

MEDIA RELEASE

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Reinstating the Activity Test will hurt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children said Peter Dutton’s plan to reinstate the childcare Activity Test is incredibly disappointing and will ultimately hurt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC, said reinstating the Activity Test flies in the face of a wealth of evidence, including recommendations from the Productivity Commission, which shows the policy would further disadvantage vulnerable children who stand to benefit from quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) the most.

“Removing the Activity Test was a long-held priority for SNAICC and the ECEC Sector, impacting thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families for the better.

“Reinstatement is a damaging move that will ultimately set back Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

“Removing the Activity Test and increasing access to ECEC has the potential for wider impacts with recent studies showing interventions in ECEC settings with vulnerable children and their families may be the key to reducing youth crime.

“Many families require affordable childcare to be in place before they can re-enter the workforce – this policy puts them at a disadvantage.

“Closing the Gap starts with our children and with the most recent data update revealing that outcomes around developmental readiness for big school are worsening, we simply cannot afford to remove equitable ECEC subsidies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.”

SNAICC welcomes the Federal Opposition’s announcement to support the Government’s proposed Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) to build or expand more childcare centres and create a new grant program to develop more flexible ECEC models in regional and remote areas.

“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.

“The Aboriginal Community-Controlled (ACCO) Sector sees better engagement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families because it goes beyond the general approach to ECEC by providing innovative models of early education that meet the needs of their local community.

“While ACCOs need a sustainable funding model so they can continue supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to access ECEC, grants that support ECEC services in delivering flexible models of care are a step in the right direction.

“It’s more important than ever that we see a bipartisan commitment to quality Early Childhood education and care to ensure our children get the best start in life. We urge the Coalition to reconsider their retrograde stance on the Activity Test.”

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