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A voice for young children

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VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 8 October 2020

ECA WELCOMES LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO UNIVERSAL AFFORDABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Federal Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese's 2020-21 Budget In Reply speech is the start of a new, much-needed conversation on early childhood education and care reform in Australia.

ECA CEO Samantha Page welcomed Labor's centrepiece commitment to increase the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to 90% for all Australian families, along with the promise to remove the annual \$10,560 CCS cap.

A Labor Government would lift the maximum CCS rate to 90% and increase CCS rates and taper them for every family earning less than \$530,000 per annum. A first-term Productivity Commission review would aim to implement a universal 90% subsidy for all families.

'This would be an excellent start to a suite of urgent systems reforms required to ensure we can deliver high quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education for all Australian families,' Ms Page said.

'We particularly welcome budget measures that address economic recovery at the same time as addressing long-term social reform which benefits children and families.'

Ms Page said women were an untapped resource when it came to revitalising the economy.

'Even when women can find work, they are overrepresented in casualised and low-paid jobs and face numerous barriers to equal employment opportunities. Most women need to know they have stable childcare before they can look for work or seek to increase their paid hours. Labor's commitment to act swiftly to support women returning to work by improving affordability and access to early childhood education is good news for all Australians.'

Ms Page renewed her call for more certainty around the *National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and Care (Universal Preschool)*. The Morrison Government's 2020-21 Budget only extended funding until December 2021. Numerous reports have called for a five-year funding commitment.

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'We need a bipartisan commitment to universal preschool (also called kindergarten in some states) in the year before full-time school. The drip-feed approach to funding is not good enough,' Ms Page said.

ECA continues to call for priority funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early learning and family support services, and an increase to funding for children with disability and additional needs.

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ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Katie Golding on: 0475 554 999

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Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.