



**Early Childhood Australia**  
A voice for young children

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday 20 June 2018

### **New South Wales leads the way on access to preschool for three-year-olds**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) congratulates Sarah Mitchell (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) on taking leadership in extending universal access to community preschools to three-year-old children across New South Wales (NSW).

‘This investment will directly subsidise thousands of children to attend a community preschool program for two years before they start school’, said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

ECA recognises that NSW families often face high out-of-pocket expenses for early education and care, and, therefore, supports any measures that make high-quality early education more affordable.

‘The next step in NSW is to work out the implementation in community preschools with the Education Department’, said National Deputy President of ECA, Chris Legg, who is also CEO of KU Children’s Services. ‘Quality preschool programs, led by qualified early childhood teachers, provide children with the opportunity to learn through play—developing their confidence in communication, collaboration and social skills and emotional regulation.’

‘This measure by the NSW Government will set up thousands of children for lifelong learning’, said Carol Burgess, ECA NSW President. ‘Preschool education is particularly effective in reducing the opportunity gap, where some children would otherwise be at a disadvantage when they begin school. Children with speech or language difficulties can be identified early and provided with extra support.’

‘Australia lags behind other developed nations on preschool participation’, said Ms Page. ‘The recent [Lifting Our Game](#) report, submitted to education ministers across states and territories, found a compelling case for increasing investment in preschool to extend access to three-year-olds, in order to lift educational outcomes. The NSW Government has taken the lead in responding to the report’s recommendations, ahead of other states and territories.’

‘It is heartening to see the NSW Treasurer championing the extension of preschool funding to three-year-olds as an effective way to improve school learning outcomes and increase university attendance, ultimately leading to higher lifetime earnings and better health outcomes’, added Ms Page.

‘Many working families in NSW will continue to access preschool programs offered in long day care services, which are covered by the federal childcare subsidy system, and subject to an activity test. It is entirely appropriate for families to use a range of early learning services, including family day care, combined with preschool for three- and four-year-olds’, said Ms Page. ‘All early education services are engaged in continuous improvement through the *National Quality Framework*.’

‘Subsidising three-year-old access to community preschools will give thousands of families more choice, cost relief and access to two days per week of early learning, regardless of their own level of work or study, ensuring their children don’t miss out on important early learning opportunities.’

‘The inclusion of \$42 million in capital grants to increase the supply of preschool places is also welcome, and necessary, to provide this extra access to more children’, concluded Ms Page.

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