A good beginning to life is recognised world-wide as the foundation for future development, health and wellbeing.

Focusing on the learning, physical, social, emotional and cultural dimensions of childhood, directly impact a person’s ability to achieve their potential throughout their life.

Recognising this opportunity, in 2014 Woodside committed A$20 million over 10 years to early childhood development to decrease developmental vulnerability and improve outcomes for children aged zero to eight in the communities in which we operate globally.

The Woodside Development Fund (WDF) strives to build alliances that bring together resources and expertise from early childhood non-profits, researchers, analysts, businesses, academic institutions, philanthropy and government to drive social change.

WDF aims to energise, collaborate and advocate. We believe that by working together we can generate systematic change by creating and enabling conditions for improved early childhood development in our host communities.

The early years of a child’s life have a profound effect on their future.
Building stronger communities

We build and maintain genuine long-term relationships and implement programs that build capacity and capability in local communities. We identify opportunities of mutual benefit for our communities and business to create shared value.

OUR LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS

Innovation and technology

A$25 million

committed over the next five years towards schools, universities and learning centres to create world-class infrastructure and resources.

Woodside Development Fund

A$20 million

committed over 10 years (2014-2024) in support of early childhood development.

Corporate volunteering

39,000

Woodside employee hours contributed through corporate volunteering since 2010, equivalent to a value of A$6.3 million.

Indigenous community outcomes

A$33 million

contributed to support Indigenous communities since 2012.
In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed on the National Early Childhood Development Strategy with the vision that “...by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for them and for the nation.”

Woodside Development Fund


Focus on projects that contribute globally to the education, health and well-being of children aged zero to eight years.

Work collaboratively to reduce development vulnerability and improve outcomes for early childhood.

Outcomes and key performance indicators are long-term and measurable.

Commitment to collaborating with other leaders in the early childhood sector.

Photo: Plan International
Catalysing the potential of children creates benefits for communities today and tomorrow.

By focusing on the early years we believe we can have a positive collective impact on improving health, productivity and participation outcomes in our host communities.

In Australia, one in five children are developmentally vulnerable when they begin school.\(^1\) Evidence shows that when children start school behind, they stay behind.\(^2\)

Economic research by Nobel Laureate in Economics Dr. James Heckman has demonstrated that high-quality early childhood programs can deliver a 13% per year return on investment. This means a great return to individuals and society in better education, health, economic and social outcomes.\(^3\)

When a child is able to reach their full potential, with strong family support, it helps to create stronger, more resilient communities. Communities where there is sustained employment and workforces, and economic and social development.

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\(^1\) 2015 AECD Results, ‘Emerging trends from the AECD’, March 2016.
We believe the future of communities is worth investing in.
Investment snapshot

Collaboration is central to the WDF and the input of a range of cross-sector experts during the design phase was vital in developing the strategy.

Since its launch in 2014, the WDF has invested in a range of community-based collaboration initiatives and programs to build capacity within the early childhood sector and enhance leadership and advocacy to drive change.

11 initiatives funded since inception.

A consistent monitoring and evaluation framework to manage and report social outcomes.

Development of kindergarten curriculum with the Ministry of Education, Myanmar.

9 Employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians, directly working with WDF partners.

Community of practice developed amongst WDF partners.

Leveraged funding into initiatives at a ratio of 1:7.4

Training and development opportunities for early childhood professionals.

Investments in Indigenous Australian children and families

Dampier Peninsula Family Wellbeing Coordination Project

Woodside has partnered with Save the Children to work with four local communities of the Dampier Peninsula in Northern Western Australia, to create a unified approach to improve health and development outcomes for children.

The initiative involves local elders, school principals, medical services and local and federal government agencies. It also provides support to build local capability in the early years sector.

In 2016, extensive work was carried out to complete and distribute a comprehensive analysis and establish priorities for 2017.

Results included:
- Community leaders see a need to overcome social issues to create a more supportive environment for children, and their role in this; and
- Service providers, have identified a need for stronger co-ordination between services to maximise effectiveness.

TWO Aboriginal trainees completed Certificate 3 in Early Childhood Services and one is continuing to complete the Diploma in Early Childhood.

Save the Children is collaborating with key Indigenous organisations, Aarnja, Goolarri Media, Kalaari Employment, Beagle Bay Futures and Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre.

Project adopted by the WA Government’s Regional Services Reform Unit as pilot site.
Pilbara Early Years Networks (Karratha/Roebourne)

Woodside is collaborating with Regional Development Australia, to support the Roebourne and Karratha Early Years Network and Pilbara Early Years Group.

The objectives of this initiative are to improve the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) community results, increase school readiness and provide access to professional development opportunities for Early Years Network members.

The presence of an effective Early Years Network provides a central mechanism through which local service providers, government and other stakeholders can come together to identify local issues, gaps and needs, share information and learnings, build capacity and develop local collaborations to support children and families.

65% of Roebourne and Karratha Early Years Networks report that their involvement has increased collaboration with other service providers.

55% report that their response to community needs has improved.

Regional Development Officer recruited to coordinate and support the Early Years Networks.

This initiative aims to improve the AEDC community profile results, increase school readiness and access to professional development opportunities.
The WDF commenced its support of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, in late 2016.

SNAICC is the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and is supported by a Strategic Alliance of over 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations.

The support provided by the WDF is directed towards the Family Matters Western Australian Working Group, which is working to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.
Investments targeting community-based collaboration

Connecting Community for Kids (Cockburn & Kwinana Collective Impact Initiative)

Connecting Community for Kids is about empowering parents, local services, industry and civic leaders in the communities of Cockburn and Kwinana, south of Perth, to work together and make a lasting difference in the lives of children pre-birth to eight and their families.

The initiative works across government and the community sector to identify gaps and duplication to improve Australian Early Development Census results in the communities and close the gap with metropolitan Perth.

A Memorandum of Understanding to underpin the governance structure help senior leaders across multiple government sectors to hold each other to account. Data experts across many fields are also increasingly sharing knowledge and information to ensure the right steps will be taken to achieve strong outcomes for kids.

Success of this initiative will help to demonstrate what is needed in a community to build the capacity and capability required to support successful structures or systems to improve early childhood outcomes.

Memorandum of Understanding between State and Local Government, service providers and Woodside is in place to underpin the initiative’s governance.

Regional leadership community reference groups have been formed to ensure the initiative is community-driven.

“The credibility and opportunity offered by the robust governance structure of Connecting Community for Kids provides a national model to enable place-based social change.”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OPPORTUNITY CHILD
Investments to build capacity and capability

Building Partnerships

Woodside funded Ngala from 2015–2017 to provide Platforms and Family Partnership training to all Child and Parent Centres (CPCs).

CPCs are community centres located at public primary schools across Western Australia.

The aim of this initiative is to work toward an integrated delivery model that will enable high-quality, accessible and coordinated early learning, parenting, child and maternal health and well-being services for families with children zero to eight.

The training builds capacity by:

+ Focusing efforts on outcomes;
+ Promoting genuine community engagement and family partnerships;
+ Facilitating and nurturing community level collaboration and innovation;
+ Establishing effective facilitative relationships with parents; and
+ Helping parents identify their strengths, explore issues and create positive change.

During 2015 and 2016, 128 people representing 25 organisations across WA have attended Ngala’s Platforms and Family Partnership training.
Connecting Early Years Networks

An Early Years Network is a group of interested volunteers (parents, family members, people working with young children) working in collaboration in a local community to improve outcomes for children aged zero to eight and their families.

The networks play a fundamental role in supporting young children and their families by improving the access, uptake and quality of services available.

Through the Western Australian Council of Social Services, the WDF supported the Connecting Early Years Networks initiative in 2015 and 2016 to assist over 45 Early Years Networks across Western Australia become sustainable and achieve their full potential.

This initiative built on existing early childhood development support networks to:

+ Ensure improved sustainability through engagement, professional development, education and training; and
+ Develop an online platform to facilitate sharing between networks (eyn.dropin.org.au).

The Connecting Early Years Networks initiative was also supported by Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government and Communities.

Early Years Resource Kit developed for community members and service providers to use when establishing and sustaining early years networks in Western Australia.

A guide developed to better support early years networks to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
Family Connections - Supporting vulnerable children through child care

Woodside has funded Goodstart Early Learning to implement a training program to build educators’ family and community collaboration skills to create environments that improve children’s social, emotional and language skills for better long term outcomes.

Goodstart Early Learning is a network of early learning centres that operate as a not-for-profit, with all generated surplus invested back into early learning initiatives.

Through this program, Goodstart Early Learning are repositioning the early learning centres as valuable assets in each community which are inter-connected with other local services and resources.

Following a one-year pilot program in 2016, the program is now working with Connecting Community for Kids initiative also supported by the WDF, to identify more centres in the Cockburn/Kwinana area to benefit from the training.

Capability training to 233 educators from 20 care centres in the Perth metropolitan area.

Positively impacting learning outcomes of about 2000 children.

Supporting over 1600 families with their children’s early learning needs.
Opportunity Child

In 2014, the WDF and ten20 Foundation worked together to develop a new collective impact approach to funding early childhood development and systems change.

This national initiative, called Opportunity Child, is guided by a shared strategy and vision, delivered through five key areas of work: building a collective, shared learning, agile funding, measuring impact and speaking with a unified and influential voice.

The goal of Opportunity Child is to dramatically improve the lives of the 65,000 children who start school each year in Australia with challenges in learning and life.

Opportunity Child is focused on creating a positive change for children in six partner communities across Australia. Connecting Community for Kids, which is also funded by the WDF is one of the initiative’s partner communities.

The approach Opportunity Child is taking is unique, because it is using the power of collective impact, led by communities who drive local and national innovation together.

National shared measurement framework developed in partnership with Telethon Kids Institute, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and the Centre for Social Impact. The framework ensures a consistent measurement and evaluation across the six Opportunity Child communities.

Joined the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to engage on collective learning on place-based approaches.
Investment to support advocacy for the early years

The Front Project

Woodside is a key foundation partner in this business-membership organisation, which was founded in 2016.

The Front Project works to unite the Australian business community to improve the prosperity of the country through investment in the early years.

The organisation has built a powerful community of corporates and individuals who believe in the benefits of early learning and school education, and are committed to helping ensure that Australian workers are skilled, flexible and responsive.

Uniting the business community to improve the prosperity of Australia through investment in the early years.

Building a community of corporates and individuals who believe in the benefits of early learning.
International investment

Myanmar Early Childhood Care and Development Project

The WDF’s first international investment was in 2016 in Myanmar, in the form of a joint collaboration between the Australian Government, Plan International, Save the Children and local organisation Pann Pyoe Latt.

The Project engaged parents in the development and application of early years education, hygiene and nutrition, which enabled vulnerable families to not only change their own parenting practices, but to also reach out to neighbours and other family members.

The Project also contributed to the development of kindergarten curriculum with the Myanmar Department of Education and provided training for Pann Pyoe Latt in organisational development and governance.

Following the successful pilot year, the WDF committed to supporting Plan International and expanding the Project for a further three years. This consolidates the work already undertaken, builds on gains made on improving early childhood development in the pilot communities, as well as provides expansion into additional villages.

Over 1300 families engaged in parenting and early childhood education programs.

Selection and training of parenting group facilitators, formation of parenting groups and support for volunteer-run community playgroups for young children.

Photo: Plan International
Education and Empowerment of Children in Dakar, Senegal

In 2017, the WDF committed to its first investment in Senegal. The education and Empowerment of Children Program is a collaboration between Save the Children working in partnership with a longstanding local organisation ENDA Jeunesse.

In the pilot year of the program (2017 – 2018), Save the Children will focus on three communities of Dakar (Guediawaye, Pikine and Rufisque) targeting children aged zero to eight.

The program aims to support teacher training and improve educational outcomes.

Activities will include establishing head teacher peer support circles, as well as support to introduce new teaching methodologies. Training and support will also be provided in leadership, protection, community liaison, and creating positive learning environments.
Through the Woodside Development Fund, we aim to be an energiser, advocate and collaborator.

WOODSIDE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & MANAGING DIRECTOR, PETER COLEMAN

Our Woodside Development Fund Network