

13 February 2024

Media Release

‘A strong example of the need for First Nations leadership’ says child protection alliance on the appointment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

An alliance of major child protection agencies commends the Federal Government on the historic appointment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.

Allies for Children includes some of the country's largest child and family organisations including OzChild, Key Assets Australia, Act for Kids, Life Without Barriers, Barnardos Australia, MacKillop Family Services and The Benevolent Society. It was formed as a partnership of organisations working across the child, youth and family sectors to ignite long-term, positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families.

A spokesperson for the Allies, Claire Robbs said the appointment has the potential to revolutionise the out-of-home care and child protection system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and reduce the distressing over-representation of First Nations Children in the criminal justice system.

“After the dire report from the Productivity Commission last week on the review into the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, there is no greater impact the Federal government could make to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children than the appointment made today,” Ms Robbs said.

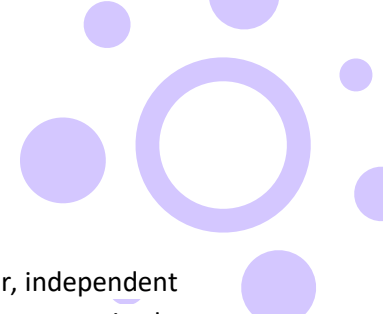
“As a partnership comprising seven of Australia’s largest providers in the child youth and family services sector, the first commitment we made was to join SNAICC’s calls for a National Commissioner because we know the transformational impact it would make for First Nations children and young people across the nation.

“On the anniversary of the National Apology, we acknowledge that we have failed as a nation to uphold the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and we will continue to do so if First Nations leadership are not at the table in driving solutions in community.

“Advocates and peak bodies have been calling for radical and immediate change in the sector to address the gross over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

“We are encouraged to see the Government listen and importantly, act on this expert advice.”

Commissioners for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People have been appointed in SA, VIC, and the ACT.



“As a collective, we encourage the remaining states and territories to establish similar, independent roles to turn the tide in failing Close the Gap measures and ensure First Nations children are raised safe, in community and with culture.”

ENDS

Media Enquiries:

Tabatha Feher - 0436 655 034

Charlie Bowcock - 0456 208 723