

MEDIA RELEASE – 16 SEPTEMBER 2016

More Universal Access funding please for Long Daycare Centres

The Australian Childcare Alliance New South Wales is pleased and troubled with the NSW Government's announcement this week of its \$115 million boost into early childhood education.

As part of the Commonwealth Government's National Partnership Program, NSW Premier Mike Baird and NSW Early Childhood Education Minister Leslie Williams announced on 14 September 2016 that \$85 million and \$30 million will be allocated to community-based childcare services and long daycare centres respectively over 18 months beginning 1 January 2017.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childcare Education (more commonly known as the Universal Access Agreement) commits all Australian governments to achieving universal access to early childhood education for all children in their year before school, delivered by university qualified Early Childhood Teachers, 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year.

ACA NSW President Nesha Oneil Hutchinson said, "We are grateful for the NSW Government's allocation of additional funding that is purposed to benefit vulnerable and disadvantaged families in order to have their children increase their participation in early childhood education."

"That said, we are disappointed that the ratio of funding fails to recognise that there are more than twice as many children in NSW receiving their preschool education in long daycare services as those attending '9 am to 3 pm preschools' due to the demands of parents wanting to synchronise their children's childcare needs with their work hours," said Ms Hutchinson.

One of the main goals of Universal Access funding for preschool programs of over 600 hours in the year before school is because it makes a demonstrable difference between a child flourishing or struggling in their first year at school. This is even more important for children who are vulnerable or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ms Hutchinson said, "Given private and not-for-profit long daycare services have by far the largest share of NSW's total childcare services that can offer preschool programs, why wouldn't Australian governments seek to leverage that in order to achieve the nation's social and economic aspirations for children and their parents."

The Australian Bureau of Statistics data for NSW already shows enrolments in preschools has actually declined in favour of long daycare. And it is also worth noting that the NSW Government commissioned Brennan Report stated that "Access, affordability and quality should be assured regardless of the type of service a child attends. Families should be able to expect that Government assistance will remain reasonably consistent if they change early childhood education providers due to changes in their workforce participation or other needs."

ACA NSW has written to NSW Premier the Hon Mike Baird MP and NSW Early Childhood Education Minister the Hon Leslie Williams MP expressing their views on the new funding announced on 14 September 2016.

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**For further media inquiries,
please contact ACA NSW President Nesha Oneil Hutchinson on 0412 085 068
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