

## Starting with an Apology - Following Up with Action

Lisa Hillan Chair of the Association said today “CAFWAA and its members join with the Prime Minister and the Federal Government in expressing our deep sorrow for the past practice of forcibly removing Indigenous children from their families and communities and recognize the immense trauma, dispossession and despair that this has caused to Indigenous individuals, families and communities both past and present.”

Today the Prime Minister will make history in undertaking this long overdue action. However, whilst an apology assists in setting an agenda for a new relationship with the Indigenous Community it is not enough.

CAFWAA urges the Federal Government to extend its efforts at addressing the current day injustices for Indigenous people and communities across Australia - the injustices of intolerable rates of poverty, incarceration, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect and homelessness.

We have taken important first steps in making a difference for Aboriginal children and their families and we must continue to address the very real issues facing our nation. With a life expectancy differential of 17 years, school retention rates three times poorer than the average and Indigenous children still eight times more likely to be removed from families and taken into care as a result of abuse or neglect, there is enormous ground to be made up before we can claim a fair go for Aboriginal people in Australia.

Ms Hillan states that “without decisive action today by our government to redress these injustices future generations of Australians will be re-visiting the issue of making an apology to the Indigenous community for our failure to act”.

CAFWAA sees the development of Indigenous agencies and communities as critical in this regard and believes that services for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities should be delivered through Indigenous agencies.

Ms Hillan reiterated that “CAFWAA and our members will continue to work with the Federal government and Indigenous communities to achieve these aims and accept our responsibility in partnership with Government to address these issues.”



*The Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA) is the national peak body representing community service organisations working with vulnerable children, young people and families, including those experiencing neglect and abuse and those living in an Out of Home Care environment.*

For information in relation to this release please contact Lisa Hillan Chairperson (0409 847284)