



MEDIA RELEASE

4 August 2021

SNAICC WELCOMES \$120 MILLION INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

On [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day](#), SNAICC has welcomed the announcement of \$120 million of new federal government investments to improve access to quality early childhood education.

An additional \$81.8 million will expand the Connected Beginnings program in 27 new sites across the country, a program that aims to support the integration of early childhood education, health, development and family support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

“This major new investment is critical for supporting our young children and families. Under the new *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, we have an opportunity to work differently to achieve the best outcomes for our kids,” said SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle.

“We look forward to working alongside the Australian Government to ensure Connected Beginnings achieves strong outcomes through service delivery that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led.”

The Australian Government has also announced a \$30 million expansion of the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Program to fund up to 20 additional child care services in remote communities, with the majority managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. This program provides much needed financial support for services that are not viable under Child Care Subsidy funding.

“This is a great start to increase early childhood development supports delivered through our community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services,” said Ms Liddle.

Achieving the Closing the Gap target to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on track against the Australian Early Development Census to 55% by 2031 will require a major shift in early education and development programs for our children.

“While we are pleased to see government moving in the right direction, we know that the Child Care Subsidy funding model isn't working for our services and families across the country, so we are still waiting to see more fundamental reforms that are needed to that system.”

The announcement by Minister Wyatt and Minister Tudge also included \$9 million funding from the

Commonwealth Government to replicate the Early Years Education Program in four sites. This program uses a multi-disciplinary approach that offers high quality early education and care, infant mental health and family support, and is delivered in partnership with families and local community organisations.

Ms Liddle said, "We welcome the commitment of funding to the Early Years Education Program, but it must provide opportunities for our communities and organisations to lead and adapt the model so that it is grounded in our cultural strengths of nurturing children and supporting families.

"This program has the potential to strengthen the already great work our Aboriginal community-controlled services are delivering, with a focus on intensive wraparound support that is vital for our children and families."

ENDS/

For more information or interviews contact:

Jo Cackett, Communications – media@snaicc.org.au; 0474 727506

About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and wellbeing.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. Over the past 40 years SNAICC's efforts has resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.

SNAICC also leads National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on 4 August – find out more at aboriginalchildrensday.com.au

For more information, please visit www.snaicc.org.au and www.familymatters.org.au