



Media Release

THRIVE BY FIVE WELCOMES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S \$334 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EARLY EDUCATION

07 December 2022 – Minderoo Foundation's Thrive by Five initiative has welcomed the Federal Government's \$334 million investment into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The Federal Government says the new programs and extension of existing funding will help 100,000 children across the country.

The investment, which will supplement current Commonwealth and State and Territory funding, will include a range of activities including facilitated playgroups in Alice Springs and South Australia's Far West Coast and early childhood education programs in Western Australia's East Kimberley region.

The Federal Government's \$334 million investment will continue until 2025 and is part of a broader commitment to the National Agreement for Closing the Gap.

Thrive by Five Director Jay Weatherill said, "We welcome the Federal Government's continued investment in education for First Nations children and their families.

"We know from research Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children are twice as likely as other children to start school developmentally vulnerable.¹ Indigenous children also only comprise 3.8 per cent of children attending early learning and childcare centres.²

¹ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/early-childhood/>

² <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/early-childhood-data-and-reports/national-workforce-census>

“It is therefore critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families have access to high quality, early childhood education so they are not left behind when they start school.

“If we are really committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children then we must make sure they have the opportunity to access local, community-led early learning,” Mr Weatherill said.

“While this funding is necessary, the Federal Government should consider abolishing the activity test to ensure all children, in particular First Nation children and their families, have equitable access to early childhood education.”

About Minderoo Foundation:

Established by Andrew and Nicola Forrest in 2001, Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation seeking to break down barriers, and drive positive, lasting change. Minderoo Foundation is proudly Australian, with more than \$2.7 billion committed to a range of global initiatives, spanning from ocean research and ending modern slavery, to collaboration against cancer and community projects. Our mission is to arrest unfairness and create opportunities to better the world.

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