



Sisters Inside Ltd ACN: 114 548 426 ABN: 94 859 410 728

P: +61 7 3844 5066

Toll Free: 1800 003 242

Address: 326 Montague Rd West End Qld

Postal: PO Box 3407 South Brisbane Qld 4101

admin@sistersinside.com.au

www.sistersinside.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sisters Inside Demands Answers Following Reports of Defunding of Aboriginal Residential Care Services

Sisters Inside is deeply concerned by reports that the Queensland Government has withdrawn funding from residential care services operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, leaving children and young people facing uncertainty, distress, and further trauma.

We are hearing reports that children currently living in these services have been informed they will be moved, but have not been told where they are going, when they will be moved, or what supports will be available to them.

‘If these reports are true, the consequences for children are profound. Many children in residential care have already experienced significant trauma, including family separation, violence, child protection intervention, homelessness, and institutionalisation. Stability, trust, connection, and certainty are not luxuries for these children, they are essential,’ said Debbie Kilroy, CEO of Sisters Inside.

‘To remove children from culturally safe environments without clear plans, consultation, or transparency risks compounding the very harms the family policing system claims to address,’ said Debbie Kilroy.

Sisters Inside is calling on the Queensland Government to immediately clarify:

- Has funding been withdrawn from residential care services operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations?
- How many children will be affected?
- Where will these children be placed?
- What consultation has occurred with the children themselves, their families, communities, and the organisations providing their care?
- What steps are being taken to ensure children are not further traumatised by these decisions?

‘The removal of Aboriginal community-controlled services raises serious concerns about the ongoing undermining of Aboriginal self-determination within Queensland’s family policing system,’ said Debbie Kilroy.



‘For decades, Aboriginal organisations have argued that Aboriginal children are best supported by Aboriginal communities, organisations, and workers who understand the impacts of colonisation, forced removal, and intergenerational trauma. Yet time and again, governments strip resources from community-controlled solutions while expanding the very systems that continue to remove Aboriginal children from their families and communities,’ said Debbie Kilroy.

‘If these reports are accurate, Queenslanders deserve to know why culturally grounded services are being defunded and what evidence supports such a decision. Most importantly, the children affected deserve answers,’ said Debbie Kilroy.

‘Children should not be left wondering where they will sleep, who will care for them, or whether they will lose connections to the people and places that make them feel safe,’ said Debbie Kilroy.

Sisters Inside calls on the Government to urgently provide transparency regarding these reports and to guarantee that no child will be displaced without meaningful consultation, cultural support, and a clear plan that prioritises their wellbeing.

Additional Quotes attributable to Debbie Kilroy, CEO, Sisters Inside

"If what we are hearing is true, this is an appalling way to treat children who have already experienced enormous instability and trauma. No child should be left in limbo, uncertain about where they are going or who will be caring for them."

"We want answers. We want transparency. And we want to know why Aboriginal community-controlled organisations appear to be losing support at a time when Aboriginal children continue to be vastly overrepresented in the family policing system."

"Governments cannot claim to care about the wellbeing of children while creating fear, uncertainty and disruption in their lives. The children affected by these decisions deserve better."

Sisters Inside’s groundbreaking report, *State Controlled Childhood: The Business of Family Policing in Queensland*, can be accessed here:

<https://sistersinside.com.au/state-controlled-childhood-the-business-of-family-policing-in-queensland/>

For further comment, please contact Debbie Kilroy on 0419 762 474.