

MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget Falls Short for Aboriginal Children Despite Community-Led Solutions on the Table

Budget 2026 is one of missed opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

CEO of peak body SNAICC – National Voice for our Children Catherine Liddle said she was disappointed to see initiatives designed by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to support to families and children be ignored in this Budget.

“At a time when our children, families and services are facing increasing and often unwarranted scrutiny, it’s disheartening to see the Federal Government failing to back programs we know will huge difference in our communities,” Ms Liddle said.

“SNAICC’s Budget submission outlined evidence-based and costed initiatives that would ensure our children and families thrive, close the gap in life outcomes and build a foundation for the future.

“There is little support in this Budget for these important measures.

“We are disappointed there is no funding commitment to secure the ongoing future of the critical Early Years Support program, despite strong evidence of the benefits the EYS is delivering to early education and care services.

“SNAICC is concerned about the future of the Inclusion Support programs, with no funding clear beyond the end of the year and a lack of clarity on how Thriving Kids will pick up the slack.

“We do welcome the announcement of dedicated funding in the Thriving Kids program to support development and training for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

“The Thriving Kids program is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform support for our children. We were hoping to see dedicated funding for ACCO services, as recommended in the Advisory Group report, but this does not seem to have happened.”

Ms Liddle welcomed the DSS investment in the families and children program of \$171.7m over five years, with the majority for direct service delivery.

“We hope the majority of this funding, around \$52m a year, will be set aside for ACCOs so we should see important growth in sector capacity.

“SNAICC strongly supports the Government’s \$218.3 million investment to support the first actions under Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices, Australia’s first dedicated national plan to end family, domestic and sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

"This investment recognises what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have always known, that lasting change comes when solutions are led by our people, grounded in culture, and designed with children, families and communities at the centre.

“While there is the odd bright spot, given the government has said this was the budget to address generational fairness it’s missed the mark to address many issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander families and the organisations that support them.”

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