

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

MEDIA RELEASE

Aboriginal children and families cannot afford to lose SAF,T

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APO NT today expressed alarm at the decision of the Northern Territory Government to cut funding to the Aboriginal child protection peak body, Strong Aboriginal Families, Together (SAF,T).

“We are alarmed to learn that SAF,T has had its *funding cut*. SAF,T is working to improve the protection and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and families in the NT and should continue to be funded to perform this vital role,” said Jared Sharp today on behalf of APO NT.

The establishment of SAF,T was one of the key reforms following the *Growing them Strong, Together* Inquiry into the NT’s child protection system. SAF,T has played a key role in:

- advocating as an Aboriginal peak body for children, youth and families ; and
- developing a preventative model which will support sustainable long term change for our children to grow up safe and cared for in family and culture.

“APO NT is very concerned by the continued and alarming levels of Aboriginal children within the child protection system in the NT,” said Jared Sharp.

“It is devastating that our children remain 5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be subject to a care and protection order in the NT and nearly 5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be living away from home,” Jared Sharp said.

“It is clear that such concerning issues require long-term, bipartisan, and preventative approaches for any process of reform to effect change.”

“Defunding SAF,T is a huge step *backwards*. For the first time, the Territory had an Aboriginal voice to advocate on behalf of our children, families and communities.”

“We strongly urge the Government to re-think its decision to defund SAF,T”, Jared Sharp said.

“The Government needs to listen to the *Growing them Strong, Together* Inquiry and ensure that Aboriginal people have a voice in developing and implementing strategies to tackle the alarming over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system.”

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