

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **SUPPORT FOR LIFE-CHANGING ECEC LEGISLATION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN**

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children welcomes the introduction of life-changing legislation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families today.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC said the legislation being introduced today will give thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families crucial access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) through scrapping the Activity Test.

“Closing the gap starts with our children and that starts in early education and care,” Ms Liddle said.

“Evidence shows vulnerable children get the greatest benefit from accessing quality ECEC. This legislation will give our families 100 hours of subsidised early education and care each fortnight.

“SNAICC has advocated for many years to remove the Activity Test, which created barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families accessing subsidised care. Many families completely disengaged because there is not enough subsidised care available.

“Access to ECEC services means our children are more likely to be developmentally ready for big school and they are more likely to access allied health and NDIS supports needed for them to thrive in life.

“It means more support for vulnerable families. Recent studies have even correlated access to ECEC services to a decreased likelihood of engaging in youth crime.”

SNAICC also strongly supports the Governments election commitment of a \$1 billion fund to build or expand more than 160 childcare centres across Australia, marking ACCOs as a priority.

“Access to childcare places in regional and remote areas where many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families live is a significant factor in early learning,” Ms Liddle said.

“Every child deserves a solid foundation in life and scrapping the activity test alongside building and expanding services in regional and remote areas will make a significant difference to the everyday lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

“This legislation and the changes it will make cannot come soon enough.

“SNAICC strongly urges bipartisan support across Parliament for this commitment, marking a crucial step toward establishing a universal, free early childhood education and care system that will foster a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future for all Australian children.”

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