

Embargoed 5am Tuesday 21 July 2026

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

What: Rally for Our Children

Where: Banyan Tree, Northern Territory Parliament House

When: Tuesday, 21 July 10.15am

Who: Speakers Cindy Torrens - CEO, North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service

Ben Grimes - NAAJA CEO

Theresa Roe - NAAJA Chairperson

Matt Ryan - Northern Land Council Chairperson

Leanne Caton - Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory CEO

Aboriginal organisations and allies from across the Northern Territory will rally today in support of children and families who are negatively impacted by the NT Child Protection system, and to show opposition to the *Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026*, warning the laws will unnecessarily tear more Aboriginal children from their families, culture and Country without making them any safer.

The coalition will gather at the Northern Territory Parliament House from 10:15am to oppose the introduction of the legislation and ask the Commonwealth Government to hold the NT Government to account for politically motivated legislative changes that ignore the evidence, front-line organisations and experts.

The rally comes after a Legislative Scrutiny Committee inquiry received more than 150 submissions, the overwhelming majority opposed to the Bill, which ultimately recommended it be passed in Parliament with only one minor amendment.

Quote attributed to SNAICC – National Voice for our Children CEO Catherine Liddle:

"By pressing ahead with this legislation despite overwhelming opposition from child protection experts and frontline services, the Northern Territory Government is choosing politics over evidence and our children deserve better. These are not administrative changes. They are decisions that will shape the lives, families and futures of Territory children for generations. Territory children and families will live with the consequences of this harmful legislation long after the political debate is over."

Quote attributed to Northern Land Council Chair Matthew Ryan:

"All children deserve to grow up connected to family and culture. This Bill will remove safeguards put in place to ensure history does not repeat itself – no more stolen generations. Our children deserve better."

Quote attributed to North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency CEO Ben Grimes:

"The Bill is the latest in a pattern of legislative reforms introduced by the NT Government over the past two years in which the government fails to consult with stakeholders and legislates despite sustained opposition from Aboriginal leaders and organisations."

Quote attributed to Yinija Guyula MLA, Member for Mulka:

"Instead of working in partnership with our communities to support programs that strengthen families, this government have decided to do maximum damage by introducing a Bill that will remove more Aboriginal children from their kin and Country. Our children belong to Country. The remove of children

to houses in Darwin where no-one speaks their language or understands their culture does significant harm. Our Elders want to be included in child protection reform. We know what will work and we are devastated that we have not been included in the discussion or decision-making process on such a critical issue that goes to the heart of every Aboriginal community."

Quote attributed to Danila Dilba CEO Rob McPhee:

"The overwhelming evidence tells us that Aboriginal children are given the greatest chance to thrive into their adulthood when they are raised by kin and can maintain their connection to culture. We see this first-hand through all the programs we run at Danila Dilba Health Service. The rights, wellbeing and cultural connections of our children must sit at the centre of any reform to the children protection system. What we need is investment in prevention, in housing, in family support — not just more of the same punitive responses. To ignore expert advice and rush through legislation without genuine consultation is nothing short of arrogant."

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Media Contact:

Emily Murphy-O'Neill
Media Strategy and Communications Officer
North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency
E: emily.murphyoneill@naaja.org.au
P: 0438 866 020