

MEDIA RELEASE

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Independent Review Confirms SNAICC's Early Years Support is Delivering Powerful Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

An independent evaluation by Deloitte has confirmed that SNAICC's Early Years Support (EYS) program is a highly effective and trusted model that is strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled (ACCO) early education and care (ECEC) sector.

The report found the EYS program is “a highly valued and effective initiative” that improves service quality, reduces administrative burden on community leaders, and builds strong, culturally safe relationships across the services involved.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children said the Deloitte findings confirm what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have always known - when Aboriginal organisations lead the way in early childhood education, our children thrive.

“The evidence is clear - this model works and it's changing lives,” Ms Liddle said.

“These are the services that are best places and are proven to get the best outcomes for our children and families.

“We now have a service for the ACCO early years workforce that is proven to deliver tangible improvements in service quality, connection and cultural strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Early Education and care services.

“This sector is instrumental in closing the gap for our children, particularly when we consider key outcomes around developmental readiness for school and family support.”

The independent review highlighted the program's greatest strengths, including its role in:

- Building trust and culturally safe relationships (86% of services reported stronger connections).
- Reducing isolation and strengthening networks across ACCOs.
- Improving service quality and confidence in meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard.
- Providing vital operational and administrative support that allows educators to focus on children, not paperwork.

Currently, EYS partners with 76 ACCOs across NSW, Victoria and Western Australia, supporting more than 2,200 children and families, including 1,700 Aboriginal children. Each year, almost 600 children transition to school through these services.

“With demand growing and hundreds of children still on waitlists, it’s critical that this trusted model continues to be supported and expanded.”

The Deloitte report concluded that EYS is well positioned to grow and deliver even greater impact across Australia. However, Commonwealth funding for the program is due to end in December 2025.

“SNAICC is urging the Government to secure ongoing investment to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to receive the culturally strong, high-quality early education they deserve,” Ms Liddle said.

“EYS is delivering exactly what the Closing the Gap reforms are designed to achieve - strong, community-led services that support our children to thrive.”

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For all media queries, please contact Charlie Bowcock on 0417 042 308 or media@snaicc.org.au

SNAICC and ACCO Centre Directors are in Canberra this week to discuss the benefits of EYS with Ministers and other Members of Parliament. Interviews available upon request.