

## **Join us to drive the nation's economic prosperity by investing in Australian children.**

ReadyNation Australia is a business membership organisation working to strengthen business and the economy through promoting better policies for children. Our business executive and board level leaders work with policy makers and educate the public about the need for effective investments in early childhood that will help children succeed in life, help business compete in today's global marketplace, and build a national foundation for lasting economic security.

### **Our mission is to work with business leaders to:**

- demonstrate that the most effective investment in economic prosperity and business sustainability is in the early years of a child's life
- influence key policy makers so that they understand the importance of investing in our children's first five years of life and, in particular, targeted investment in disadvantaged children and indigenous children living in adversity
- help to ensure all children are better resourced and prepared so that they can contribute and participate in the future of our society and the workforce
- highlight the vital importance of investing in programs, such as STEM and STEAM, that will give children the best preparation for the world of work
- actively promote the policies and investments that will help achieve national economic prosperity and a better future for children

### **Why does Australia need ReadyNation?**

The rapid rate of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is creating new challenges to our national prosperity. To meet these demands business leaders now require a workforce of skilled, flexible and resilient employees. The evolution of new types of employment and ways of working will put further pressure on all of us to adapt to this new environment.

Yet Australia is not prepared for this future and is poorly positioned for the serious threats to its economic prosperity. Today in Australia:

- One in five children is not ready for their first year of school and Indigenous children are twice as likely to be unprepared for school.
- Of the 600,000 children living in poverty in our nation, 70% live in households with no adult in paid work and the rate of joblessness is worse in sole parent families.
- By the time our children are 14 years of age, 28% of them are failing high school.
- At the age of 24, some 26% of young Australians are not in any type of employment, study or training.
- Two in five of all adult Australians are not fully literate.

We know from international experience that this lack of investment in children can have a significant impact not just on the individual, their family and local community, but on national security and prosperity. In the US, 70 percent of young adults aged 17 to 24 cannot qualify for military service because they are not academically prepared, are overweight, or have a record of crime or drug abuse.

## **We can make a difference.**

Brain studies show that in the first five years of life, children build the foundations for their future. Not only does more than 80 percent of brain development occur in those years, children also learn the skills they will need to participate in school, work and life.

Research from around the world shows that access to quality early learning, including formal care and programs that help parents give their children the support they need, is the most effective way of lifting all children and improving their lives today and into the future. Renowned economist Heckman (2006) says, “Investing in disadvantaged young children is a rare public policy with no equity-efficiency trade-off. It reduces the inequality associated with the accident of birth and at the same time raises the productivity of society at large.” He finds investment in the early years has the highest rates of return on investment (up to 10% per annum).

Yet, as a nation, Australia is lagging in participation in early learning and other programs for the birth to five group despite growing evidence that this is crucial to future health, well-being and productivity.

## **Why will business make a difference?**

Over the past 10 years ReadyNation US has demonstrated the difference business advocates for quality early learning can make. Powerful, independent voices often have greater impact on public policy and opinion than sector representatives and lobby groups.

In the US ReadyNation has built a coalition of more than 1100 executive and board level members that has successfully advocated for policy change and increased or maintained investment in early childhood across the nation.

## **What can Business Leaders do?**

Business leaders join ReadyNation Australia and receive the support to:

- ✓ Inform policy makers and elected officials about the value of early childhood investments
- ✓ Speak to the media
- ✓ Participate in the production of digital content and campaigns (eg video, blogs)
- ✓ Host an event to share information with business
- ✓ Give conference key note talks and presentations within professional circles
- ✓ Support programs in the communities they are located
- ✓ Support the collection of research and evidence
- ✓ Encourage your business colleagues to develop formal positions on the benefits of effective early childhood programs
- ✓ Give your employees information about the importance of childhood and what they can do
- ✓ Adopt family-friendly practices in your business

## **How ReadyNation Australia can help.**

Business people who become members of ReadyNation Australia will receive support to speak out. ReadyNation will:

- ✓ Build and share the business case and roadmap in Australia for economic prosperity through early childhood programs and investment
- ✓ Provide supporting materials, including summaries of research and evidence based on effective investments and programs

- ✓ Provide monthly e-newsletters on new evidence, business networking events and champions
- ✓ Provide access to business leaders as speakers, plus provide sample speeches, op-eds, talking points, and other communications
- ✓ Provide support for meetings with policy makers and elected officials
- ✓ Provide business events and conferences