



# The Sunday Times 50 years of magic and fun

**T**HE *Sunday Times* has long been a proud supporter and major participant in the most fantastic of community initiatives — Telethon.

This year we are part of the Seven West Media stable, though even when we weren't *The Sunday Times* played an integral role, lending its offices and staff as a call centre for pledges. And we've always given generously, as we will do again on this auspicious 50th Telethon.

We passionately believe Telethon embodies the very best of WA, its spirit and its people. It's the best advert for what we can and do achieve as a caring, united community. It is unique — no other Telethon in the world comes close.

The past 49 Telethons have raised a staggering \$232 million. But it's impossible to put a monetary figure on the contribution it has made to the lives of sick kids, in this State and beyond. It is incalculable — you can't put too high a value on the health of children. Yes, it has saved lives, improved lives and, because of its strong focus on research to advance medical knowledge and find new treatments, kids not yet born will enjoy full lives that otherwise might not have been so.

Part of the magic of Telethon is the enthusiasm we see in our children embracing the cause. Whether it's pocket money, emptied jars of coins collected over months or the proceeds of lemonade stalls and sponsored fundraisers, they open their hearts. The spirit of giving is infectious and support extends from West Australians doing it tough to our biggest corporations. All donations, small or large, are received with equal gratitude.

Governments, too, recognise that Telethon is a sound investment in public

health. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull flew into Perth last night to announce the Origins project which will follow a cohort of 10,000 WA children for five years, from birth. The longitudinal study, by the Telethon Kids Institute and Joondalup Health Campus, will look at how a child's early environment influences the dramatically rising risk of a broad range of chronic health problems such as allergies, asthma, autism, diabetes and obesity.

The Federal Government's \$13 million contribution is in addition to the annual Commonwealth contribution to Telethon, which this year would be \$2 million.

In celebrating Telethon, we can't overlook the feel-good buzz it creates, from volunteering, participating or simply watching the 26-hour marathon of entertainment. Many people don't sleep until the final tally is announced.

Thank-you for buying today's newspaper, with 10¢ from every paper going to Telethon. Together, as always, we can make this 50th Telethon the best yet.