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MEDIA RELEASE

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GROUNDBREAKING REDFERN ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES RECOGNISED ON STATE HERITAGE REGISTER

Pioneering Redfern Aboriginal Children's Services & Archives (ACS) has been placed on the State Heritage Register in recognition of its huge success in bringing about a substantial shift in government policy regarding the care of Aboriginal children, Heritage Minister Mark Speakman announced today.

The service, based at 18 George Street, Redfern, was also influential in the introduction of the 'kinship care' policy for non-Indigenous children, Minister Speakman said.

"The ACS is an excellent example of resistance against the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their family, culture and community and successfully establishing kinship ties as an important consideration in child placements. It's fitting that we recognise the Redfern Aboriginal Children's Services & Archives during NAIDOC week, when we seek to *Learn, Respect and Celebrate*."

"Along with Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Housing Company and the Aboriginal Medical Service, the ACS was one of the pivotal Aboriginal organisations in the self determination that occurred in Redfern," Mr Speakman said.

"Several key figures in Aboriginal politics and welfare provision are associated with the service including Isobel Coe, Jenny Munroe, Mum Shirl, Ann Weldon, Vilma Ryan and Sylvia Scott."

The twentieth century saw increased political activism among Aboriginal people and growth of organisations for the achievement of changes to the constitution. Poor housing and living conditions increased demand for services and facilities for urban Aboriginal people.

Having a large Aboriginal population, the suburb of Redfern became a focus for activism around civil and land rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In the 1960s and 70s, Aboriginal people living in Redfern were the subject of unofficial policing methods such as the ten o'clock curfew; if an Aboriginal person was found on the street after 10pm, they were arrested whether or not they had committed any crime.

In 1970, a group of activists came together to provide legal representation for Aboriginal people who were otherwise unaware of their rights and the Aboriginal Legal Service was born.

In July 1971, another ground-breaking service for Aboriginal people was established in Redfern – the Aboriginal Medical Service – which provided free health care to Aboriginal people.

Many other pioneering organisations were established by the Redfern Aboriginal community around this time including the Aboriginal Housing Company, Black Theatre and Murawina child care centre.

The ACS received NSW Government funding until 2008, and continues to deliver a range of charity and advocacy works today with sponsorship from a not-for-profit organisation.

Built in 1874, 18 George Street is a three-storey Victorian Filligree-style gentleman's townhouse with an attic and additions to the rear, and is an excellent example of a building adapted for reuse.

Listing on the State Heritage Register ensures that the future management of this site will be supported with expert advice from the Heritage Council of NSW.