

MEDIA RELEASE

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Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices shape the future for children and families

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from across Australia have come together on Kurna Country in Port Adelaide for SNAICC's inaugural Youth Voice Gathering, creating a national space for young people to shape the issues that affect their lives.

Held from 8-10 September, the Gathering was planned with SNAICC's Youth Voice Sub-Committee and brought together young people to yarn about the issues affecting children, young people, families and communities, and develop solutions grounded in their experiences, aspirations and knowledge.

The Gathering was a significant step in SNAICC's commitment to ensuring young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not only heard, but have a meaningful role in shaping the policies, programs and systems that affect their lives.

The conversations and insights captured through the Gathering will contribute to SNAICC's ongoing advocacy and decision-making, ensuring the organisation's priorities reflect what matters to young people and their solutions are amplified to governments and decision-makers.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC, said the Youth Voice Gathering was an important opportunity to listen directly to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensure their experiences shape SNAICC's work.

"Bringing nearly 40 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people together gives us a unique opportunity to listen, learn and hear directly from young people about what matters to them and their communities.

"This Gathering is about making sure young people's knowledge, experiences and ideas help shape SNAICC's priorities and advocacy as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

"This is also about ensuring young people have the opportunity to determine their own priorities and advocacy.

"The insights shared over these three days will strengthen our understanding of what young people want and need and help us take their solutions into our work and to governments and decision-makers."

Rylie Cadd, a proud Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung man and Youth Voice Sub-Committee member, said young people deserved to be recognised for the knowledge and capability they bring.

“I joined Youth Voice because I believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are more capable than they know and they deserve to have their voices heard.

“The Youth Voice Gathering is about young Mob being heard - whether that’s by the person next to them, someone at SNAICC or a politician. Our voices belong in those spaces.

“Too often there’s a perception that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aren’t equipped to enter these rooms and Youth Voice is about making it clear this perception needs to change because we are capable, knowledgeable and ready to contribute.”

The Gathering builds on the findings of SNAICC’s Youth Voice Engagement Report, which brought together the insights and opinions of more than 150 individuals, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and 45 Aboriginal community controlled organisations across remote, regional and urban Australia. The report found that young people want authentic representation, decision-making power and community-led structures that deliver meaningful outcomes.

Read the Youth Engagement Report here - <https://www.snaicc.org.au/resources/youth-voice-engagement-report/>

Youth Voice Sub-Committee Members are available for comment.

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For all media queries, please contact Mandy Taylor on
0414 634 159 or media@snaicc.org.au