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COAG MISSES OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Canberra, Australia: The Family Matters campaign is disappointed today’s COAG meeting failed to adopt any measures to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed by child protection authorities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children currently represent over 35 per cent of all children who have been removed from their families, despite making up only 5.5 per cent of Australia’s child population. This figure is set to soar in the next 20 years unless we make significant changes now.

Family Matters campaign Co-Chair, Gerry Moore, labelled the omission a missed opportunity.
The over-representation of our children removed by child protection authorities is a national crisis and should be prioritised as such.

“First Ministers should be congratulated for putting the critical issue of over-representation on the COAG agenda. However, it’s disappointing that no commitments have been given on new measures to address it, or targets set to ensure we are moving in the right direction,” said Mr Moore.

“This meeting was a critical opportunity to address this disgraceful over-representation. We hope this is the start of an ongoing COAG conversation, which is followed by meaningful action.”

The Family Matters campaign is calling on State and Federal Governments to embrace a national strategy to turn around the situation, including nationally consistent reporting and targets to track their progress.

We are pleased that leaders particularly support the critical importance of early intervention efforts to reduce the flow of children into the child protection system, as well as identifying opportunities to reduce over-representation of Indigenous children.
“We look forward to working with leaders over the coming months on a refreshed Closing the Gap agenda and targets that include child protection and improved safety and well-being of our children,” said Mr Moore.

“We urge the Australian Government to use the 20th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home Report in May 2017 as an opportunity to announce a strong, united government strategy to ensure that in another 20 years we are in a very different position.”

ENDS

To read the COAG meeting Communiqué visit: 

For more information visit: http://www.familymatters.org.au

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