



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

The Front Project is an independent national enterprise focused on better outcomes for Australian children and society. We bring the early years (children aged 0-5) into focus for business leaders and communities with a clear **vision**: that all Australian children are thriving from the start and driving our national prosperity.

**Our mission is twofold:** to ensure all Australian leaders and the community are committed to placing a new value on the early years, and for all Australian children to have the 21st century attributes they need to thrive.

### **Why does Australia need The Front Project?**

We believe that when children have access to a stimulating environment early in their lives, they thrive through life. And when people thrive in life and work, our national productivity, health and wellbeing is dramatically increased.

Our purpose is to increase the value placed on the early years so that children thrive through life and our national prosperity is lifted.

The biggest shift we need to make is in our hearts and minds. Investing in the early years will yield results for generations ahead.

The Front Project exists to:

1. Partner with influential business and community leaders to advocate for the future prosperity of Australia
2. Drive public campaigns based on the strong evidence base that links the early years to better business outcomes
3. Provide the tools and platforms leaders need to ignite positive systems change

### **Why should Australian businesses care about the early years?**

The rapid rate of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is generating 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 evolution and is poorly positioned for the serious threats to its economic prosperity and capacity to build a workforce of the future.



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 when they start.
- Of the 600,000 children living in poverty, 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.

### **Investment in the early years can make a difference.**

Brain studies show that in the first five years of life, children build the foundations for their future. More than 80 percent of brain development occur in those years, and 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 US economist, Professor James 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.”. Heckman finds investment in the early years has the highest rates of return on investment (up to 10% every year.)

### **How can Australian businesses help?**

Business leaders can join The Front Project and receive the support to generate interest in their community by doing things like informing policy makers and elected officials about the value of early childhood investments, host an event to share information with business, give conference key note talks and presentations within professional circles, speak to the media, or provide your employees with information about the importance of childhood and what they can do.

We can also 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, and influence key policy makers so that they understand the importance of investing in our children’s first five years of life.

**For more information or to get involved with The Front Project, please email us at [info@thefrontproject.org.au](mailto:info@thefrontproject.org.au)**