

MEDIA RELEASE

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We Cannot Close the Gap Alone

Peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People, SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is calling for a unified, bipartisan approach to make real change on Close the Gap day.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC said when the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is involved in genuine partnership and shared decision-making, there is impactful change in Closing the Gap measures.

“When all governments work with us, they not only empower communities but also drive better outcomes and lasting change,” Ms Liddle said.

“We have seen positive change in areas such as land rights where governments have involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as partners in decisions about our lives.

“We need to see change in all sectors. Our children deserve nothing less.

“Committing to the Priority Reforms under the National Closing the Gap Agreement will Close the Gap. This means a commitment from all levels of Governments to work in partnership with our communities as the experts in own lives.

“Last week’s update on the Closing the Gap targets should have served as a wake-up call about the real-life impact of government inaction.”

The latest update from the Productivity Commission on Closing the Gap revealed that only one-third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early childhood education and care are developmentally on track for big school. Governments have made zero improvement in the continuing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in juvenile justice and child protection systems across Australia.

“The cost of this lack of action is directly felt by our children. By failing to work with us, governments are contributing to a cycle of child removal, criminalisation and systemic disadvantage for our children,” Ms Liddle said.

“We don’t need a different approach to Closing the Gap. We need all governments to keep their word and look at the evidence for what works to change our life outcomes.

“We can close the gap, but we can’t do it alone. It’s time Australian governments uphold their commitments and work with us.”

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For all media queries, please contact Charlie Bowcock on 0417 042 308 or media@snaicc.org.au.