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MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia-first mapping tool to improve service delivery to children and families launched

Data on Western Australian children's health, learning, development and social characteristics will be mapped using geospatial technology so that community leaders and service providers can identify the priority issues for their children.

The Western Australian Child Development Atlas is the first resource of its kind in Australia to bring together and map in one place a range of data sources that are specifically focused on children's development.

The Atlas will use geo-spatial technology to inform policy making, research and service delivery, and help facilitate coordination between service providers. This technology maps population-level data, grouped into levels of geography (e.g., suburbs), so that patterns in the data can be more readily identified and used for service planning and delivery.

Telethon Kids Institute Director Professor Jonathan Carapetis said the idea for the Atlas came from the Institute's innovative Developmental Pathways Project team and the Western Australian Government agencies they work with. Together they have pioneered population-level data linkage across multiple service sectors in WA.

"Today we are launching the pilot Atlas, which is the first stage of the project," Professor Carapetis said.

"We will be seeking feedback from policy makers, service providers, and researchers with the aim of providing a publicly-available online resource that enables easy access to comprehensive information on the development and wellbeing of children and young people in each Western Australian community."

The Atlas has been created thanks to funding from The Ian Potter Foundation and the Minderoo Foundation. The Ian Potter Foundation has given a grant of \$406,743 over three years to Telethon Kids, and the Minderoo Foundation has provided funding through CoLab, a partnership between Telethon Kids and the Minderoo Foundation. The project has reached its first milestone, the development of a pilot Atlas, launched today.

Minderoo Foundation CEO Nicola Forrest said the idea for the Atlas aligned with CoLab's mandate to enable greater visibility and understanding of efforts to improve child and family outcomes.

"We know that to improve child development outcomes we must understand the unique needs of communities and respond accordingly," Mrs Forrest said.

"The Child Development Atlas will help achieve this by putting data in the hands of those who need it to inform their work.

"Place-based interventions are critical to addressing social inequalities and ensuring equitable access to goods and services, regardless of where children live."

The Atlas is online and interactive and only requires a web browser to operate. It will include indicators of child and youth development and wellbeing outcomes, providing a snapshot of the state of development of children and young people in each community across WA.

Mr Charles Goode AC, Chair of The Ian Potter Foundation said the Foundation was pleased to support this innovative project to create a comprehensive tool designed to inform policy making, service delivery and community capacity resulting in targeted and better integrated services that will improve children's learning and development.

"Once implemented in Western Australia, the Atlas also has potential to be established in other states," Mr Goode said.

The development of the project has involved working closely with Government agencies, researchers, community services and community representatives. Privacy protection measures have been implemented so that no individual data will be displayed or accessible by users, and information will be suppressed for areas with small populations, ensuring that no individual can be identified from the maps.

Ends

About CoLab

[CoLab](#) is a partnership between Telethon Kids Institute and the Minderoo Foundation which unites the expertise of families, policymakers, clinicians, educators, practitioners and researchers, to work together to improve the learning and development of children and reduce inequality.

About the Minderoo Foundation

Minderoo was established by Nicola and Andrew Forrest in 2001 based on the mandate to give a hand up, not a hand out. Since establishment the Foundation has committed \$645m to a wide range of causes – from ending modern slavery to improving the lives of Australian children - and worked with over 250 partners in Australia and beyond.

About The Ian Potter Foundation

The Ian Potter Foundation is one of Australia's major philanthropic foundations. The Foundation makes grants nationally to support charitable organisations working to benefit the community across a wide range of sectors including the arts, environment, science, medical research, education and community wellbeing. The Ian Potter Foundation aims to support and promote a healthy, vibrant and fair community for the benefit of all Australians.

Media Contacts:

Telethon Kids: Jean Perkins 0438 886 954 or jean.perkins@telethonkids.org.au
Minderoo: Tess Ingram 0448 922 364 or tingram@minderoo.com.au