

MEDIA RELEASE

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Racism Blocking Progress on Closing the Gap

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle has told a parliamentary inquiry that pervasive racism is blocking progress on Closing the Gap and all governments should embed truth telling to mitigate harm caused by an increase in racist views and rhetoric aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Appearing before the Parliamentary Inquiry into Racism, Hate and Violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Ms Liddle warned that racism in Australia is systemic, structural and deeply embedded at every level of public and private life.

"While racism against our people is rooted in colonisation, it is not just historical. It is not incidental. It is in the very walls of our institutions. It is in the bedrock of our media and increasingly in our public discourse.

"Racism is embedded in the policies, practices and decisions that continue to disadvantage our children and families every day.

"Despite decades of inquiries, reviews and reform efforts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to experience verbal, physical and emotional abuse in places they should feel safe."

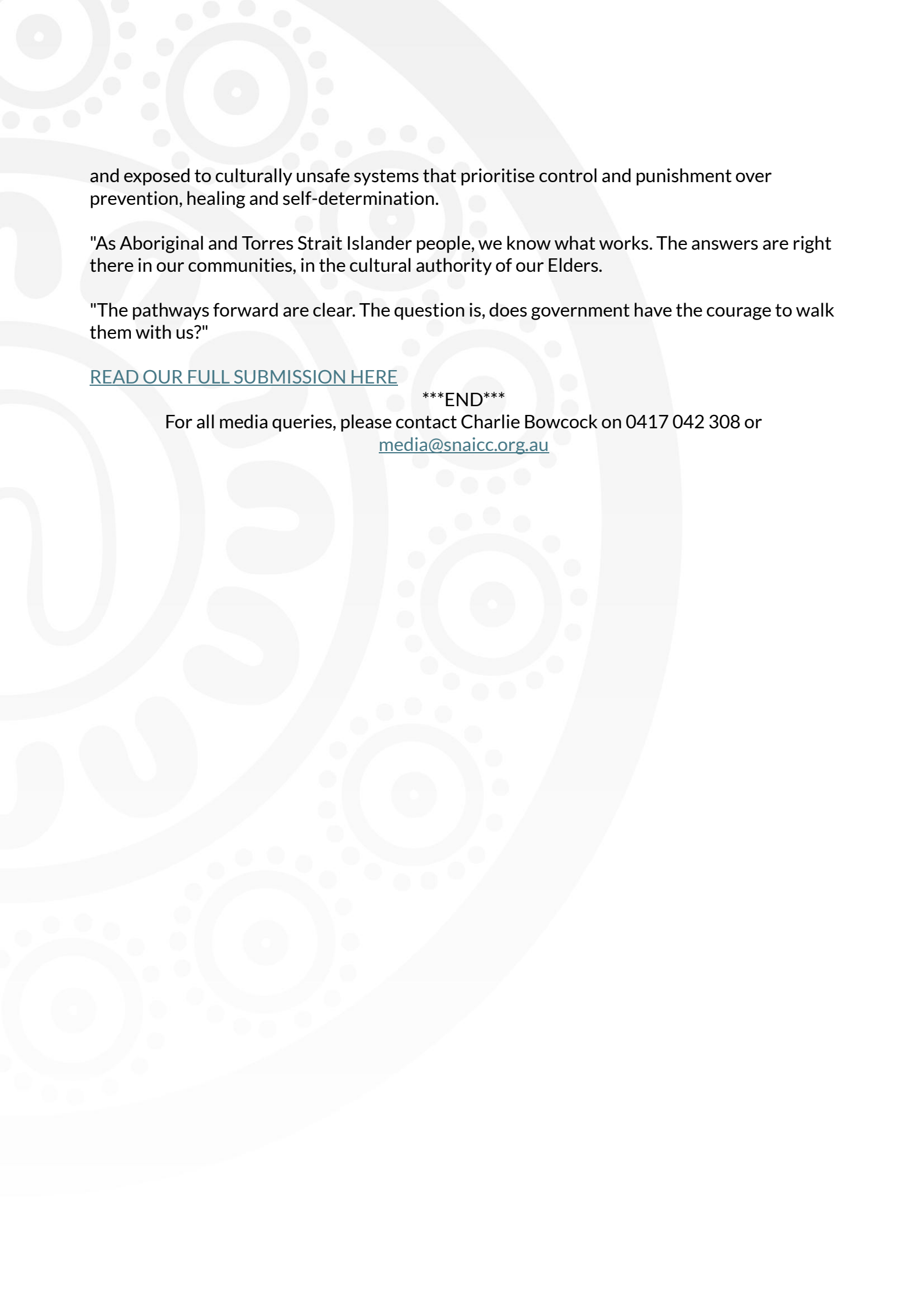
As part of its Youth Voice project, SNAICC engaged with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who described racism as an everyday reality experienced across schools, online spaces, healthcare services and broader public life.

Young people spoke about being excluded from decision-making, dismissed within professional and institutional settings, and subjected to harmful public debates that undermine their identity, safety and sense of belonging.

Ms Liddle has called for a full and genuine implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the creation of a formal truth-telling process and more investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) as the most effective providers of prevention, early intervention and family support services.

In its submission to the Inquiry, SNAICC demonstrated how mainstream systems are failing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families with worsening outcomes across child protection, youth justice, health and early childhood development.

SNAICC's evidence shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continue to be disproportionately removed from their families, over-policed, criminalised



and exposed to culturally unsafe systems that prioritise control and punishment over prevention, healing and self-determination.

"As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we know what works. The answers are right there in our communities, in the cultural authority of our Elders.

"The pathways forward are clear. The question is, does government have the courage to walk them with us?"

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