



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

25 February 2015

ECA supports bipartisan approach to early childhood reform

National children's peak body Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has welcomed the Government and Opposition's statements today supporting a bipartisan discussion on reforms to the early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

In particular, ECA CEO Samantha Page said that ECA welcomed Social Services Minister Scott Morrison's consultative and collegiate approach.

'If we are going to embed lasting and genuine reform and investment in early childhood education and care, the fundamentals of the system must have bipartisan support', Ms Page said.

'In particular we call on all sides of the political spectrum to consider how further investment will be funded to improve access to quality early childhood education for children and families.'

Ms Page said that the Productivity Commission's proposed reforms are a starting point but further investment is required to significantly improve both access and affordability.

'The benchmark price proposed by the Commission is too low and places a cap on workforce participation and access to early learning for children.'

Ms Page said that there is a compelling case for investment in ECEC to improve the nation's future prosperity. PricewaterhouseCoopers has found that:

Benefits to GDP from a 5 per cent decrease in the net price of ECEC (for increased female workforce participation) = \$6 billion cumulative to 2050.

Benefits to GDP for children receiving a quality education and care program = \$10.3 billion cumulative to 2050.

Benefits to GDP of increased participation of vulnerable children whose parents are in the lowest income bracket = \$13.3 billion cumulative to 2050.

'The economic and social benefits of investment in early childhood development will not accrue until decades down the track so it's important that short-term politics and savings measures don't get in the way of lasting reforms', Ms Page said.

'ECA also welcomes Minister Morrison's statements in support of the National Quality Framework, which means that we can get on with the funding reform to improve access to quality early childhood services for all children.'

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