

SNAICC'25

OUR CULTURE **KEEP IT STRONG** WE BELONG

11TH SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE • REPORT



MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Including leaders, advocates, experts and allies, gathered in Meanjin/Brisbane for SNAICC'25, which officially became Australia's largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference and one of the largest First Nations conferences in the world.



Organised by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, this biennial, three-day national conference showcased excellence in Aboriginal-led practice, shared lived experience and research, and strengthened national efforts to drive reform for better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. The gathering brought together Elders, community leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations, service providers, researchers, educators, frontline workers, students and representatives from all levels of government.

The event put into spotlight the depth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and leadership across multiple sectors.

SNAICC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country, the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples on whose lands the SNAICC National Conference took place in Meanjin/Brisbane.

SURVEY RESULTS

354 Respondents

Representing 17% of registered attendees



14 Minutes

Was the average time taken to complete the survey



91% Said

They felt welcomed, safe, valued and visible at **SNAICC'25**

93% Said

SNAICC'25 provided opportunities to make meaningful connections

92% Said

They left the conference feeling inspired and motivated in their work



92% Said

They enhanced their knowledge and learnings at **SNAICC'25**



93% Said

They're likely to suggest **SNAICC'27** to a friend or colleague

96% Agreed

SNAICC'25 highlighted the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to elders both past and present.

THE NUMBERS THAT TELL THE STORY



The survey responses confirmed that SNAICC'25 was an exceptional success that left attendees inspired, connected, and recommitted to their work

The dominant sentiment across the responses was profound gratitude, with many describing it as the best conference of their careers, using words such as *amazing*, *deadly* and *inspirational*. Attendees reported an exceptional opportunity for practical learning and networking.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

2130

Attendees

6

Plenary sessions

84

Breakout sessions

200+

Breakout session presenters

685

Organisations and associations

52

Exhibitors and stall holders

24

Cultural performances

40+

Young performers

SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYED A KEY ROLE

In keeping attendees connected at SNAICC’25. The conference brought in over 1300 new followers over one week on SNAICC’s social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Posted content reached 11 million people, significantly amplifying key messages, announcements, and highlights coming from the conference. It also gave people who couldn’t attend the conference an insight into the event and its key moments. The strong social media presence ensured the conversations continued way beyond SNAICC’25 itself.

Media coverage focused on SNAICC’25 being the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Conference in the nation and elevated the advocacy for legislative powers and independence behind the national and jurisdictional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Commissioners.



MEDIA SUCCESS





CONFERENCE DESIGN AND PLANNING

Building on the success and learnings from previous National Conferences, the goal was to create a *safe and strong* space of cultural safety to allow energised, authentic and relevant conversations to take place.

This approach informed all aspects of planning, including:

- Formation of a dedicated Cultural Advisory Group (CAG)
- Year-long process of engagement with local Traditional Owners
- Working with local secondary students to design the elements of the 2025 logo
- Using local Indigenous-owned suppliers and contractors wherever possible
- Careful use of language and tone of all marketing and communications
- Building timelines that allowed flexible and respectful engagement with community
- Conference registration fee structure that supported participation by ACCO's
- Content, themes, language and structure of the conference program
- Visual design of the printed program, banners, signage and screen content
- Engaging with venue staff to share our approach to cultural safety
- Thoughtful use of the spaces available at the conference venue
- Designing a Quiet Reflection Space
- Offering a dedicated Elders Space
- Inviting local artists and artisans to display and sell their art in the marketplace
- Providing culturally appropriate, trauma-informed counsellors to support delegates

PROGRAMMING

Each of the three programming strands of the conference program were developed with their own unique process.

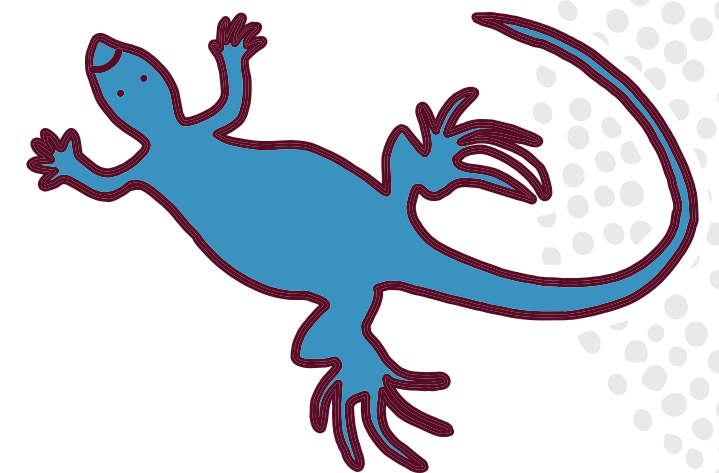
Breakout sessions

The building of the breakout program commenced with a call for abstracts in late 2024. Given that this call commenced shortly before the summer break, the deadline was extended until the end of February to allow applicants additional time to prepare and submit abstracts online.

The selection committee reviewed and rated all of the 190 abstracts received based on the following criteria:

- How well does the submission align with SNAICC's strategic priorities?
- Does the presentation involve or strongly reflect the voice of young people?
- Will the session be presented by a young person
- How clear are the abstract's main themes, topic and ideas?
- Does this abstract present new research, practices, ideas or application of culture?
- Is the session being presented by an ACCO or ACCHO?

The program structure of 12 sets of seven concurrent breakout sessions over three days, determined the total number of sessions. After due consideration and discussion, 84 abstracts were selected and the submitters contacted to confirm their participation. The sessions were allocated to one of the seven different rooms available at the venue.





Keynotes and Plenary sessions

The plenary sessions were designed to provide attendees with a collective experience at the start and end of each day. These sessions offered exposure to unique and compelling presenters and, most importantly, offered a range of diverse cultural performances.

SNAICC'25 offered six plenary sessions in the Great Hall:

- Opening plenary
- Youth Voice panel
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioners Panel
- Cultural dance performance
- Keeping It Strong panel
- Final keynote from Narelda Jacobs



Cultural Performances

Conference attendees were treated to an exceptional range of 24 performances by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancers, musicians, children and Traditional Owners. These performances were woven through three days of the conference and took place throughout the whole venue. The shared cultural experiences included live music in the concourse during each break, traditional dancers in the Great Hall, music and a mesmerising concert performance by Christine Anu for the Gala Cocktail Party.



“One thing that really set the bar was the introduction, especially the song lady. She was just amazing and absolutely captivated me. From that moment, I knew it was going to be an incredible conference.”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

SNAICC is justifiably proud of the depth and strength of the program and the hundreds of presenters and cultural performers who contributed to the success of SNAICC'25. There are, however, a small number of sessions that stand out for their relevance and impact. Based on survey responses, a number of panel discussions stood out as highlights of the conference.

SNAICC's Youth Voice panel. This inaugural panel discussion was a clear demonstration of the power and importance of including young people's voices in the development of policy and advocacy.

A key focus of advocacy at SNAICC'25 was the urgent need for independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Children's Commissioners in every state and territory, alongside strong legislation to empower the newly established National Commissioner. At the conference, SNAICC and Commissioners from across jurisdictions came together to call for enabling legislation that would provide the authority to compel evidence, the power to hold systems accountable, a mandate to investigate systemic failures and binding inquiry and reform powers.

The regular Children's Commissioner's Panel, featuring an introductory keynote from Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung woman, Sue-Anne Hunter, the newly appointed National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People.

“

Listening to the [young people] share their stories and hearing their passion was truly inspiring.

“

Best conference I've ever been to, vibrant, full of culture and staunch advocacy.

The lively discussion that followed featured Dale Agius, South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People, SA, Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People, WA, Natalie Lewis, Queensland Family and Child Commission – First Nations Commissioner, QLD. Shahleena Musk, Children's Commissioner, NT and Shona Reid, State Guardian, SA.

The Keeping it Strong panel featured four unique perspectives of experience, success and resilience from Dr Katrina Wruck, Prof Jack Beetson, Adj Assoc Prof Joe Williams and Fiona Jose.



SECTOR IMPACT

SNAICC'25 was a unique opportunity for the SNAICC Community Partner team and the ACCOs we work alongside to connect in person. It gave us the space to build genuine relationships, share honest yarns, and learn from each other in a culturally safe environment. Being together helped us deepen our understanding of community priorities, exchange experiences, and strengthen trust. These conversations and connections will make our collaboration stronger and more grounded in what communities truly need, so we can shape program support that respects culture, lived experience, and local leadership. It was a powerful reminder of how much showing up and listening matters.

The SNAICC conference was also an opportunity to gather our EYS participants together with a range of other community and government stakeholders. The clear benefits for ACCO ECEC's were the opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing and relationship building. Participants were also able to present or facilitate and share their professional learnings and practice with their colleagues across the broader sector. From a professional learning perspective, our services were able to build and reaffirm practice and connect with new practice trends. SNAICC'25 contributed to and enabled self-determination of our sector and ECEC's.



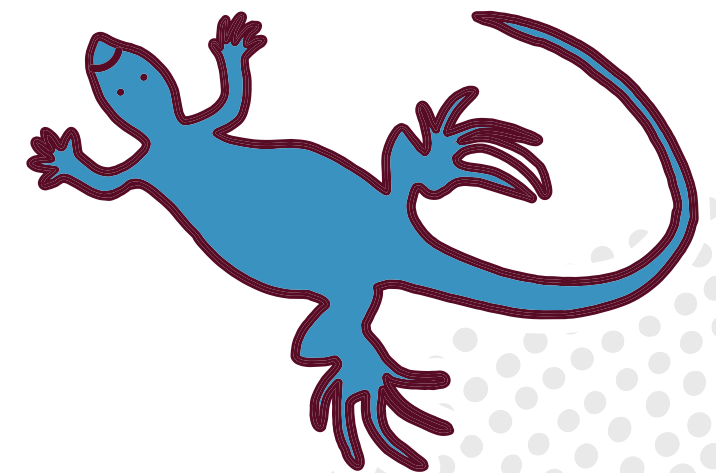
Delegates were able to connect with peers from across Australia, strengthening cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Attendees highlighted how the conference reinforced the urgency of state-level reforms in child protection and family support, aligning with national priorities to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. For grassroots

organisations, the conference offered visibility and validation of their work, encouraging stronger advocacy for self-determination and Aboriginal-led service delivery. Youth participants shared that cultural workshops and storytelling sessions deepened their sense of identity and belonging, which they intend to bring back to their communities to inspire peers.

“

FOR ME IT WAS CULTURALLY SAFE WITH HIGHLY MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS THAT INSPIRE YOU. I LOVE HOW ITS FOCUS IS ON SELF-DETERMINATION AND COMMUNITY FOCUSED AND COLLABORATION AND HAVING A VOICE AT THE TABLE.

“I felt that I came away with more **knowledge** and it gave me more insight into ensuring I deliver a culturally safe service to clients of my health service.





INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

Respondents reflected on the feeling of cultural safety

“

Wonderful, inspiring event showcasing some very wonderful programs happening to support our families and children.

FROM THE
MOMENT
YOU WALKED
INTO THE
CONFERENCE,
YOU FELT
A SENSE OF
BELONGING.

“Despite
2,000 of
us being
there it
still felt
intimate.

“ Makes me
want to go home
and work on
Country.

“ My cup
was well and
truly filled
with sharing
laughs,
knowledge,
experiences
and practice
wisdom.

“ I felt very
privileged to
be an attendee
with so much
cultural
knowledge
in each of
the rooms
and spaces
I entered.

“ SNAICC’25 really
opened my eyes into
what I really want to
do with my future and
for our people and
community.

“ I LOVED
THAT WE HAD
MOB GETTING
UP AND GIVING
IT A GO AND
SHARING
STORIES
FROM THEIR
HOMELANDS.

“ I have come
back to work with my
soul full and more
passion in my heart.

Attendees expressed a profound sense of gratitude and praise

“ I am so grateful
to have been part
of SNAICC 2025. As
a first nations ally,
I was welcomed and
included by everyone.
The conference and
each room were full
of kindness and love.

“ This was by far the
BEST ECEC conference
I have ever attended,
across 22 years in
ECEC.

“Deadly
three days,
BEST
conference
I have
attended
thus far.

“ Wonderful,
inspiring event
showcasing
some very
wonderful
programs
happening to
support our
families and
children.

“ THIS IS
ONE OF THE
BEST NATIONAL
CONFERENCES
I HAVE BEEN
TO IN MY 30
YEARS IN EARLY
LEARNING
EDUCATION/
TRAINING/
CONFERENCES.
I LOVED
EVERYTHING
ABOUT THE
CONFERENCE.

“ SNAICC is
absolutely amazing,
it could not be
any better!

“ THIS IS
THE BEST
CONFERENCE
I HAVE EVER
ATTENDED!

“ WHAT I
TOOK AWAY
FROM THE
2025 SNAICC
CONFERENCE
WAS AN
IMMENSE
AMOUNT
OF HOPE,
PRIDE AND
OPTIMISM.

“ I am even
more proud
to be an
advocate
for my Mob.

“ This was
by far the
BEST ECEC
conference
I have ever
attended,
across 22
years in
ECEC.

“ BEST.
CONFERENCE.
EVER!!!



SPONSORS

The importance of the sponsorship relationships cannot be overstated. The financial support generated, totalling almost \$600,000 provided us with the confidence to design a safe and strong environment for the community to meet, talk and share. It also allowed SNAICC to support delegates representing ACCO's and ACCHO's and SNAICC members to attend and participate through our program of travel subsidies and significantly reduced registration fees.

SNAICC'25 sponsors benefit directly through the positive visibility provided by various tiers of sponsor benefits including, but not limited to:

- Recognition on all marketing materials and in all paid advertising
- Acknowledgement of support via dedicated social media posts
- Inclusion in social media post acknowledging all sponsors
- Exclusive profile on the main SNAICC'25 webpage on the SNAICC website
- Profile on the 'Meet our Sponsors' SNAICC'25 webpage on the SNAICC website
- Logo and hyperlink on the Home conference webpage on the SNAICC website

- Logo and hyperlink on the Sponsor conference webpage on the SNAICC website
- Exhibitor booth in the Market Hall
- Sponsored session slides and acknowledgement at the start of sponsored sessions
- 1 delegate satchel insert (A4 single page)
- Premium full-page advertising space in the conference program book
- 150-word profile in the conference program book
- Logo on venue signage at the registration desk
- Logo on sponsor acknowledgement screens on every stage, logo on holding slides
- Recognition as a sponsor at the official opening of the conference
- Logo in the 'Program at a Glance' and the conference program book
- Logo in the official interactive conference app
- Complimentary full delegate registrations
- Complimentary tickets to the Welcome Function
- Complimentary tickets to the Gala Cocktail Party

Equally important are the less tangible benefits of being offered multiple formal and informal opportunities to hear from, and connect with, the almost 700 organisations, associations and entities who were represented at SNAICC'25.

We extend our sincere thanks to the following sponsors:



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