



ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CARE KEY TO IMPROVING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH: THRIVE BY FIVE

12 October 2021 – Thrive by Five has welcomed the recognition of early education in the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy launched today and urged the Federal Government to introduce universally accessible, high quality early learning and care for every child.

During the first five years of life, the human brain develops to 90 per cent of an adult's size. This makes the early years critical for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

Thrive by Five CEO Jay Weatherill said "So many children and families are struggling right now, making the work of our early educators more vital than ever.

"Thrive by Five is calling for the Federal Government to fast-track the professional training and development of guidelines for educators to follow when they believe a child or family is struggling.

"More young children will be returning to early learning in NSW and Victoria in the coming weeks and the resources should be in place to support those who have fallen behind or need extra stability and assurance.

"The Federal government must also prioritise making high-quality early learning accessible for all Australian children.

"The COVID crisis has shown us how vital our early learning system and our dedicated, professional early educators are for supporting the mental health of children and giving them the best start in life.

"Children develop the bulk of their emotional skills through play-based learning and the problem solving and other skills involved are essential in good mental health.

"Our early educators are critical for identifying children and families under pressure, and a trusted source for providing access to help and support. We need investment in the early education system so no child or family falls through the gaps."

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 key initiatives spanning from ocean research and ending slavery, to collaboration against cancer and building community projects.

Media contact:

Ting Huang (Essential Media)
M 0432 126 739