

MEDIA RELEASE

Children in Long Day Care to Benefit from 'Universal Access' Preschool Funding

Australian Childcare Alliance New South Wales (ACA NSW), the peak body for the long day care sector in NSW, has warmly welcomed the Federal Government's confirmation today of \$840m to assist in the delivery of preschool programs across Australia.

"We are pleased that the Federal Minister for Education and Training has listened to the experts in requiring States and Territories to deliver this funding across the sector for at least another two years" ACA NSW President Nesha O'Neil said today.

"There are twice as many children in NSW receiving their pre-school education in long day care services as those attending '9am-3pm preschools', reflecting the growing demand for early childhood education and care services more closely aligned with parents' work hours" Ms O'Neil explained. "It is important that the children attending long day care services share the benefits of this sound investment in the sector".

"This funding will assist services in delivering high quality preschool programs to help children start their lifelong love of learning well ahead of commencing formal schooling" Ms O'Neil said.

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

"We have had to fight to have Universal Access funding delivered to long day care services in NSW, with only \$20m of the \$90.6m earmarked for NSW preschool programs in 2015-16 allocated to long day care this year" Ms O'Neil said. "This was, in fact, the first time since the agreement was signed in 2008 that the NSW Government provided any Universal Access funding to our sector, despite the fact that a quarter of a million children receive their preschool education via a long day care service in our state".

"This is not about reducing the current investment in preschools, but rather – like other states and territories – stepping up and funding the sector more appropriately" Ms O'Neil said.

"We congratulate the Federal Government for extending this much-needed funding and look forward to working closely with the NSW and Federal Governments on the implementation of this fantastic initiative for children right across the country" she concluded.

Contact: ACA NSW Chief Executive Officer Brianna Casey 0439 723 401