MEDIA RELEASE

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TERRITORY CHILDREN DESERVE BETTER FROM GOVERNMENT

More Territory children are at risk of spending their Christmases separated from family and community under proposed changes to NT child protection laws.

The proposals include measures to restrict the ability of courts to order contact for children with their families and communities, and to expedite permanent care and adoption for Aboriginal children.

National peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families SNAICC – National Voice for our Children has joined NT organisations flagging major concerns with the proposals.

“The Northern Territory Government seems set on punishing vulnerable children and families rather than keeping them safe with every opportunity for a strong future,” SNAICC Council NT representative Rob McPhee said.

“The consultation process is an absolute farce with many organisations receiving less than a week to respond to what are major law changes that will impact potentially thousands of Territory children and families.

“Many organisations with the cultural and technical expertise have not even been invited to have input.

“I thought I was past the stage where I could be shocked by this NT Government’s punitive approach to already vulnerable children and families but they’ve again proved me wrong.

“We all want the best for our children, we all want them to grow up safe, healthy and happy. The NT Government has a responsibility to design and enact laws that will do this.

“Current child protection laws do need an overhaul and SNAICC and local organisations are keen to take part in a proper and informed process to design the best legal framework for our children.

“But what the NT Government is putting forward are proposed laws that will see more children and babies permanently removed from their families and communities.

“We already know what happens when children grow up separated from their culture and identity. We already know the damage the current child protection laws to do our babies.

“There is no excuse to put Territory children at further risk with a rushed, ill-informed process to bring in laws that could negatively impact families and the wider NT community for generations.

“I call on the Minister to slow down, get it right, and make the effort to allow all Territorians who may be impacted by these laws to have a say. Surely our children deserve it.”

END

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