



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 20 February, 2024

Welcome Expansion of NSW Preschools

Children and families across NSW will benefit from improved access to preschool following the [NSW Government announcement](#) of 100 public preschool locations over the weekend. This represents a significant investment which will address gaps in preschool provision and reduce barriers for children missing out. We know that children who access a high-quality preschool program in the two years before compulsory schooling are much more likely to successfully transition to school, be engaged and confident learners and to go on to finish school and engage in study or training.

ECA welcome the investment in public infrastructure and delivery of preschool so that all children receive an entitlement and families can have choice. *“Many families seek out school-based preschools, particularly if they have older children at school or limited transport options”,* says ECA CEO Sam Page; *“co-location of preschools with schools makes good sense. However, consultation with experts in planning this integration and consideration of age-appropriate pedagogy are imperative to ensure it is play-based and valued by the school leadership team”.*

It is also important that the NSW Government continue to invest in the well-established community-based preschools, including those run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). *“We ask the NSW Government to consult on and develop a strategy of support for community bare preschools - many of which have been part of the fabric of local communities for a very long time. Investment in expanding some of these preschools and building on their excellent track record would be well supported”,* says Ms Page.

Long day care services also play a very important role in preschool provision across NSW and it is vital that working families continue to have access to longer sessions of early childhood education and care if they need it. *“Our primary interest is ensuring that families have choice of what suits their child and family circumstances, and no early childhood education provider should lose from this investment”,* says Ms Page.

ECA acknowledges that robust criteria were considered when selecting the 100 additional sites, and significant planning went into the planning process. ECA urges this planning to continue from now until 2027. The fact that almost half the new preschools will be established in regional locations, where there are well-documented shortages, is pleasing. This will help to address the current gaps within unserved or underserved communities. *“We know the sector does need to expand and lift capacity to provide universal access. However, we also know all too well that there is a shortage of early childhood educators and teachers and we don’t want to lose any services from the system especially in rural, remote and regional areas”,* Ms Page says. ECA is keen to support, through our regional networks across NSW, local consultation. With strong local committees, ECA can leverage

our extensive knowledge and experience, strong cross-sectoral relationships and national policy team that understand the complexities of phasing in universal programs at scale.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Please contact the ECA Media team on 0475 554 999 or email media@earlychildhood.org.au

ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA

Early Childhood Australia is the peak national advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals. For more information, please visit www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/about-us