

MEDIA RELEASE

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New partnership to grow Aboriginal-led early childhood education and care across Australia

SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children, in partnership with Coaxial Foundation founded by Nicola Forrest, is launching two first-of-their-kind programs, Nest and Nurture and the Workforce Innovation Fund, to tackle two of the biggest barriers to growing Aboriginal-led early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The three-year partnership will strengthen SNAICC's ability to support early learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Australia through intensive support and workforce solutions for Aboriginal community-controlled services.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children, said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been clear about wanting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) services and solutions for their children and this support from the Coaxial Foundation would help make that happen.

"Demand for ACCO-led early childhood services is far greater than the capacity of the current system to deliver, particularly in communities where culturally safe early childhood education and care is hardest to access," Ms Liddle said.

"Together, these two programs tackle the biggest barriers to growing Aboriginal-led ECECs across the country - the structures needed to establish and operate services and the workforce needed to sustain them."

The Coaxial partnership will help deliver

- **Nest and Nurture** – a first-of-its-kind Aboriginal community-controlled model designed to make it easier for communities to establish their own early childhood services. These will come under the Nest and Nurture operator and receive intensive support to build capacity to deliver culturally strong, high-quality early childhood education and care that responds to community needs.
- **The Workforce Innovation Fund** – a tendered grants process that puts resources in the hands of communities to develop workforce solutions that work for them. The grants will create solutions to workforce challenges unique to individual communities, while generating evidence about what works so successful community-led approaches can be strengthened, replicated and used to drive broader workforce and system reform.

"These innovative programs have been developed through years of feedback from our Aboriginal-led early years services," Ms Liddle said.

“The communities with the greatest need have often been treated as the hardest places to deliver services. We should be asking what needs to change in our systems, so Aboriginal communities can lead those services themselves.

“Nest and Nurture provides the platform to grow and strengthen ACCO-led services, while the Workforce Innovation Fund helps build the people and leadership needed to make them sustainable. Together, they start to fill a huge gap in the market.

“This is the kind of investment that can turn community demand into real services on the ground and ultimately give more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children the strongest possible start in life.

“We know ACCO early childhood services that provide trusted spaces and family supports can make a real difference in communities.”

Nicola Forrest said the evidence is clear, a strong start in a child's earliest years shapes their health, learning and wellbeing for life.

"SNAICC – National Voice for our Children has spent decades supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities. Our partnership backs two new initiatives that will help build stronger early childhood services across the country,” Ms Forrest said.

SNAICC thanks the Coaxial Foundation for its partnership and commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

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