



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

Parliament of Australia: Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed
at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

April 2026



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

AbSec is the peak organisation advocating for the rights, safety, and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, and communities in New South Wales.

As an Aboriginal-led organisation, we champion self-determination and work towards a child and family system that is culturally safe, community-driven, and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AbSec leads policy reform, strengthens the capacity of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people remain connected to family, community, and culture. We are a key member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and the primary organisation responsible for Target 12 under Closing the Gap.

Through advocacy, research, and sector leadership, AbSec works to address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and promote holistic, community-led approaches to child and family wellbeing. Our commitment is to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up strong in culture, identity, and connection.

Our vision is that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are looked after in safe, thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, raised strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong wellbeing and connection to culture, and surrounded by holistic supports.

In working towards this vision, we are guided by these principles:

- Acknowledging and respecting the diversity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Acting with professionalism and integrity in striving for quality, culturally responsive services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- Underpinning the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop our own processes and systems for our communities, particularly in meeting the needs of our children, young people, families and carers.
- Being holistic, integrated and solutions-focused through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in delivering outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.
- Committing to a future that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, representing our communities, and the agencies there to serve them, with transparency and drive.

Acknowledgement of Country

AbSec acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal People of the Eora Nation, the land on which our office stands, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the Elders, leaders and advocates within our sector and pay our respects to them as knowledge holders within this space and every space.

AbSec acknowledges the Stolen Generations who never came home and the ongoing impact of government policy and practice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the lands we serve.

Terms of Reference

The Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will inquire into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including:

1. The nature, prevalence and impact of racism, hate and violence towards First Nations people, including trends over time
2. The effect of online platforms on the reach, prominence and harm caused by racism and hate directed at First Nations people
3. Initiatives that are effective in combating racism targeted at First Nations people and reduce individual and collective harm
4. The threat posed by ideologically motivated extremism towards First Nations people and the role of intelligence and law enforcement agencies in protecting the community from that threat
5. The effectiveness of avenues for reporting and responding to racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the consistency, timeliness and appropriateness of outcomes across jurisdictions and institutions, and
6. Other matters related to racism, hatred and violence directed at First Nations people.

1. Scope of This Submission

This submission is made by AbSec to the Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

AbSec acknowledges that racism against our communities operates at every level.

Interpersonal racism – hate speech, the differential treatment across health, justice, housing and every other service system our people access – is real, widespread, and deeply harmful. We recognise with particular concern the sharp increase in overt racism following the 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum, which emboldened individuals, institutions, and communities to express prejudice more openly. The current geopolitical environment has reinforced this, creating conditions in which racism has become bolder and, at times, more violent. The harm this causes is not episodic: racism is generational. It shapes what our children are born into, how our families are treated, and what futures our communities are permitted to imagine.

For this submission, AbSec focuses its evidence on systemic racism. Not because interpersonal racism is of lesser importance, but because systemic racism is less visible, less understood by policymakers, and less likely to be addressed without targeted efforts. The NSW child protection system is one of the most consequential and most enduring environments through which systemic racism is exercised against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It is a system that removes our children at rates 12 times higher than for non-Aboriginal children – not because our children are less safe, but because that system was built on, and continues to reproduce, colonial structures designed to sever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family life.

2. Systemic Racism in Child Protection: Historical and Conceptual Context

Systemic racism operates through institutions, laws, policies, and professional practices that produce racially disparate outcomes irrespective of individual intent. In child protection, this means a system in which the ordinary functioning of risk assessment tools, case management practices, and governance arrangements consistently disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families – not because individual workers are necessarily racist, but because the system itself was shaped by and continues to reflect settler-colonial assumptions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.

The Bringing Them Home report (Wilson, 1997) established almost thirty years ago that the systematic removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was not incidental but the deliberate policy of the Australian state. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the National Indigenous Australians Agency have confirmed that over-representation in the child protection system today continues to reflect that history. This includes colonisation, dispossession, the destruction of culture, and the intergenerational impacts of systemic violence these have produced (AIHW & NIAA, 2025). Systemic racism is not an aberration in

Australian child protection: it is an ongoing structural feature that drives over-representation (Krakouer, 2023).

Critically, the factors that most commonly trigger child protection involvement – housing instability, domestic and family violence, economic hardship, contact with the justice system – are not randomly distributed. These are the concentrated consequences of dispossession and discrimination experienced disproportionately by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. When the child protection system treats these structural consequences as evidence of individual parenting risk, it converts the effects of historical injustice into grounds for the removal of children. That is systemic racism in practice.

3. The Scale of Over-representation: 2024–25 Data

The most recent NSW child protection administrative data provides the most current picture of the systemic impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The data confirms that over-representation remains entrenched and is, at several critical points in the system, worsening.

3× more likely to be reported at ROSH than non-Indigenous children	6× more likely to be seen by a DCJ caseworker	12× more likely to enter OOHC	10× more likely to be in OOHC
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25,096 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were reported at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) in New South Wales in 2024–25, a modest reduction from 25,863 the prior year. Neglect remains the most common ROSH issue, accounting for one in three of all reports (31%), followed by physical abuse (20%), sexual abuse (15%), and emotional abuse (13%). Reports of physical and sexual abuse increased statewide: physical abuse by 4% and sexual abuse by 6% – with significant rises in Hunter, Northern NSW, Western Sydney, Western NSW and Illawarra Shoalhaven.

The ratio of Aboriginal children entering OOHC compared with non-Indigenous children per 1,000 population has increased in 2024–25. The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has not released disaggregated entry data for this period, making it impossible to determine whether this reflects more Aboriginal children entering care, fewer non-Indigenous children doing so, or both. This is an accountability gap that must be addressed.

The most acute disproportionality continues to occur in metropolitan Sydney, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are:

- 11 times more likely to be reported at ROSH;
- 25 times more likely to be seen by a caseworker; and

- 40 times more likely to enter OOHC or be in OOHC than non-Indigenous children.

These are evidence of institutional racism operating through all stages of the child protection system.

3.1 Placement and the Child Placement Principle

The placement data for 2024–25 reflects incremental improvement in the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP), alongside persistent and serious gaps. The proportion of Aboriginal children placed with Aboriginal relatives or kin has risen from 33% to 34%, and placements with non-Aboriginal relatives or kin have grown from 22% to 24% since 2023, now exceeding placements with non-Indigenous foster carers for the first time. This is welcome.

However, several trends are deeply concerning. Placements with Aboriginal foster carers have declined consistently across most districts, reducing the availability of culturally safe non-kinship placements. The combined total of children in the three preferred ATSICPP placement types has fallen from 4,538 in 2022–23 to 4,416 in 2024–25. Most seriously, the ‘Other (non-Indigenous carer)’ category – which includes residential care placements characterised by rotating shift workers rather than stable family environments – rose by 12% to 422 children. Residential care is the least appropriate placement for Aboriginal children, and its growth is a direct indicator of system failure.

Moreover, fewer than one in four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC in NSW have their casework provided through an ACCO, as at April 2026. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC have their casework provided by mainstream non-government organisations (NGO) and government. This is despite NSW Government aims to have all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC where care is provided by a NGO to have that care provided by an ACCO by 30 June 2026.

3.2 Funding, Reform Investment, and the OOHC Strategy

2025–26 funding data must be understood alongside two significant recent government commitments: the \$70 million per annum Aboriginal Family Preservation investment announced in April 2025, and the NSW Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Strategy released in February 2026. Together, these represent the most substantial package of child protection and OOHC reform announcements in NSW in a generation. AbSec engages with both in a spirit of genuine partnership, while submitting that neither, as currently configured, is sufficient on its own to address the systemic racism this inquiry is examining – and that both carry risks requiring careful scrutiny.

The Aboriginal Family Preservation investment is genuinely significant. AbSec commends the Minister for Families and Communities Hon Kate Washington MP for delivering this investment and reform. The new model, co-designed with ACCOs and Aboriginal communities, commits:

- 40% of Family Preservation service delivery funding to ACCOs
- To five-year block funding contracts, and

- To more equitable pricing, with new contracts commencing 1 July 2026.

AbSec publicly welcomes this reform as a “turning point” – a recognition that when communities lead, children thrive (AbSec, 2025). However, AbSec is concerned that similar reform and expanded investment has not occurred of Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) funding – the stream most directly associated with preventing children from entering care.

ACCO PSP funding has increased by 9% to \$200.2 million, but 91% of this extra funding is concentrated in just three districts – Western NSW, Western Sydney, and Hunter – and PSP is, by design, a response to children already in care rather than an investment in keeping them safe, at home with their families. Additional monies announced in the 2025/26 Budget are also mostly focused on a long overdue increase to foster carer allowances and more funding for expanding state government OOHC provision and to support the recruitment and retention of government caseworkers.

The NSW Government is investing substantially in the response to children already in care. The critical question for this Committee is whether it will invest equally in preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from entering care in the first place – and whether the communities best placed to do that work will hold genuine authority in the reformed system.

The NSW OOHC Strategy (DCJ, 2026), released in February 2026, is the most comprehensive statement of the NSW Government’s long-term intentions for OOHC. It identifies eight key reform directions. This includes a commitment to ‘expand Aboriginal-delivered OOHC’ and a policy position that Aboriginal children in home-based care should be ‘supported by ACCOs to enable Aboriginal communities to care for Aboriginal children.’ It also commits to a dedicated reunification and restoration initiative for Aboriginal children and families, and to developing an Aboriginal Sector Development Strategy.

However, the OOHC Strategy is concerning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in NSW. It was developed and announced as a government-led process, not co-designed with the communities most affected (AbSec, 2026). The Strategy proposes to re-centralise critical system functions under government control: government will lead carer recruitment, authorisation and allocation, retain primary responsibility for restoration and guardianship casework, and lead the provision of specialist and therapeutic supports. The Permanency Support Program – through which ACCOs currently deliver the majority of their OOHC services – will be wound down, with redesigned service streams not commencing until 2028, 2029 and 2030 respectively. The commissioning framework that will determine future provider allocations will apply criteria including ‘value for money’ and ‘performance’ – criteria that historically disadvantage ACCOs relative to large non-government organisations in competitive procurement. Typically, such procurements do not account for the holistic nature of ACCO service provision.

The structural risk is significant. A reform program that nominally commits to expanding Aboriginal-led delivery may in practice recentralise authority with government while progressively reducing the role of ACCOs in the system. The PSP wind-down creates uncertainty for ACCOs and for the Aboriginal children and families who depend on their services. The OOHC Strategy stated commitment to self-determination must be matched by structural guarantees of ACCO authority – not merely ACCO participation – in the reformed system. AbSec urges the Committee to scrutinise the OOHC Strategy implementation and to recommend that the NSW Government commit to co-designing all replacement service streams with the ACCO sector, with binding targets for ACCO service delivery embedded in legislation.

4. Policy Commitments and the Evidence of Failure

The systemic racism documented in the data above exists in direct contradiction to a set of clear, binding, and publicly stated government commitments. Three frameworks are of particular relevance: the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Safe and Supported national framework and the Family Is Culture review.

4.1 Closing the Gap: Target 12

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Target 12 commits all Australian governments to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031. NSW is a signatory. The Productivity Commission (2025) has confirmed this target is not on track nationally. SNAICC's 2025 review of NSW is direct: the target is unlikely to be achieved in this jurisdiction, and a substantial and immediate overhaul of child protection systems and practices is essential.

The 2024–25 data is consistent with this assessment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain 10 times more likely to be in OOHC than non-Indigenous children, and the rate for OOHC entries has increased. The NSW Government's obligations under the National Agreement require more than stated commitment: these require demonstrable, data-supported progress. That progress is not occurring.

4.2 Safe and Supported: The National Framework

Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031 establishes shared national commitments to child safety and wellbeing, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families identified as a priority population. The Framework explicitly commits signatories to implementing the ATSI CPP to the standard of 'active efforts', developing national standards for its implementation, and addressing the social determinants that drive over-representation.

The 2024–25 data demonstrates that NSW is not meeting these commitments. The ATSI CPP placement hierarchy remains inconsistently applied. Placements with Aboriginal foster carers are declining. Residential care placements are rising. The governance arrangements required to

ensure accountability for ATSI CPP implementation – which the Safe and Supported framework identifies as essential – have been found by the NSW Audit Office (2024) to be absent. DCJ cannot demonstrate compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principles that the Framework requires it to uphold.

Safe and Supported also commits jurisdictions to establishing jurisdictional leads for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People consistent with agreed minimum requirements for accountability roles across the country. AbSec welcomes the Commonwealth Government establishing through legislation a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People. However, NSW remains one of the few jurisdictions without a state-level Aboriginal Commissioner for Children and Young People. The gap between national commitments and state-level accountability structures is significant.

4.3 Family Is Culture: Five Years of Inaction

The Family Is Culture Independent Review (Davis, 2019) remains the most comprehensive examination of why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in OOHC in NSW. Commissioned by the NSW Government, Professor Megan Davis, led a review of the circumstances of 1,144 Aboriginal children who entered OOHC in 2015–16. Professor Davis made 126 systemic recommendations. Its central finding was unambiguous: the systems, policies, and practices of child protection in NSW contribute directly to the disproportionate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care.

In July 2020, the NSW Government formally committed to implementing the Review’s recommendations. By February 2024, five years after the report’s release, only 12 of the 126 systemic recommendations had been fully implemented – a completion rate of under 10%. The NSW Audit Office (2024) confirmed that DCJ had “effectively abandoned” the strategies and reforms the review required, with insufficient governance and accountability arrangements contributing to this failure.

The 2024–25 data tells the same story. Family Is Culture called for substantially increased investment in early intervention commensurate with the proportion of Aboriginal children in the system. The forthcoming \$70 million per annum Family Preservation investment from July 2026 is a meaningful step, but TEI – the stream that reaches families before statutory intervention – remains critically underfunded. The Review called for culturally grounded assessment frameworks to replace tools known to disadvantage Aboriginal families. While the actuarial component of the structured decision making (SDM) tool has been abandoned, other SDM tools remain in use. Partnership work involving AbSec, with the NSW Government and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) has commenced on redesigning the child protection assessment framework albeit that this work is unlikely to deliver substantive reform until at least 2028. The review called for Aboriginal-led governance and accountability. No independent Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people exists in NSW and nor has there been progress on implementing recommendations about a standalone child protection commission that can comprehensively address gaps in the institutional framework for ensuring transparency and accountability and driving improved performance in the NSW child protection and OOHC system.

The Family Is Culture recommendations are not aspirational. They are the minimum required by the evidence. The cost of non-implementation is borne daily by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

5. The Mechanisms of Systemic Racism

5.1 Structured Decision-Making Tools

The Structured Decision Making (SDM) framework – a suite of actuarial tools procured from a US-based provider in 2011 and applied at every critical decision point in the NSW child protection system – is a primary mechanism through which systemic racism operates in practice. External reviews in 2017 and 2019 both identified that the tools are susceptible to bias in their application to Aboriginal families, and both recommended independent examination of the tools. That examination never occurred (Audit Office of NSW, 2024).

The 2024 Audit Office report is explicit: DCJ was made aware that its SDM tools adversely affect Aboriginal children and families and continued to use them. This is not an oversight. It is an institutional choice that prioritises administrative continuity over the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The academic literature explains why this occurs even without explicit discriminatory intent. The SDM tools are designed to be race-neutral, excluding ethnicity as an explicit variable. However, the risk factors these do measure – housing instability, financial hardship, prior system contact, domestic violence – are not race-neutral in their distribution. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families disproportionately experience these impacts as a direct consequence of colonisation, dispossession, and structural disadvantage. Tools that measure the downstream consequences of racism while ignoring racism itself, do not produce neutral outcomes. These convert structural inequality into risk scores, and those risk scores into removals (Feely, M. & Bosk, E.A., 2021). SDM tool was found to be racially biased in a 2024 peer-reviewed evaluation in Queensland and was discontinued (Jenkins & Tilbury, 2024). DCJ has established a Partnership Agreement with AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd. to redesign the child protection assessment framework. As per the previous section, the Partnership Agreement is at an early stage, with parts of the SDM tools still in use.

5.2 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The ATSI CPP has been embedded in NSW legislation since 1998. With its five elements – Prevention, Partnership, Placement, Participation, and Connection – embedded as a part of the 2022 Family is Culture legislative amendment. These interconnected elements require that Aboriginal communities are genuine partners in child protection, that children are placed with family and kin before considering non-Aboriginal alternatives, and to actively maintain

children’s connection to culture. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural connection is not separate from safety: it is integral to it.

The 2024 Audit Office report found that DCJ cannot demonstrate compliance with the Principles. These have not been embedded in DCJ’s governance frameworks, accountability arrangements, or day-to-day casework practice. The 2024–25 placement data confirms this: placements with Aboriginal foster carers are declining, residential care placements are rising, and the combined total of children in preferred ATSI CPP placement types has fallen for the third consecutive year. The placement hierarchy is not consistently applied, and there are no governance mechanisms in place to ensure that it is.

6. Recommendations

AbSec proposes the following recommendations, grounded in the evidence above and in the commitments the NSW and Australian governments have already made:

Recommendation 1: Establish an Independent Child Safety and Wellbeing Commission

The NSW Government should immediately establish an independent *Child Safety and Wellbeing Commission* with statutory functions to investigate systemic failures, receive complaints from families and communities, and publicly report on outcomes across the child protection system. This is consistent with the NSW Government’s commitments under Family is Culture and would address the governance failures identified by the Audit Office of NSW (2024). The Commission’s functions, governance, and accountability frameworks should be designed in genuine partnership with AbSec, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd., and the broader ACCO sector.

Recommendation 2: Appoint a Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in NSW

The NSW Government should appoint a *Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People* – a position held by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person – with independent statutory authority to advocate for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, ensuring the perspectives, aspirations, and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are heard and embedded in government advice and decision-making and to drive greater coordination, accountability, and influencing systemic issues that disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. This includes investigating issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and advocating for policy and practice changes at the highest levels in NSW.

NSW is one of the few remaining jurisdictions without this role. A national Commissioner has been in place since January 2025. State-level accountability must follow.

Recommendation 3: Recognise Self-Determination through Transfer of Authority to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations

The NSW Government should implement a genuine transfer of statutory authority to ACCOs in child protection, enabling ACCOs to lead case management, family decision-making, and restoration processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children – not as funded service providers within a DCJ-controlled system, but as decision-makers exercising authority over decisions that affect our communities. This delegation must be resourced appropriately and accompanied by accountability frameworks developed with the ACCO sector. We note that other jurisdictions including Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland are making progress in these areas.

Recommendation 4: Invest in the ACCO Sector Through Aboriginal-Led Commissioning

The NSW Government's \$180 million annual investment in a redesigned Family Preservation program, with a dedicated Aboriginal Family Preservation stream and 40% of service delivery funding directed to ACCOs, is significant and welcome. The Committee should note, however, that this investment must be accompanied by the urgent expansion of earlier supports to families, such as those provided through the very small TEI program. Family Preservation addresses families who are already in crisis with statutory involvement. TEI is the service stream that reaches families before children are at risk of removal. A genuine commitment to reducing overrepresentation requires significantly expanded support at every stage of the pre-removal continuum. The Committee should recommend that future commissioning of TEI and related early intervention services are structured through Aboriginal-led processes, and that ACCOs receive a share of TEI funding commensurate with the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the system.

Recommendation 5: Require DCJ's Anti-Racism Strategy to Address Systemic as Well as Interpersonal Racism

DCJ's Anti-Racism Strategy, and the anti-racism policies of all organisations funded by DCJ to deliver child and family services, must explicitly address both interpersonal and systemic racism. Policies that address individual behaviour without thoroughly assessing the tools, processes, and governance arrangements that produce racially disparate outcomes are insufficient. These policies must include measurable accountability mechanisms for reducing racially disparate outcomes, not merely for addressing incidents of individual prejudice.

7. Conclusion

AbSec submits that the Committee cannot adequately address racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without examining how it operates through the institutions that govern our lives. The NSW child protection system is not at the margins of this inquiry. It is one of the most powerful, most consequential, and most enduring expressions of systemic racism in contemporary New South Wales.

The 2024–25 data confirms that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain 10 times more likely to be in OOHC than non-Aboriginal children, that the rate for entries to OOHC increased in the most recent year, that residential care placements of Aboriginal children rose

by 12%, that targeted early intervention funding is insufficient and that the governance mechanisms required to enforce compliance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's statutory rights do not exist.

Against this, the NSW Government has made significant commitments – under Closing the Gap, Safe and Supported, and in response to Family Is Culture – that it has not fulfilled. The gap between those commitments and the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is itself an expression of the systemic racism this inquiry is examining.

Our communities are strong. Our families are strong. Our cultures are strong. What we ask of this Committee, and of the governments it holds to account, is that the systems designed to protect children are reformed so that they serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people rather than remove them. We are ready to partner in that work. We call on this Committee to ensure that government is too.

For further information:

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