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**JOINT STATEMENT**

**ORGANISATIONS REJECT CALLS FOR ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL CHILDREN**

Child abuse is a serious crime, which has a devastating impact on children, family and communities.

The safety of children should not be politicised or used as a platform to advance a political position.

It is frustrating and disappointing to hear the Opposition Leader and Senator Price repeating the same claims and calls they made earlier this year, again with no evidence and no credible solutions.

If any politician, or anyone at all, has any evidence about the sexual abuse of children then they must report it to the authorities.

These calls for a Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of Aboriginal children have been made without one shred of real evidence being presented. They play into the basest negative perceptions of some people about Aboriginal people and communities.

In April this year, the Australian Child Maltreatment Study revealed the majority of Australians (62 per cent) have experienced at least one type of child abuse or neglect, with domestic violence, physical, emotional or sexual abuse the most common.

Child abuse is far too prevalent in Australia full stop.

Singling out Aboriginal families and communities is harmful and puts ideology before evidence. The most recent Child Protection Australia data release, by the AIHW, shows that Indigenous children were *less* likely to be the subject of a substantiated notification of child sexual abuse in 2021-22 (6.8% of substantiations) than were non-Indigenous children (9% of substantiations).

The evidence and the solutions are very clear.

There have been more than 33 reports into child protection since the Bringing Them Home Report in 1997.

SNAICC produces an annual report, Family Matters, and has done for many years which details the evidence-based solutions that will enable our children to grow up safe, loved and protected. These solutions have been developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

They prioritise Investment in effective, culturally safe supports for families and children before they reach crisis point, through Aboriginal community-controlled services.

The most effective and immediate action Government can take to make children safe and protect their human rights is to stand up a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner, with the legislated power to investigate and make recommendations on issues impacting our children.

This will be more effective and more powerful than any Royal Commission.

We have been calling for a National Commissioner for many years.

We now call for bipartisan support to make this happen.

Endorsed by

SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children

Coalition of Peaks on Closing the Gap

NACCHO

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Healing Foundation

Life Without Barriers

Families Australia

Reconciliation Australia

National Coalition for Child Safety and Wellbeing

ACT Children and Young People’s Commissioner Jodie Griffiths-Cook

WA Commissioner for Children and Young People Jacqueline McGowan-Jones

SAFeST Start Coalition

Act for Kids

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Professor Catherine Chamberlain

Onemda Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing

Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future

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For all media queries, please contact Mandy Taylor 0414 634159 or [media@snaicc.org.au](mailto:media@snaicc.org.au).

Jo Cackett (Lowitja) 0474 727506 communications@lowitja.org.au