

Media Release

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Long Day Care Misses Out in Preschool Funding Reforms

Child Care New South Wales, the voice of private long day care in NSW, has expressed its extreme disappointment in the failure of the NSW Government to act on expert advice in its long-awaited preschool funding reforms.

“Whilst the preschool funding reforms announced yesterday are quite positive from a community preschool perspective, they effectively ignore the burgeoning demand for preschool programs delivered via long day care” Child Care New South Wales President Nesha O’Neil said.

“We strongly and unequivocally support the NSW Government’s State Plan target of ensuring that all children in NSW have access to preschool programs in their year before school” Ms O’Neil said.

“But it is a nonsense to think that these preschool programs are only being provided in a community preschool setting, which is what the NSW Government is effectively saying by failing to commit any new funding for preschool program delivery via long day care” Ms O’Neil said.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education commits all Australian Governments to achieving by 2013 universal access to early childhood education programs for all children in the year before school, delivered by university qualified early childhood teachers, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year.

“The NSW Department of Education and Communities’ own data shows that there are twice as many children under the age of 6 in NSW attending long day care services as those attending preschools, yet if you are a parent who has chosen long day care rather than preschool – in many circumstances because it aligns more closely with work hours – there is nothing in this for you”.

The *Review of NSW Government Funding for Early Childhood Education* conducted by Professor Deborah Brennan in April 2012 recommended “that families and children should benefit from the Government’s investment in quality early childhood education programs regardless of whether they access a long day care centre or a preschool”. The *Government response to the Brennan review* supported this recommendation. Furthermore, the NSW Government advised Child Care New South Wales that “funding LDCs to have early childhood teachers dedicated to preschool-aged children will support the achievement of our universal access targets”.

“Despite this serious setback for families of children in long day care, we will continue to deliver wonderful preschool programs in a long day care setting” Ms O’Neil said.

“We are hopeful that the NSW Government will reconsider its position on investing in universal access regardless of service type, and will continue to work with the NSW and Federal Governments to ensure our members can continue to deliver quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care services for families across NSW” Ms O’Neil concluded.

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