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BHP and Child Australia partner to create 'Thriving Futures' in early childhood learning in the Pilbara

World-leading resources company BHP has partnered with respected not for profit Child Australia in 'Thriving Futures', a unique project that will develop career pathways for the Pilbara workforce into early childhood education and care, and provide more opportunities for local children to be engaged in high quality early learning.

Proudly funded by BHP 'Thriving Futures' will support the workforce in Hedland and Newman to engage in career opportunities in the early childhood education and care sector. The project will encourage career pathways with a focus on retention, sustainability, and enhanced professionalisation.

With the shortage of early childhood education services throughout the Pilbara, BHP and Child Australia have partnered to develop a sustainable workforce strategy for the local sector. With over 30-years of experience providing exemplary early childhood learning services in regional communities throughout Western Australia and in remote communities in the Northern Territory, Child Australia is able to draw on parallel challenges facing service delivery throughout the Pilbara.

The partnership aims to increase the number of qualified educators in the region who have access to career development pathways; increase the number of people seeking to establish a career with early learning services; develop a co-ordinated approach to continuing professional development; improve business practices, workplace relationships, stability of the workforce; and increase the number of children engaged in high quality early learning.

Scholarships will be offered to assist eligible candidates in the Pilbara region to obtain the skills and qualifications required to begin a career in early childhood education and care. The local recruitment strategy will encourage the indigenous community and workplace programs, school leavers, parents re-entering the workforce, and mature-age workers looking to reinvigorate their careers.

BHP's WA Manager Communities Chris Cottier said, "The benefits of developing a regular, familiar and consistent early childhood workforce in the Pilbara will provide continuity to both the children and their families, inspiring long-term use of facilities and services. Early childhood education equips children with the skills and capacity to be effective and engaged learners through to school and beyond, so this project will deliver add-on benefits in the Pilbara region for years to come."

Child Australia's CEO Ms Tina Holtom said, "There's something quite powerful about a mining giant partnering with a small not-for-profit organisation to effect genuine change to improve opportunities for children. We are very proud to partner with BHP on this project. Our organisation has a long history working in the Pilbara and we're really looking forward to working alongside stakeholders and the local communities to support and build sustainable practices that will improve developmental outcomes for children.

"A career supporting children in their early years is incredibly rewarding on many levels. There are very few professions where your impact can help to shape and nurture the future of generations of children. COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated the importance of this 'essential' workforce and the critical role this sector continues to play in economic recovery. There has never been a greater time to be an early childhood educator".

Project Website: www.thrivingfutures.org.au

enriching children's lives

About Child Australia

Established in 1987 Child Australia is a not for profit organisation and a leading provider of professional development and support for the education sector in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Child Australia's purpose is to develop the capacity of professionals working with children, families, and the community to support children's wellbeing, learning and development. More information at www.childaustralia.org.au

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