



Child & Family Welfare Association of Australia Inc.

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STATE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies (NSW)
- Child & Family Welfare Association of South Australia
- Child & Family Welfare Association of Tasmania
- Child, Youth & Family Agencies of the ACT
- Centre for Excellence in Children & Family Welfare, Victoria
- Children's Youth & Family Agencies Association (WA)
- PeakCare (Qld)

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Media Release

The widening gap in Indigenous child neglect and abuse

The Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA) is today calling for the establishment of a national Aboriginal support framework to help reduce a widening gap in child neglect and abuse between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

On the eve of National Aboriginal Islander Children's Day (August 4), the national welfare peak has revealed the rates of substantiated abuse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has more than doubled in the past five years, and is far outstripping the rates for non-Indigenous children.

According to CAFWAA Chair Lisa Hillan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are today more than seven times as likely as non-Indigenous children to be the subject of a substantiated report of abuse. Figures also show that 44 out of every 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were on care and protection orders between 2008 and 2009, compared to five per 1000 non-Indigenous children during this same period.

Ms Hillan said the figures highlight a profound failure in the way the nation is supporting Aboriginal children and families, and wants all political parties to support the implementation of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Children and Families Network that delivers a coordinated set of support and early intervention initiatives.

"This growing gulf in the rate of child abuse between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children is totally unacceptable and is, in part, the result of government failure to introduce a national support system that supports *all* families," Ms Hillan said.

"Narrowing this disturbing gap is a significant election issue that warrants a definitive response from all sides of politics.

"Any action must begin with substantial investment and a sustained focus on expanding family support and welfare services in a culturally sensitive manner that values the identity of Indigenous Australians and recognises the importance of extended family and kinship networks."

For information in relation to this release please contact Lisa Hillan Chairperson (0409 847 284).

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.