

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Early Childhood Education Reforms Must Aim for a Safer System

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is urging the Federal Government to ensure that proposed reforms to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system, go beyond a reactive response and deliver comprehensive, systemic change to make all children safer.

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said that while measures to improve child safety are absolutely welcomed, reforms must be grounded in the realities facing the sector, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

“Safety must be the top priority for all children in early education,” Ms Liddle said.

“But we can’t ensure that safety until the underlying systemic issues impacting Australia’s early learning and care sector are properly addressed.

“Australia’s current Child Care Subsidy funding model has contributed to a profit-driven environment, where some providers are able to put financial gain ahead of the wellbeing of children.

“Unless we fundamentally shift the way early education is funded and supported, we will continue to see safety and quality issues arise.

“The way the regulations are implemented, how they impact and who they impact must be taken into account.”

SNAICC is calling on the Government to ensure that legislative changes do not further burden the services already doing the hard work, particularly Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), which are delivering high quality care and safety outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

“The community-controlled sector is already demonstrating what high-quality, culturally safe early education looks like,” Ms Liddle said.

“Considerations must be made to ensure we are not piling on more bureaucratic red tape and expense that takes educators away from children.

“This is not the time for knee-jerk policy. It’s time for lasting reform.”

SNAICC stands ready to work with governments to ensure reforms lead to a safer, more equitable early education system for all children.

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