



Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre

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Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre to Provide World-leading Care for Kids with Cancer

Sydney, Australia: Every week in Australia, 20 children are diagnosed with cancer. Globally, 400,000 babies, children and young people are diagnosed with cancer every year. Too often, parents are told there are no further treatment options to save their child - a truly heart-breaking conversation.

Today the Hon. Greg Hunt MP announced a major philanthropic donation for Australia's first Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre which will be integrated into the new redevelopment for the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick.

To bolster the generous funding commitments from the NSW Government, Federal Government and the University of New South Wales (UNSW), a further \$50 million is required from philanthropic donations to complete the project and enable even greater investment in technology, research and services to offer the best possible care for sick children.

It was announced Minderoo Foundation will donate \$15 million with Chairman Dr Andrew Forrest AO and Co-Chair Nicola Forrest AO lending their patronage to help attract the final \$35 million required. In recognition of this philanthropic leadership the Centre will be known as the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

The 20,000 sqm Centre – a partnership between the Kid's Cancer Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick, Children's Cancer Institute and University of New South Wales – will be the first of its kind in Australia: a fully integrated cancer centre, combining world-leading clinical care, with ground-breaking research and education, to change the face of paediatric cancer and ultimately, put an end to childhood cancer.

Federal Health Minister, Mr Hunt said the partnership of Children's Cancer Institute, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and UNSW, "will provide the depth, breadth and excellence of research, clinical and education-focused child cancer activities that will position the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre amongst the leading paediatric cancer centres in the world."

Dr Forrest said, "our ultimate goal must be to make childhood cancer non-fatal. Nicola and I see the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre as a major step toward achieving that goal. It will enable the critical linkage between research and clinical care to drive and expedite collaboration in a single centre. There is power in philanthropy, the scientific community and government coming together to avoid the incalculable tragedy of losing the life of a child."

Mrs Forrest said, "we are proud to be leading the way in helping to realise this extraordinary vision, and invite our fellow passionate Australians to help ensure this world-leading Centre, reaches its full potential, saving the lives of children with cancer".



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The \$658 million investment in the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre includes: \$478 million from the NSW Government; \$100 million from the Commonwealth Government; \$25 million from Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation; \$25 million from Children's Cancer Institute and the University of NSW is providing a \$30 million in-kind contribution for the Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre within the adjacent UNSW Health Translation Hub.

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton said she is proud to be part of a record investment in paediatric healthcare, "the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre is an investment in the future of paediatric healthcare at Randwick. It is an ambitious project, building on the clinical excellence and child-centred focus of existing services."

Professor Michelle Haber AM, Executive Director, Children's Cancer Institute added, "Building on decades of success between Children's Cancer Institute and Kid's Cancer Centre this centre will be globally leading with positive impact for children with cancer in Australia and internationally," she said.

"The vision for the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre is to be the leading children's comprehensive cancer centre world-wide providing for the seamless integration of clinical care and research, with the goal of putting an end to childhood cancer."

Expected to open in 2025, the Centre will support children like Rory who is being treated through the Zero Childhood Cancer program (ZERO) - a flagship collaboration led by clinical and scientific teams at the Kids Cancer Centre, Randwick and Children's Cancer Institute.

At the age of two and a half years, Rory's parents were told the unthinkable - he had a very rare aggressive thyroid cancer that had already metastasised to his neck and chest.

Analysis of Rory's cancer and blood through ZERO, confirmed he had a RET mutation and a rare inherited cancer predisposition syndrome.

Equipped with this genomic information, Rory's oncologist, A/Prof Anazodo was able to direct the family toward a clinical trial available at the Kids Cancer Centre using a drug called Selpercatinib, designed to specifically target RET.

Fast forward to today, Rory has had a complete response to this oral therapy and has been able to continue his treatment closer to home in Port Macquarie.

Mum, Aimee, said her son's response has been remarkable, "Rory started cycle 25 of treatment last week and has been responding positively to therapy with no side effects – my husband and I are completely blown away."



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“The journey we’ve been on is nothing short of remarkable. To be given such an unknown prognosis to watching him now, is the best news a parent can hope for. Prior to treatment, he wasn’t growing or gaining weight and he was so developmentally delayed - this therapy has completely turned his life around.”

Using a well-developed outreach partnership between Sydney specialists, his local paediatrician and GP on the Mid North Coast, his care can now mostly be done closer to home.

Professor Tracey O’Brien, Director of Kids Cancer Centre said, “care for kids like Rory with rare cancers, requires pushing the boundaries of science, safe use of cutting-edge therapies in hospital and strong collaboration across differing specialities with hospitals and local communities.”

“The ability to deliver integrated, specialist cancer treatment, education and research to transform the lives of children with cancer in a purpose-built centre will help us achieve the best possible outcomes for patients and their families.”

The Chancellor of UNSW, David Gonski, said that a key component of the MCCCC will be the education and training of future generations, “Our brightest minds will be trained as future leaders in this vital quest to advance the treatment and prevention of childhood cancers.”

Nicola Stokes, CEO of Sydney Children’s Hospitals Foundation added, “The collaboration and commitment from both State and Federal Government and philanthropic leaders, will transform the way some of sickest children – not only in our State, but around the world – are cared for.”

“It is only through this type of investment that we will see more breakthroughs and milestones, turning points and world firsts. Childhood is brief, the window of opportunity is short, but together we can ensure all children with cancer have the opportunity to follow their passions, achieve their ambitions and reach their greatest potential.”

ENDS

COLLATERAL FOR MEDIA:

Link to sharing of fly through video in Dec 2021 <https://www.ccia.org.au/blog/a-new-age-in-children---s-healthcare-for-sydney>

Link to Randwick Campus Redevelopment website and the information about the SCH stage 1/MCCC: [https://randwickcampusredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-children-s-hospital-stage-1-\(1\)](https://randwickcampusredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-children-s-hospital-stage-1-(1))

Video of new hospital <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x05puZ9frwY>

Images of Rory’s family: <https://we.tl/t-PmWSgrgpWa>



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About Kids Cancer Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick:

The Kids Cancer Centre (KCC) at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick has been treating children with cancer and blood disorders in NSW, Australia and the Asia-Pacific region for over 50 years. Over 90 per cent of children treated at the KCC participate in clinical research, in a model where research and clinical care are embedded as one - bridging the gap between science and care - ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and their families. Over the years the survival rates for children with cancer have gone from 10 per cent to nearly 80 per cent. Clinical and research staff from the KCC have made major national and international contributions to the expansion of knowledge in the area: from important discoveries around bone marrow transplantation, chemotherapy for relapsed solid tumours and leukaemia, to the invention of novel anti-cancer drug combinations and minimal residual disease testing in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. KCC staff have been leaders in devising new methods of outreach and home nursing, and in developing psychosocial, health and lifestyle programs for children with cancer and their families. These achievements have been founded on academic excellence and clinical expertise. The team of world-class specialists are major contributors to the global childhood cancer community.

About Children's Cancer Institute:

Originally founded by two fathers of children with cancer in 1976, Children's Cancer Institute is the only independent medical research institute in Australia wholly dedicated to research into the causes, prevention and cure of childhood cancer. Forty years on, our vision is to save the lives of all children with cancer and improve their long-term health, through research. The Institute has grown to now employ over 300 researchers, operational staff and students, and has established a national and international reputation for scientific excellence. Our focus is on translational research, and we have an integrated team of laboratory researchers and clinician scientists who work together in partnership to discover new treatments which can be progressed from the lab bench to the beds of children on wards in our hospitals as quickly as possible. These new treatments are specifically targeting childhood cancers, so we can develop safer and more effective drugs and drug combinations that will minimise side-effects and ultimately give children with cancer the best chance of a cure with the highest possible quality of life. More at www.ccia.org.au

About Minderoo Foundation:

Established by Andrew and Nicola Forrest in 2001, Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation seeking to break down barriers, innovate and drive positive, lasting change. Minderoo Foundation is proudly Australian, with key initiatives spanning from ocean research and ending slavery, to collaboration against cancer and building community projects.



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About Zero Childhood Cancer:

The Zero Childhood Cancer Program (ZERO) is a truly collaborative national research and clinical initiative led by Children's Cancer Institute and Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, together with all eight of Australia's children's hospitals. The Program is the most exciting childhood cancer research initiative ever undertaken in Australia, and is a huge step towards the ultimate aim which is to see personalised medicine become the new model of care for children and young adults with cancer. For participating hospitals and research centres click here: [Participating Hospitals and Medical Research Institutes](#). ZERO aims to identify the precise make-up of each individual child's cancer by using sophisticated genomic tests (whole genome sequencing, whole transcriptome sequencing and methylation profiling) to identify the molecular changes (including "mutations") driving their cancer and matching these with treatments most likely to target their unique cancer. Where possible, preclinical drug testing is carried out to provide further evidence for the most effective treatment. The aim is to identify a personalised treatment plan for each child. ZERO is funded by the Commonwealth Government, Minderoo Foundation and many philanthropic funding partners, for more information click here: [ZERO Funding Partners](#)

