

Years on End... The Tyranny of Distance.

The By Five Paediatric Project thinks outside the square to address rural divide for Wimmera children.

By Five have joined forces with Wimmera professionals and families to address the growing disparity in child health outcomes upon school entry for rural children. By Five have released a mini-documentary, 'Years on End... The Tyranny of Distance', showcasing the award-winning collaboration and the incredible outcomes that have been achieved to date through this revolutionary work.

Over 400 children and families and counting have accessed timely paediatric care with the support of their local health provider and within their own town. This locally born and bred initiative is being hailed as a blueprint for rural and remote communities across Australia to emulate.

Dr Franklin Butuyuyu, a local GP based in Warracknabeal, says, "In rural Victoria you are faced with the tyranny of distance. Without access to paediatric care, the divide just continues. The problem is real, families are suffering. (This initiative) has really helped me hone my diagnostic skills, my understanding and management of children with complex behavioural issues and to support them in their growth and development".

Parents from across the Wimmera have praised the support network on the ground and By Five in building the capability and confidence of the local 'village' of maternal and child health nurses, allied health practitioners, social care and education professionals along with general practitioners to support them with their child.

The By Five Paediatricians regularly visit the Wimmera, immersing themselves in the region and its people. Paediatric Fellow Dr Kate Monagle says, "Meeting some of the local professionals, it's infectious. They care for the community and the kids that they look after". Dr Nadia Coscini, Paediatric Consultant, remarks, "To be in a position where you're having the co-consult with someone who actually knows the family really well, you feel like you're really building the village around the child".

The initiative began following data highlighting that up to half of children in the Wimmera were arriving at school developmentally vulnerable, well above the state and national average of 1 in 5, making it difficult for them to engage in learning and fulfil their potential.

BY FIVE PAEDIATRIC PROJECT



This work has primarily been funded by the Victorian State Government until June 2025, and has demonstrated the innovation needed to navigate the challenge of service access and utilising the enormous skill and resources we have in our communities. It is a collaboration with the Centre for Community Child Health, which is a department of the Royal Children's Hospital and a research group of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Best summed up by local Pre-school field officer, Peta Bond, "Being able to access this paediatric service ensures that our children are getting the care equal to every other child in the state... we deserve that. Our families deserve that."

For more information, please visit the By Five website: byfive.com.au

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