



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)

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Building a bi-partisan commitment to Indigenous children

Ms Muriel Bamblett, AM, Chairperson of SNAICC, said today, “SNAICC congratulates the Federal ALP for choosing to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as their first major Indigenous policy release.”

She said, “SNAICC is hopeful that the Federal ALP and the current Federal Government will be prepared to tackle Indigenous disadvantage in a bi-partisan fashion”. She added, “At the last Federal election the decline of ATSIC as a credible organisation became a negative focus in the election with neither the ALP nor Coalition releasing policy statements specifically focussed on Indigenous children.”

Ms Bamblett said, “The ALP paper, *New Directions – An equal start in life for Indigenous children*, makes very significant and well focussed commitments to early childhood, improving literacy and numeracy and extending child and maternal health services. In a welcome show of bi-partisanship it seeks to build on the positive initiatives in the recent Federal Budget including the governments commitment to fund some new Indigenous childcare hubs and early childhood services.”

Ms Bamblett said, “both parties recognise the importance of early childhood but both have thus far underestimated the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in accessing childcare and preschool programs. SNAICC has advised the parties that an additional \$92M over four years is required for new childcare and early learning services with neither party yet to fully commit to what’s required.”

“Indigenous children are up to four times less likely than other children to access childcare and preschools services. To close the gap in literacy and numeracy skills Indigenous children have to start school on equal terms with their non-Indigenous peers – not behind the eight ball.” Ms Bamblett said.

She said, “SNAICC has provided a brief to all the parties on areas to address in the next term of government and will continue to urge all parties to make the additional commitments required to break the back of Indigenous disadvantage.”

SNAICC, the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, has published our priorities for the 2007 federal election online:

<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/KeyCommitments.html>

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