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## Game Changer for Child Opportunity

### A bold new approach to transform vulnerable children's lives from cradle to career

More than twenty-two per cent (22%) of children in Australia are today considered vulnerable – one in four are not ready to start school due to poor living and developmental environments. A new national initiative, known as Opportunity Child, to be launched in Sydney today, aims to reduce early childhood vulnerability in 20 Australian communities over the next 10 years.

Opportunity Child will trial a new approach to collaboration – increasingly known as “collective impact” – in communities that want to substantially improve educational and developmental results for their children.

The goal is to build a \$30m capital fund that leverages contributions from community, philanthropy, corporate and government, beginning with a \$10m seed funding base from the [ten20 Foundation](#). The community-led initiative includes a partnership between the [ten20 Foundation](#) and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth ([ARACY](#)).

“With changing demographics and increased budgetary pressures, there is growing recognition that complex social problems demand new answers. These answers cannot rely on increases in government funding for programs, but must instead focus on new ways of working together – with and in the community, to tackle complex social issues affecting our children.” said **Seri Renkin, CEO, ten20 Foundation**.

“**Opportunity Child is a game changer** to drive the accountability required for whole communities, including business and philanthropy, to work together for common goals focused on children achieving their potential.

“**It is the first time that a multi sector consortium is making a capital investment on this scale which will focus on maximising the potential of children**

“We talk all the time about collaboration but rarely is it properly resourced for success and is often operating in a silo.

“We know one in six children are at risk of neglect and abuse, and one in four are not ready to start school due to poor living and developmental environments – if we work differently with communities, aligning our individual efforts towards a shared vision, lives can be transformed,” Seri Renkin said.

The initiative will focus on getting results for children and youth, by aligning visions from community with the efforts of local agencies, practitioners and funders. It will build on local effort and move toward greater focus on prevention and early intervention to improve child wellbeing. [The Nest: A national plan for child and youth wellbeing](#) will support this work at the grass roots level.

“We are proud the evidence-based strategies and common measurement framework outlined in [The Nest action agenda](#) will be drawn on to inform this initiative. We are looking forward to working with other partners in creating a learning system that captures what works (and what doesn’t work) in improving child wellbeing,” said **Dr Emerson, CEO ARACY**.

“We shall seek further participation and funding from those interested in co-investing in this strategic opportunity. We will also be talking with the Federal government about the new role they can play in working with communities and the NGO sector to support development of a strong results-based framework.” **Ms Renkin** said.

## Important Additional Facts

- Children are 25% of our population and 100% of our future
- The OECD released a report into the early childhood policies, and government spending on the early years, from 20 countries in 2006. At this time Australia was ranked the lowest.
- The ABS estimates that approximately 5 million children under 18 years of age will be living in Australia by the year 2025. (*Australian Government Law Reform Commission - ALRC Report 84*)
- More than twenty-two per cent (22%) of children in Australia are today considered vulnerable.
- Up to 70% of teenagers in some of the communities that will be targeted under *Opportunity Child* are in our justice system.
- Based on latest estimates, here's what we're currently spending as a nation on our most vulnerable:
  - Government – at least \$165 billion into administering and delivering social programs
  - Non-profit sector – an additional \$90 billion on social programs
  - Total philanthropy – private funds, foundations etc. – another \$1-1.5 billion
  - That's at least \$250 billion per annum (estimated)<sup>1</sup>.

## About The ten20 Foundation

The ten20 Foundation is a new catalytic philanthropy organisation, providing ten years of funding and service support to 20 Australian communities leading collaborative models of social change, to create opportunity for all children. Ten20 dedicates it's \$10m corpus to convening Opportunity Child that will enable, through the provision of funding and service support, selected demonstration communities across Australia to lead the alignment of effort around a common agenda and shared outcomes so that all children turn up to school ready to learn. Support will focus on developing the community's capacity around i) community leadership and collaboration ii) shared data and measurement and iii) blended capital utilisation. Case studies, tools and proposed policy reforms arising from these 20 demonstration communities will be captured in an open source learning system for widespread dissemination. Visit our website for further information: [www.ten20.com.au](http://www.ten20.com.au)

## About ARACY

At ARACY, we progress and promote evidence-based programs and strategies to improve the wellbeing of children and youth. As a national not-for-profit organisation, we work collaboratively with our 3300 members, both individual and organisational, to turn 'what works' into practical, preventative action. Through these collaborative efforts, we have led positive change in many areas of early childhood, middle years and youth development, and more than tripled our membership in recent years. Visit our website for further information: [aracy.org.au](http://aracy.org.au)

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