



**Roy Hill  
Community  
Foundation**



**Perth  
Children's  
Hospital  
Foundation**

**17 November 2017**

### **WORLD-FIRST: NEW INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES IN THE PILBARA**

Port Hedland is the first regional centre in northern Australia to receive the green light for a world-leading program that is receiving global recognition for its potential to identify rare diseases and syndromes that manifest in the face.

*Pilbara Faces* combines 3D facial photography and innovative medical technology to build the world's first library of photographs of Aboriginal children's faces - a unique knowledge-base to assist in medical diagnosis, treatment monitoring and clinical research.

The program has been made possible by the Roy Hill Community Foundation in partnership with Perth Children's Hospital Foundation. It could reduce the need for families to travel from their remote communities to a regional hospital or Perth for diagnosis and treatment.

*Pilbara Faces* was launched today at Hedland Senior High School by Roy Hill Community Foundation Chairman and Roy Hill CEO, Mr Barry Fitzgerald and *Pilbara Faces* team leader Dr Gareth Baynam, with support from Town of Port Hedland representatives including Mayor Camilo Blanco, who spoke at the event.

The 3D facial imaging technology was demonstrated to students, event guests and school staff with several images added to the *Pilbara Faces* library.

Around 60,000 children in Western Australia have a rare disease. It is estimated that one in twelve people have a rare disease, and half of these diseases start in childhood.

The non-invasive test and analysis only takes 20 minutes and will give families a new way to find answers for children with long-standing, complex, usually multi-system disorders that were previously undiagnosed, despite intensive efforts.

The facial imaging project is led by clinical geneticist Dr Gareth Baynam of Genetic Services Western Australia (GSWA). The images are used to identify subtle variations in facial contours, often imperceptible to the naked eye, which can be markers of disease and can be monitored to assess response to treatments.

Dr Baynam and his GSWA teams are at the global forefront of 3D facial analysis, an innovative new technology that is changing clinical practice.

**Barry Fitzgerald CEO of Roy Hill and Chairman of the Roy Hill Community Foundation said:**  
"Through *Pilbara Faces*, the region has the opportunity to collectively advance medical

innovation to support new solutions for patient care. It uses innovative imaging technology to improve health outcomes for children in the Pilbara and will help to address a gap in medical and community health services,” he said.

“This program is a world-leading innovation with a Pilbara focus. It’s a legacy project that will bring countless benefits now and in the future.”

**Pilbara Faces Project Leader, Dr Gareth Baynam said:** “Our face is a biological billboard that advertises our physical and mental wellness, our ageing and our disease. Approximately one third of genetic and rare diseases are thought to have subtle facial clues, so harnessing these through 3D facial analysis will provide a new way to improve diagnosis and treatment.”

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