

# Working Together Agreement

December 2023



A commitment between Government and philanthropic partners to a long-term collaboration to improve the wellbeing of children, young people, and their families, by working with communities to reduce intergenerational disadvantage in Australia.

## Our Vision

**An inclusive and equitable Australia where all children, families and communities can fulfil their potential.**

Australia's greatest assets are our people, families, and communities. Yet many people in Australia experience disadvantage, which can be persistent, entrenched and disproportionately concentrated in geographic locations.

One in 5 children in Australia starts school developmentally behind their peers. This can have significant implications for their ability to grow, learn, participate, and contribute throughout their lives. These challenges can compound further for some children and families, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and in communities experiencing place-based disadvantage.

A collaborative and long-term approach is needed to ensure all children and young people across Australia can fulfil their potential. We believe this requires a different way of working and strong, enduring partnerships between key stakeholders, including between communities, philanthropy, and governments.

We aim to bring governments and policy makers, philanthropic funders, investors, communities, academic experts, practitioners, business, and service delivery groups, together. We will share expertise, data, and resources to translate and measure what works and what matters. And we can help communities build solutions that respond to local need, with access to targeted support and services within a person-centred, needs-based framework.

## Our Commitments

**Collaboration:** We will work together and work differently – collaborating within and across sectors, in partnership with communities, and in ways that empower children and families. We will bring our investments, leadership, influence, and genuine collaboration in support of community-led strategies for change. We know together, and with diverse perspectives, we can achieve more.

**Long-term approach:** We will work over the coming decade to enable lasting positive, intergenerational change, particularly for those who face disproportionate levels of disadvantage including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, and those from diverse cultures. We recognise to do this will take time; to enhance work already underway and to try new things, as well as to see results.

**Community led:** We recognise communities are experts in their own experience and have solutions, driven by local data and lived experience. Children and families have voices we need to hear and respect. We will embrace opportunities to learn from and work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and organisations.

**Meaningful outcomes:** We will work to make a real and positive difference for people; good intentions are not enough. We recognise, where necessary, this will require changes to systems, not just new programs.

**Continual improvement:** We will work in a shared learning culture. We will strengthen our capabilities to collaborate and work in partnership with communities. Transparent evaluation, learning, and adaptation throughout are integral to understanding and furthering our impact.

## Our Focus

We will focus on ambitious, measurable objectives that could not be achieved by government or philanthropy working on their own.

The Dialogue will draw on the strengths of both philanthropy and government, including:

- Philanthropy's agility, independence and ability to take risks and fund innovative solutions through longer-term investments that build a compelling evidence base;
- Government's capacity to scale and sustain what works in communities and make informed, evidence based changes to policy, regulatory and legislative settings.

Priorities and opportunities will be focused across four domains, in alignment with Government, philanthropy and community priorities, and the long term broader public interest:

- **Projects and Programs:** We will look for opportunities to align our investments to reduce duplication, appropriately allocate resources, incentivise innovation and maximise our collective impact.
- **Place:** We will work in partnership to deliver targeted, place-specific solutions that are community-led. We will invest in capability and will share leadership with communities and people with lived experience of the challenges we seek to address.
- **Policy and system level reforms:** We will create the conditions necessary for systems change and aim to better deliver solutions in genuine partnerships with local communities. We will work to ensure services and systems are adjusted to meet the needs of local communities where required.
- **Data and evaluation:** We will prioritise improvements to data and evaluation practices, including improved community access to data, to help identify priority areas for reform, enable effective investment decisions, and support community decision making.

## Invitation

We invite current and future philanthropies and governments to commit to the vision and shared objectives of the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children.

### Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP

Treasurer

### Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Social Services

### Prof Kristy Muir

Paul Ramsay Foundation

### Paul Conroy

The Ian Potter Foundation

### Matthew Cox

The Bryan Foundation

**The Berg Family  
Foundation**

