



## **MINDEROO FOUNDATION'S \$5 MILLION DONATION TO ZERO CHILDHOOD CANCER WILL HELP KIDS LIKE JACK BEAT BRAIN CANCER**

Two years ago, Jack Burai was diagnosed with a low-grade cancer in the brain (glioma) at just 9 years old. Following surgery his prognosis was good and his parents, Vivian and Alex believed Jack to be cured. 12 months later Jack relapsed and was in hospital with multiple tumours in his brain and spine, his cancer failed to respond to standard treatment and his condition was rapidly declining. His eyesight was threatened by the build-up of fluid in his brain and he could no longer walk.

Jack was enrolled in the Zero Childhood Cancer program (Zero), which genetically tested Jack's cancer, and detected a BRAF V600E mutation that was believed to be driving the aggressive growth of his cancer. The team identified new therapies uniquely designed to target and kill his tumours. Within 45 days Jack was out of a wheelchair, playing tennis, and today Jack is back at school and doing well.

Today (15 May) Minderoo Foundation's Eliminate Cancer initiative will announce a \$5 million partnership with Zero to help scale the program in Australia, drive further research into personalised medicine in childhood cancer and help established standardised international protocols.

Australian philanthropists Andrew and Nicola Forrest founded Minderoo Foundation in 2001 and, since then, have committed over \$1.5 billion to the Foundation and its partners to address some of the world's most urgent and complex challenges, including the fight against cancer which Minderoo has committed \$75 million to through its Eliminate Cancer initiative.

"The vision of the Zero Childhood Cancer program is simple and inspiring: reduce child cancer deaths to Zero," Mr Forrest said.

"Cancer has no right to strip children of their bright futures and must be arrested through collaboration and world-class research here in Australia, and around the world. As adults we have the duty to protect and improve the lives of these children and Minderoo is proud to partner with Zero to help realise this."

May is International Brain Cancer Awareness Month which aims to highlight the fact that more children die from brain cancer than any other cancer.





The challenge in curing children with cancer is that each child and each cancer is unique meaning standard therapies are not effective for every child. Zero, led in partnership by Children’s Cancer Institute and Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick, is designed to fast track children with high-risk aggressive cancers into treatment with new drugs specifically tailored for their unique disease. As with Jack, once accepted into Zero’s national clinical trial, the child’s cancer cells undergo extensive and sophisticated genetic testing and analysis. In parallel, when possible, their tumour cells are subjected to detailed laboratory analyses to determine their response to a range of anti-cancer drugs. This combined approach helps to identify the treatments most likely to target and kill each child’s specific cancer and give them the greatest possible chance of survival.

The Zero Childhood Cancer Program which has built a collaborative network of 21 national and international research partners opened a national clinical trial in September 2017 at all eight children’s hospitals in Australia. In the first 20 months of the trial more than 200 children have been enrolled, with personalised treatments recommendations made for more than 70% of the children and reported to the children’s treating doctors within an average of 9 weeks.

More than 400 children are expected to be enrolled in the national trial by September 2020, according to Professor Michelle Haber AM, Executive Director of Children’s Cancer Institute, with a third of all the patients involved in the program being children with aggressive brain cancer. “Stories like Jack’s, and others, show that Zero Childhood Cancer can provide exciting new options where standard treatments have failed. For the first time we have a real chance to defeat aggressive childhood cancers, and it’s donations like the one today from Andrew and Nicola Forrest’s Minderoo Foundation that can make this happen,” she said.

A/Professor Tracey O’Brien, Director of Kids Cancer Centre, Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick, explained “three children are dying from cancer in Australia every week. Zero Childhood Cancer aims to change this, by unlocking each individual child’s cancer and then targeting the therapy to achieve better results. It’s about giving the right drug to the right child at the right time. Jack’s story demonstrates what can be achieved with this approach, it is tomorrow’s care today.”

Vivian Rosati, Jack’s mum said she is “beyond grateful” to the program. “We would like to thank everyone for allowing our son to enter the Zero program which has changed our lives





and saved his. Donations like this today means that other families will have the same chance, programs like Zero Childhood Cancer give families hope where there would otherwise be none,” she said.

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**About Minderoo Foundation**

Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation that takes on persistent issues with the potential to drive massive change. Minderoo has over AUD \$1.5 billion committed to a range of global initiatives, including ending modern slavery, global cancer research, creating parity for Indigenous Australians, and innovative community development and environmental conservation initiatives. Minderoo’s Eliminate Cancer initiative strives to partner and share information globally to reduce the incidence of cancer, accelerate development of breakthrough therapies, and empower patients, scientists and clinicians to strive for a world where cancer is a treatable, non-fatal disease.

[www.minderoo.com.au/elimiate-cancer/](http://www.minderoo.com.au/elimiate-cancer/)

**About Zero Childhood Cancer**

The Zero Childhood Cancer Program is a national initiative led by scientists and clinicians of Children’s Cancer Institute and the Kids Cancer Centre, Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick (part of the Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network). The Program is one of the most exciting childhood cancer research initiatives ever undertaken in Australia, tackling the most serious cases of infant, childhood and adolescent cancer. Participating hospitals and research centres include:

- NSW – Children’s Cancer Institute
- NSW – Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick
- NSW – The Children’s Hospital at Westmead
- NSW – John Hunter Children’s Hospital
- NSW – Children’s Medical Research Institute





NSW – Kids Research Institute, Westmead

NSW – Kinghorn Centre for Clinical Genomics, Garvan Institute of Medical Research

NSW – Prince of Wales Hospital – Hereditary Cancer Clinic

NSW – NSW Health Pathology, Prince of Wales Hospital

NSW - Centre for Economic Impacts of Genomic Medicine, Macquarie University

NSW - Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University

QLD – Queensland Children’s Hospital

QLD – The University of Queensland Diamantina Institute

SA – Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Adelaide

SA – South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute

SA – Centre for Cancer Biology

VIC – Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne

VIC – Monash Children’s Hospital, Clayton

VIC – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

VIC – Murdoch Children’s Research Institute

VIC – Hudson Institute of Medical Research

WA – Perth Children’s Hospital, Perth

WA – Telethon Kids Cancer Centre, Telethon Kids Institute

GERMANY – DKFZ (German Cancer Research Centre), Heidelberg

NETHERLANDS – Princess Maxima Centre, Utrecht

FINLAND – FIMM (Institute for Molecular Medicine Finland), Helsinki

FRANCE – Curie Institute, Paris

USA – Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia

USA – St Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, Memphis

For more information, see [www.zerochildhoodcancer.org.au](http://www.zerochildhoodcancer.org.au)

### **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 nearly 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](http://www.ccia.org.au)

#### **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 diseases in NSW, Australia and the Asia-Pacific region for nearly 50 years. Almost two thirds of children treated for cancer or leukaemia at the Centre are enrolled on clinical trials, in a unique model where research and clinical care are one, aimed at ensuring the best possible care for children and their families. During that time the survival rates for children with cancer have gone from 10 per cent to nearly 80 per cent. Clinical and research staff from the Centre have made major international and national 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. Centre staff have been leaders in devising new methods of outreach and home nursing, and in developing modern approaches to the bereaved family. These achievements have been founded on academic excellence and clinical expertise. In the past five years alone, Centre staff have published over 200 papers in peer-reviewed medical and scientific journals and have been awarded more than \$60 million in competitive grant funding. Over the past 20 years a total of eight clinical staff have received Order of Australia honours for their work. More at <http://www.kids-cancer.org/> or [www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au)

