



## Minderoo urges policies that support children and families to thrive

### Media Release

3 August 2016

Today's release of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy results (NAPLAN) highlights the need for change in how Australia prepares children for education.

The preliminary [NAPLAN results](#) have shown little improvement in student outcomes and highlight the continuing divide between students as a result of their location and background. Minderoo believes it is possible that these slipping outcomes could have been prevented if we had a stronger focus on early childhood development before formal education commences.

“By engaging with individual children and families before school starts, possible delays and roadblocks to educational achievement can be detected and remedied before it's too late,” Mrs Nicola Forrest, CEO of the [Minderoo Foundation](#) said.

“Holistic and evidence-based policies that attack disadvantage from all sides can end the disparity that puts some children behind right from birth. We look forward to working with the Turnbull Government to address these issues,” Nicola said.

Minderoo congratulates Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham on his recent re-appointment as Minister for Education and Training and the [announcement](#) of the first site in the \$20 million [Connected Beginnings](#) initiative. The Minister's leadership in this portfolio is critical to the future prosperity and wellbeing of all Australians.

[Connected Beginnings](#) was developed in response to recommendations from Andrew and Nicola Forrest and the *Creating Parity: Forrest Review*. Following its original announcement in May 2015, the \$20 million trial was recommitted by the Turnbull Government in the 2016/17 [Budget](#).

The funding will enable priority communities to increase the integration of child, maternal, health and family support services to drive better outcomes for children and families before formal education commences. The first site is Alice Springs, with further sites to be announced in the coming months.

“Children are our nation's most important asset and the first three years of every child's life are critical to future success. [Connected Beginnings](#) is an opportunity to demonstrate that by more holistically wrapping services around children from birth and engaging with families, we can ensure our children will be school ready. It should be the start of a new way of thinking about and working for our children,” Nicola said.

Learn more about Minderoo's early childhood initiatives and its vision to see every child thrive by the age of five [here](#).

--ends--

### Minderoo Foundation contact:

Hayley Panetta, M: +61 438 014 632

