



Media Release

ADDRESSING YOUTH CRIME WILL REQUIRE REFORMS THAT HELP PROVIDE CHILDREN THE BEST START TO LIFE

9 July 2024 - Minderoo Foundation's Thrive by Five campaign has stressed the need for comprehensive early childhood reforms as a key long-term prevention strategy for youth crime in the Northern Territory.

Sarah Rheinberger, convenor of the Thrive by Five Northern Territory Early Childhood Alliance, said ensuring every child had access to high-quality learning and holistic health and development support in the early years would provide them with the best start to life and reduce their interactions with the criminal justice system.

"Research from a wide range of experts has time and again highlighted the importance of early intervention and prevention in reducing youth crime," Ms Rheinberger said.

"However, discussions about the best ways to address challenges with youth crime often do not include a conversation about early childhood reforms.

"This must change. We must recognise that short-term reactionary measures such as curfews and punitive policing policies will not address the root causes of the issue."

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, said that any meaningful conversation about solutions to the challenges of youth crime must include a discussion on early childhood reforms.

"Curfews should not be part of the policing tool kit, we need to look at sustainable solutions," Ms Liddle said.

"SNAICC has proposed a child and family support hub that offers early interventions to vulnerable families and children.

"It could offer early education and care, support for older children to attend school, and connections to other services such as accommodation, therapeutic care, finance, employment, return to country, Centrelink and DSS.

"What is vital is that the services would come to where the families are – in the short term this could be the RFDS lawns, town camps and urban housing

“There is no doubt that if better supports, such as high quality, culturally safe early childhood education and care, were made available to all families and children from the beginning, that the situation we face today could’ve been avoided.

“Long term solutions must include building a truly comprehensive and supportive early childhood education and care system, one that is accessible by all.”

About Minderoo Foundation:

Minderoo Foundation takes on tough, persistent issues with the potential to drive massive change. We incubate ideas, advocate for systems change and accelerate impact. We push the limits of what is believed possible. Minderoo Foundation is proudly Australian, independent, forward-thinking and seeks effective, scalable solutions. Through bold, collaborative, and selfless action, we seek to dismantle the systems that entrench inequality and fight for a fair future.

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