



Thrive by Five welcomes Federal Government investment in preschool access for Indigenous children

5 August 2021 – Thrive by Five has welcomed the Morrison Government’s \$120 million investment in programs to improve access to preschool for Indigenous children in regional and remote Australia as part of the Closing the Gap implementation plan.

Thrive by Five CEO Jay Weatherill said the announcement was recognition of the importance of high quality and universally accessible early learning.

“We know that high quality early childhood education sets children up for life. When children attend high quality early learning they start school ready to learn and have greater opportunities to fulfil their potential in later life,” Mr Weatherill said.

“Currently, one in five Australian children are considered developmentally vulnerable at the time they start school. These children are more than twice as likely to be found in low-income communities as in high-income communities and they are also more than twice as likely to be Indigenous.

“The evidence shows that vulnerable children stand to benefit the most from high quality early learning.

“Thrive by Five welcomes investment to improve access to early learning for Indigenous children in regional and remote Australia.”

The investment is an expansion of Minderoo Foundation’s Connected Beginnings initiative, which has been adopted by the Government and partners with local organisations and providers in regional and rural communities to determine the best method of early education and care delivery.

“We continue to urge National Cabinet to prioritise overall early learning reform,” Mr Weatherill said.

Thrive by Five is calling on the National Cabinet to adopt a five-point plan to reform early learning and childcare.

1. Agree to a new Federal-State Agreement to deliver universal three-year-old preschool across the country to match the agreement in place for four-year-old preschool.
2. Lift the childcare subsidy to 95 per cent for all children and set agreed fee caps.
3. Make the childcare subsidy available to all children regardless of the service type and the income or work status of the parents.
4. Start workforce planning for a universal system and fund appropriate pay and conditions for educators to end the problem of skill shortages, high vacancy rates and high staff turnover rates across the sector.
5. To achieve these outcomes, we ask that early education and childcare become a part of the National Cabinet reform agenda to deal with complexities of the system and build a true national universal system.

**About Minderoo Foundation:**

Established by Andrew and Nicola Forrest in 2001, Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation seeking to break down barriers, innovate and drive positive, lasting change. Minderoo Foundation is proudly Australian, with ten key initiatives spanning from ocean research and ending slavery, to collaboration against cancer and building community projects.

Media contact:

Afsah Haque

M 0410 860 435

E Afsah.haque@essentialmedia.com.au