



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for the Public Service
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House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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May 26 2020

Dear Prime Minister

We commend the extraordinary, collaborative leadership - through mechanisms like the National Cabinet that you have established. Australian Governments have rolled up their sleeves, and rolled out the most significant economic stimulus and social support packages this country has ever seen.

These determined efforts have minimised public health risks and hardship, and provided essential stimulus to the economy. Social cohesion and confidence in governments is high as decisions are timely and evidence-based.

To build a more resilient and prosperous future for Australia beyond COVID-19, there is no better investment than the wellbeing of children and young people.

This can be a defining moment in Australia where we build back better together beyond COVID-19 to ensure that all children start school ready to learn and leave school equipped for life. Australia is an international in our COVID-19 response, we can now be a leader in how we deal with our post-COVID-19 future.

We urge you to implement a New Nation-Building Commitment for children and young people with 6 main features (Attachment 1):

1. Continue the National Cabinet – This mechanism has been highly effective in driving timely decisions that promote economic stimulus and public health.
2. Elevate the wellbeing and prosperity of children and young people with increased investment in infrastructure for children and young people.
3. Implement an Every Child Support Guarantee – Ensure that every child will have access to quality child care and early learning; education and health services, and a decent home and family income.
4. Large scale national roll-out of Early Years Centres – A flagship program of child and family, health and wellbeing centres that offer integrated health, education, housing, disability, home visitation and related support services in regions across Australia, will improve child development.
5. Invest in a 20 year nation-building Affordable Housing Strategy – Ensure that all children and young people have a secure place to call home.
6. Report annually on a Prosperous Children Report Card – This must feature wellbeing targets for children and young people alongside GDP as a measure of progress and guide to investment.



Our concern is that children and young people in jobless households, without decent housing and income, and those with disabilities, have been at particular risk of hardship during these challenging times.

We knew that prior to COVID-19 20% of Australian children were not doing well – this has been compounded by the COVID-19 experience. We also knew that the cost of late action – of not providing timely support to children and families – was estimated at \$15 billion annually.

We must maximise this opportunity to build back Australian communities better with economic infrastructure (such as affordable housing) and program infrastructure that significantly improves the resilience and quality of life for all children, young people and families. This is not only central to building back a more robust and functional society but also for our future economic prosperity.

Australia can be the best place to raise children.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Nowlan'.

Kirsty Nowlan
Executive Director, The Benevolent Society
Co-Chair Every Child

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Schrapel'.

Simon Schrapel
CEO, Uniting Communities SA
Co-Chair Every Child