

Media Release – The Hon Shelley Payne MLC

Delivering better outcomes for children in the Great Southern

Friday, 5 May 2023

- Early Years Community Plan launched to benefit children and families in the shires of Katanning, Kojonup, Gnowangerup, and Broomehill-Tambellup
- Plan developed by the local community is focused on local priorities to improve outcomes in child health and development, financial wellbeing, family safety and maternal health
- Plan is part of the Early Years Partnership between State Government and Minderoo Foundation

An Early Years Community Plan for children living in the central Great Southern region has been released as part of the Early Years Partnership (EYP).

The EYP is a 10-year partnership between the State Government and Minderoo Foundation to improve child wellbeing and school readiness for children aged 0-4 years across four Western Australian communities, including the central Great Southern region, where more than one in four children are considered developmentally vulnerable.

The 'Children Growing Strong' Central Great Southern Community Plan, launched in Katanning today, has been co-designed with local communities and forms a roadmap for change for children living in the shires of Katanning, Kojonup, Gnowangerup, and Broomehill-Tambellup.

The local communities identified five priority areas to support child wellbeing and school readiness:

- child health
- child development
- financial wellbeing
- family safety; and
- maternal health.

The Central Great Southern Region Community Plan will be implemented in partnership with a local working group, which is made up of representatives from local and State Government agencies, the four local shires, community organisations, families, and community members.

Telethon Kids Institute is also involved in the partnership, providing research and evaluation support.

An Early Years Community Plan for Armadale West was launched in March, and work is underway for similar plans in Derby and Bidyadanga in the Kimberley.

Comments attributed to Member for the Agricultural Region Hon Shelley Payne MLC

“This is great news for families living in the Shires of Katanning, Kojonup, Gnowangerup, Broomehill-Tambellup,” she said.

“Setting strong foundations for children in their early years is so important for their development, growth and wellbeing and the Early Years Partnership will help to facilitate that”.

Comments attributed to WA Early Childhood Education Minister Sabine Winton:

"The first five years of a child's life are critical to their development and life outcomes. It's during this time they build the foundation for lifelong learning, health, and wellbeing.

"We all want great outcomes for children, families and our wider community. The Early Years Partnership is a unique collaboration between the State Government and Minderoo Foundation that promotes new ways of working to achieve this.

"One of the keys to any localised initiative like this is hearing from people in the community who will benefit from the Plan, and making sure priorities, resources and solutions are tailored to their specific needs.

"The co-design process has captured the community's priorities and aspirations and that collaborative approach will continue as we work on improving outcomes for children and their families in the Central Great Southern."

Comments attributed to Minderoo Foundation's 'Thrive by Five' Director Jay Weatherill:

"We are incredibly proud to work alongside the Western Australian Government in this unique partnership between philanthropy and government that is designed to do new things in new ways to support the development of children across WA.

"Minderoo is particularly proud of the child dental program that has had a real impact in the central Great Southern and shows the power of partners working together to improve the health of children in our communities.

"Delivering services to children and families is different for every family no matter where they live and so it's crucial that we involve local communities in the design and delivery of those services which goes to the heart of the Early Years Partnership.

"This 10-year commitment across four sites in WA showcases how a place-based, community-led and innovative model using the best available research and evidence can demonstrate better ways to support children and families and gives us knowledge to benefit all Western Australian families and communities."

Comments attributed to Minderoo Foundation's Co-Founder Nicola Forrest AO:

"I am very proud that the Early Years Partnership has been launched in the central Great Southern and I am grateful for the dedication of all the partners involved, whose work is together improving the lives of Western Australian families.

"Our ambition is that this unique partnership will demonstrate what can be achieved for children and families, not just in the four Early Years Partnership communities, but across WA and nationally - so that all Australian children get the best possible start in life."

Comments attributed to Federal Minister for Early Childhood Education Dr Anne Aly:

"We know quality early learning drives better school outcomes - improving school readiness, as well as increasing retention and graduation rates.

"Children who access early childhood education do better on key measures throughout life, including improved literacy and numeracy skills, better health outcomes and go on to higher paying jobs."

Media Contact: Kelly Brady – (08) 9072 1786