



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Indigenous Australians
Member for Hasluck**

Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

**Minister for Families and Social Services
Minister for Women's Safety
Senator for South Australia**

The Hon Stuart Robert

**Acting Minister for Education and Youth
Member for Fadden**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

8 December 2021

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childhood Strategy Released

The Morrison Government, in partnership with SNAICC – the National Voice for our Children, has today released the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy.

The Strategy delivers a long-term framework for government and non-government organisations to strengthen their collaboration and improve early childhood outcomes.

Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, said the Strategy responds to calls for a more joined up approach between jurisdictions and service providers.

“The new way of working under Closing the Gap offers a framework to have a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to a child’s development,” Minister Wyatt said.

“The first five years of a child’s life are critical for long-term health and wellbeing.

“This Strategy sets the vision that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and remain strong, are nurtured by strong families and thrive in their early years.

“For the first time, agreed priorities, future opportunities and significant activities underway have been captured in a single strategy - so that everyone who contributes to the early childhood care and development system are aligned and progressing in the same direction.

“The national consultation process behind the Strategy heard directly from families and advocates about what they need to lay the foundations for long-term health, getting children ready for school and developing identity and understanding of culture.

“There is a strong focus on early learning, health, housing, safety, disability, the sector workforce and cultural connections to guide future changes and help parties align their policies and actions with what we’re hearing from children and their families.”

The new Strategy places children at the centre of policy design and builds on the commitments made under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including the \$123 million Early Childhood Package announced in August.

The Government is also investing \$9.1 million to support SNAICC’s Intermediary Services Support Pilot.

Acting Minister for Education and Youth, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, said the Pilot will help early childhood providers to improve quality under the National Quality Framework. Minister Robert said it will also increase access to training and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

“The Morrison Government is pleased to support the establishment of SNAICC’s Intermediary Support Services Pilot, which will increase the capacity of the community-controlled sector to deliver high quality and culturally-safe early learning,” Minister Robert said.

“Co-investment is being sought from state and territory governments to support the Pilot, to further strengthen community organisations and provide greater access to quality early childhood education so children are school-ready.”

Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston said the strategy would be a critical tool to help us meet our target under the Closing the Gap Agreement to reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care.

“Parents and kin are our first teachers and primary carers and this Strategy would ensure they are supported to raise strong and resilient, safe and healthy children,” Minister Ruston said.

“The strategy will also work alongside the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031* which is a 10 year whole-of-nation framework launching today that will drive change through collective effort across all areas that support children, young people and families in need.

“Together in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we can develop community-led solutions to on-the-ground challenges.

Launched at the 9th SNAICC National Conference, the Chair of SNAICC, Adjunct Professor Muriel Bamblett AO, said the Strategy is focussing on strengthening families and recognises the impact of intergenerational trauma.

“This Strategy stands as a blueprint for the work that we, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families, parents and carers have done each and every day for our children for a millennia,” Adjunct Professor Bamblett said.

“We are all focussed on making sure children feel safe, loved, cared for, strong in their identity and proud of their culture, so they can walk their own path in life.

“By embedding connection to culture, Country and language throughout the Strategy, and identifying opportunities for positive influence – together, we can make a difference and truly close the gap in outcomes for our children.

“Indigenous-led solutions will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have every opportunity to live happy and healthy lives, strong in their culture and identity.”

A copy of the Strategy is available on the [NIAA website](#).

Minister Wyatt: Marie Hogg, 0431 299 518

Minister Ruston: Genevieve Morris, 0467 950 884

Minister Robert: Stuart Howie, 0419 566 504