

March 2023 Leadership Gathering & Life Without Barriers Elevate RAP Launch Learning Summary



Key takeaways from Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine

In her address, Karen congratulated Life Without Barriers (LWB) for their commitment to lead real transformative change as part of their Elevate RAP. She stated that the outcomes of this RAP, through LWB's partnership with SNAICC, will have a profound impact on the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities for years to come.

- Closing the Gap Report: Outcome 12 on reducing the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031, is not currently on track to meet the target.
- Over 20,000 First Nations children in Australia are currently in out-of-home care.

Key takeaways from SNAICC CEO, Catherine Liddle

In her address, Catherine highlighted that this Elevate RAP demonstrates how organisations can make real impact in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. She stated that the commitment from Life Without Barriers, through their transformation project, will set a precedent for other organisations working with First Nations children and families.

- At present, only 41% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.
- The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is an historic opportunity to influence how policy and implementation can better support First Nations families in Australia.
- Closing the Gap requires transformative action from all levels of government and from partners and allies.

Key takeaways from Life Without Barriers CEO, Claire Robbs

In her address, Claire encouraged us all to be brave and take action around the overrepresentation of First Nations children in out of home care. She invited the RAP leadership cohort to join Life Without Barriers in taking a public Yes stance in the upcoming referendum.

- If we don't take action around the overrepresentation of First Nations children in out of home care, we become complicit in repeating the mistakes of the past. The RAP network has an enormous ability to influence change.
- Non-Indigenous Australians have a duty and an obligation to further this work. They are granted the choice to do so, where First Nations Peoples do not have that luxury.
- LWB's commitments will require them to partner, change their organisation, influence policy and legislation and advocate for the direct investment of resources into community-controlled organisations.

- Resources, shared wisdom and commitments are needed to support the capacity of community-controlled organisations, so they can ensure First Nations children can grow in culture and with kin.

Key takeaways from leader panel and roundtable discussions

Attendees participated in a leader roundtable discussion, in partnership with Reconciliation Australia, Life Without Barriers and SNAICC.

Taking action to drive transformational change:

- Organisations can support the work of SNAICC by first clearly identifying areas of expertise and then understanding the needs of community, as a precursor to all partnerships and engagement.
- Transformation can look like transferring control and leadership to First Nations community-controlled organisations.
- Collective change is about harnessing resources, policies, experiences and ideas to support better outcomes for First Nations Australians.
- The social services sector needs to shift from a ‘welfare’ to a ‘human rights’ approach.
- Driving change within our sectors requires action to follow intent. This requires regular communication within organisations to promote the ‘why’ when it comes to educating staff, as well as public communication to ensure accountability.

Working together to support a referendum on a Voice to Parliament:

- Children do not have a vote, and yet the impact and flow on effects of this referendum will greatly impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC reminded the room that “this is about their future.”
- Corporate Australia and NGOs have significant influence on the Australian public. They have a responsibility to lead by example and will play a fundamental role in the months to come.
- Education will play a key role in the referendum discourse. Ensuring staff and stakeholders are well informed is one way that we can support a successful referendum.

News and resources

Voice Education Network

With the Voice Referendum Campaign now in full swing, we invite you to join the conversation and access a wealth of resources via our [Voice Education Network](#).

National Reconciliation Week

NRW 2023 is fast approaching! Access our [digital resources](#) to communicate your support for this years' theme: 'Be a Voice for Generations'. We love to see all the exciting events taking place; remember to register yours [here](#).

Please contact Joelle Low at joelle.Low@reconciliation.org.au with any questions you have about the information above.