen in previous Family Matters reports,” Ms Liddle said.

“The solutions and answers are available – we know the transfer of authority to ACCOs to make child protection decisions is having a huge impact on increasing reunifications, and we need more investment in prevention and early support services that will help to reduce child removals.

END

Background: The Family Matters report is an annual report that highlights progress towards ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture. Eliminating the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care within a generation, by 2040, is a core part of achieving this goal. The next report will be released in November 2024.

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