

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Review finds funding model changes needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive**

A review of the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) Grant has recommended that the Australian Government explore ways to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and families.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children said the report acknowledges the important role of ACCOs in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to access ECEC, and the need for governments to better fund and support these services.

“Many of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services funded by the CCCFR grant operate in remote communities where there are significant barriers to providing ECEC and where the benefits for accessing early childhood services will produce the greatest benefit,” Ms Liddle said.

“ACCOs go beyond the mainstream approach to childcare, offering connection, accountability and providing holistic wrap around support for children and extended families because that’s what’s needed in these communities.

“Despite consistently showing increased engagement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, ACCOs do not receive the funding they need to operate sustainably.

Ms Liddle said she was pleased to see the Australian Government commit to extending funding to CCCFR services for a further two years, providing important certainty for ACCOs funded under this grant.

“The government needs to commit to meaningful reform of the ECEC sector by implementing the recommendations of the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry Report ‘*A path to universal early childhood education and care*,’” Ms Liddle said.

“Now is the time for large-scale ECEC reform. Governments should commit to implementing a dedicated funding model for ACCO early years services that ensures their sustainability.”

## **Background:**

The CCCFR Grant aims to improve early childhood development outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children; and increase workforce participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged families. The Australian Government Department of Education (the Department) commissioned a review of the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) Non-Competitive grant funding arrangements.

Key findings and recommendations of the review included that:

- Few CCCFR services would be viable operating on mainstream childcare funding alone
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities do not feel that the CCCFR grant is sufficient to support strong developmental outcomes and address barriers to ECEC participation for their communities.
- An alternate dedicated funding model should be considered for ACCO early years services, designed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.
- The objectives of the CCCFR program should be revised to align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, including a focus on self-determination and building the community-controlled sector.

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