

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland ‘Drops the Ball’ on Child Protection Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

The Queensland Government has failed to report critical child protection data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, creating significant gaps in national reporting, new data shows.

The latest Report on Government Services (RoGS) reveals that Queensland’s data on children in out-of-home care is missing, despite the state having one of the largest populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for our children said the omission is not only negligent but creates a huge problem.

“It is inconceivable that a child protection department can reach a point where it cannot say how many children were in its care or what their experience of that system was when they are responsible for those children and their safety,” Ms Liddle said.

“Ongoing IT failures in Queensland’s child protection system are not just an operational issue - they’ve created critical gaps in national data that will distort the picture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (OOHC) for years to come.

“Due to the high population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in QLD, we’re deeply concerned about maintaining consistency and transparency when it comes to the number and outcomes of children entering QLD’s child protection system.

“The QLD department have dropped the ball on this one, and our children will end up paying the price.”

Ms Liddle said the missing data risks undermining the Family Matters Report, Australia’s only annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led report monitoring the removal of children from their families and tracking government progress in addressing over-representation.

“It will also impact the integrity of the Closing the Gap dashboard data, tracking the progress of Target 12 in reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care,” Ms Liddle said.

“Queensland’s data feeds directly into national accountability mechanisms. When that data is missing, transparency is lost.”

SNAICC is calling on the Queensland Department of Child Safety to urgently explain how it will address the data gaps and properly account for the outcomes of children in its care.

“Each missing data point represents a child’s life and lived experience. Those stories deserve to be counted in the national conversation about out-of-home care.”

END

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