

MEDIA RELEASE

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ready to work in partnership for a safer future for Queensland children

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children CEO Catherine Liddle has urged the Queensland Government to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in reforming the State’s child protection system.

Ms Liddle said the findings from the Queensland Child Safety Inquiry Final Report make it clear children and families are not safe in the system as it stands, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in residential and out-of-home care.

“Disappointingly, the Report falls very short in its recommendations, many of which contradict the volume of expert and lived experience evidence presented to the Inquiry,” Ms Liddle said.

“Alarmingly, multiple recommendations prioritise permanency for children, including expanded use of adoption.

“This flies in the face of everything we know from the experience of Stolen Generations and multiple investigations since the Bringing Them Home report.

“The Report’s complete denial of the impact of racial bias in the system, with a finding that racism is not a motivating factor in the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, is a slap in the face to all our families.

“What does the Commission of Inquiry see as the explanation for the vast and unacceptable overrepresentation of our children in the child protection system? This finding is quite frankly inexplicable.

“The inquiry findings also misunderstand the Child Placement Principle by arguing that it needs to be made subordinate to the best interests of the child. Connections to family, community, culture and Country are integral to the best interests of children not separate.

“Existing legislation in Queensland is already clear that the best interests of the child is the paramount principle.

“It is positive that regardless of the questions it raises about the ATSICPP, the inquiry supports full implementation of the five elements of the Principle and recognises this as important to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.”

Ms Liddle said it was critical the Queensland Government move urgently to appoint a Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children now Commissioner Natalie Lewis's tenure in the Queensland Family and Child Commission has come to an end.

"This position will be enormously important to properly inform system reforms and to ensure Queensland Aboriginal children, families and organisations have a voice in the system that directly impacts them.

"Queensland has an opportunity to remake child protection so it provides safety and better outcomes for children and young people. We stand ready to work with them so all Queensland children have a safe and supported future."

END

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