

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Peak Body Backs Budget Measures in Early Childhood Education and Care**

The peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has welcomed the Federal Government's recommitment to reforming the early education and care sector in Budget 2025, with particular measures aimed at closing the gap.

SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children CEO Catherine Liddle said it was heartening to hear Treasurer Jim Chalmers acknowledge the importance of early education and care in his Budget statement.

“We couldn't agree more. As he stated, this all starts with early childhood education and care', Ms Liddle said.

“Closing the Gap starts with our children, and the \$5 billion commitment to reforming early education and care is an important foundation that will help shift the dial.

“We know investing in early education and care not only sets up our children to thrive, it makes all the difference to their life outcomes and builds stronger and resilient families where children are less likely to enter child protection and youth justice systems.

“Effectively abolishing the Child Care Activity Test for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by guaranteeing 100 hours of subsidised care a fortnight for families, increasing workforce wages and establishing a \$1 billion dollar fund to build new centres are very welcome investments.

“Of course, there is so much more still to be done, but Budget 2025 has made some significant commitments to fund much needed changes.”

Ms Liddle said some of the other positive measures in Budget 2025 for children include

- \$3.1m for the Office of the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Investment in tackling food security - \$50m to lower product prices in remote stores and \$21.4m to build a nutrition workforce in remote communities
- \$4.5m to the Coalition of Peaks to continue its work to Close the Gap
- \$21.8m to provide family, domestic and sexual violence services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and communities.

“This investment should flow to the ACCOs that are best placed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

“As always, there are important investments we are disappointed to see missing in this Budget.”

Ms Liddle said Budget 2025 missed opportunities to support

- Implementation of measures under Safe and Supported, that would reverse the unacceptable trend of children being removed from families and coming into contact with child protection and youth justice systems
- A new funding model for Aboriginal community-controlled early education and care, that would see wrap-around supports and cultural early education properly funded

“SNAICC will continue to advocate to the Federal Government to invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children so they have every opportunity to thrive.

“We will shortly be releasing our election priorities that we urge all parties and candidates in the upcoming Federal election to commit to these.”

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For all media queries, please contact Charlie Bowcock on 0417 042 308 or [media@snaicc.org.au](mailto:media@snaicc.org.au).