

From: [Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney](#)
To: [Legislative Scrutiny Committee](#)
Subject: Re. the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026
Date: Friday, 22 May 2026 4:47:39 PM
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To the Legislative Scrutiny Committee,

We write to express grave concerns regarding the proposed amendment to the NT Care and Protection of Children act. This issue touches the heart of both what it means to be Australian in the 21st Century, and our Jewish values as well.

Protecting children must be seen as one of society's most important obligations. And yet, Australia does not have a positive record when it comes to this issue, especially as regards to Indigenous children. The tragic irony is that even as families and communities continue to suffer the after-effects of the Stolen Generations, the plight of many Indigenous children remains so dire that removing them from their families remains the only option.

As a community that has fought for the last 2000 years to hold on to our traditions and culture in the face of conquest and persecution, we can easily understand the importance of maintaining connection to one's heritage and community and country. A child protection system that does not centre these considerations can not be said to protect children at all.

Indeed, there is little evidence that children removed from family of origin experience improved long term outcomes, except in cases of severe neglect and abuse that are already well addressed under the current act. Rather, evidence consistently shows that supporting birth families and communities to care for their children is the most effective form of intervention, with the added positive of supporting the continuity and advancement of their communities.

In 2017 at Uluru, Indigenous peoples from across this continent proposed a way forward toward reconciliation with Australia. The Voice to Parliament may not have passed constitutional hurdles, but no-one could disagree that Indigenous peoples should have a strong voice in policies that affect them. The concern with the current proposed Amendment is that, once again, Indigenous communities and experts have not been consulted on these changes.

It is well established that Indigenous Australians engage more fully with local, Indigenous-controlled services, and outcomes improve where solutions are built from the ground up. The proposed changes do not reflect this best practice at all. Minister Cahill has said she won't be one who "abandons yet another generation of territory kids". However, if this Amendment proceeds as planned, she will be a minister who once again makes the fundamental mistake of excluding Indigenous people from the design of policy aimed to serve them, which will ultimately undermine the policy itself.

We hope that the Minister and NT government will rethink this very rushed proposal, and take the time to develop real solutions that will stand the test of time. To this end, the comprehensive *Family Matters* report published by SNAICC in 2025, as well as the original 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report from HREOC -- and, indeed, the *Uluru Statement From the Heart* -- can all serve as foundation for the important work ahead of

you.

In times of crisis there is a temptation to take action in haste. However, just as with the ill-considered protest laws rushed through by the Minns Labor government in NSW, haste can come at great expense of quality and justice. We urge you not to repeat this mistake, or those of our colonial past.

Regards,

Dr Hayim Dar
Paediatric trainee

Adam Dickes
Clinical and child/adolescent psychologist

Jewish Health Workers Alliance
and
Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney

