

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Leading NGOs back SNAICC and AbSec response to social justice issues in the Northern Territory**

The Benevolent Society, Mission Australia, Rise, Brotherhood of St Laurence, and Uniting NSW.ACT collectively support statements made by [SNAICC](#) and [AbSec](#) calling for a better focus on First Nations self-determination rights, and the need to listen to community-led solutions to intergenerational policy failure and neglect in the Northern Territory.

Different governments have attempted to realise the intentions and aspirations of the first Closing the Gap Framework after it was released in 2008. The latest Closing the Gap Report 2022 shows disappointing progress for Indigenous Australians, with only four of 18 targets on track, and four key targets worsening – this includes incarceration rates, suicide rates and children in out of home care.

First Nations peak bodies and community leaders have continually highlighted that Closing the Gap will not be achieved without direct engagement with First Nations peoples, communities and organisations. There is clear evidence showing that empowered First Nations communities are critical in meeting the Closing the Gap targets and indicating that when people are free to set their own course, they are better off.

Like all other Australians, First Nations peoples have the right to self-determination and the right to equality and non-discrimination. This includes the right to be consulted about and have a voice in decision-making concerning legislative and policy changes affecting their rights and interest.

**Lin Hatfield Dodds, CEO, The Benevolent Society, said:** “The Benevolent Society stands behind SNAICC and AbSec’s call for better self-determination and community driven solutions for First Nations people in the Northern Territory. Social policy setting takes intergenerational policy commitment and bipartisan support – with First Nations people leading the change.”

**Sharon Callister, CEO, Mission Australia, said:** “We stand alongside SNAICC and AbSec’s calls for self-determination and community-led solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities have the answers – we need to support and invest in the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to lead the work that affects them.”

**Tracey Burton, CEO Uniting NSW.ACT, said:** “Uniting NSW.ACT is proud to back the call of SNAICC and AbSec for First Nations people in Northern Territory communities to be leading the work to design and implement the solutions that will make a difference in Closing the Gap. The crucial leadership role of First Nations people to determine their own futures and break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage must be recognised.”

**Justine Colyer, Chief Executive Officer, Rise, said:** “Although a Western Australia based organisation, Rise recognises the importance of supporting self-determination in other States and Territories as critical for the success in closing the gap nationwide.”

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