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The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Social Services

Member for Kingston

MEDIA RELEASE

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Boost in jobs vital to reducing the number of First Nations children in out-of-home care

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to reducing the number of First Nations children in out-of-home care and has created close to 100 additional jobs in Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to assist.

Indigenous children are almost 12 times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care or connected to the child protection system. The Commonwealth has committed to the Closing the Gap target to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031.

As progress towards Target 12 under Closing the Gap, the Government's investment in the Improving Multidisciplinary Responses (IMR) program last year has seen the creation of more than 93 jobs – the majority in regional and remote Australia.

The IMR program aims to keep First Nations children safe by enhancing and supporting holistic responses for families with complex needs in culturally, geographically, and socially diverse contexts.

A total of \$44 million was committed to the program for 15 organisations in August last year with a focus on embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and its five elements of prevention, placement, participation, partnership and connection.

Minister for Social Services Amanda Rishworth will today speak with the organisations on the frontline of this work at an IMR Community of Practice event in Adelaide.

“I want to acknowledge the innovation of these Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and their dedication to support First Nations children to grow up safe, strong and connected to their families, communities and culture,” Minister Rishworth said.

“Their crucial work will ensure First Nations children receive the targeted support and services they need, specifically designed to tackle complex needs.

“The Government looks forward to learning about the innovative service delivery models which participating First Nations organisations are designing under the IMR program.”

CEO of SNAICC Catherine Liddle highlighted the importance of First Nations-led solutions.

“Strengthening Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in the early years space to support vulnerable families will help keep our children safe and allow them to thrive, connected to family, community and culture,” Ms Liddle said.

“The IMR project will assist in reducing the rates of our children in the child protection system, one of the key outcomes in Closing the Gap.”

Minister Rishworth said the IMR program was one of the priority measures in achieving Target 12 of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, to reduce the rate of over-representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031.

“The Government is committed to Closing the Gap in social and economic outcomes through activities like the IMR program, to making a positive impact for First Nations youth, children and families, and aiding in developing a stronger community and future,” Minister Rishworth said.

“I hope that through the IMR program we will see an increase in the rate of First Nations families accessing early intervention services, assisted by the funded First Nations organisations and SNAICC.”

For further information on the IMR program, visit the [Department of Social Services website](#).

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