

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian  
Premier of NSW

Dear Premier Berejiklian,

Quality Counts: for every child, every family, our economy and the nation.

The undersigned organisations call upon the New South Wales and Australian Governments to work together to negotiate a long-term commitment to the *National Quality Agenda on Early Childhood Education and Care*, whilst maintaining the consistent application of the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*.

All governments, children and families benefit from a joint national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of early childhood education and care services. There have been significant 'benefits and efficiencies' achieved 'by jointly creating and supporting a unified, *National Quality Framework* for early childhood education and care services', as evidenced by the continuous quality improvement in service provision and efficiencies in regulation.

Australia's jointly governed *National Quality Framework* upholds children's best interests through the implementation of a world-class quality system of scale and effectiveness. This aspirational system, coupled with national progress reporting, has underpinned significant advances in reducing vulnerability and increasing school readiness as evidenced by the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).

The *National Partnership* has been the mechanism that binds this system together for the benefit of the 1.3 million children and 900,000 families accessing early education and care services across Australia.

The Federal Education Minister's announcement that the Commonwealth plans to unilaterally withdraw from the National Partnership, risks potentially derailing the significant progress to date. It is also of particular concern, at a time when:

- the Royal Commission's report into institutional child sexual abuse is highlighting the requirement for a 'national watchdog' to ensure our children's safety, security and wellbeing;
- the Gonski 2 report emphasises the connection between quality early learning and school outcomes; and,
- the Lifting our Game report outlines clear evidence that early education and care provides a double dividend to government through improved education, health, social and economic outcomes that can break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

National and international research data unequivocally demonstrate the benefits of quality early education programs. Australia remains in the transition phase of implementing the National Quality Framework and is only just beginning to see the benefit of the resultant quality improvements needed for every child, every family, our nation and the economy.

We note that the small short term financial gains of ceasing this National Partnership has the potential for significant long-term risks to quality and safety for Australian children.

The undersigned call on the New South Wales and Australian Governments to establish a broader early years strategy the intent of the *National Partnerships on the National Quality Agenda* with innovative workforce strategies. This must be supported by sustainable and recurrent funding.

The National Quality Framework has cut down red tape and duplicate systems, driven quality service provision and improved outcomes for children. 57 percent of services have improved their quality rating and 75 percent are now meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard.

The recent Gonski report articulates that early childhood education provides a return on investment, makes a significant contribution to school outcomes and is essential to close the learning differential between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

We must embed the progress to date and continue the transformative possibilities of the early years.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success and gains of the *National Quality Framework* through a long-term National Agreement to realise the benefit of quality early childhood education for future generations and the wider community.

For further information please contact Elizabeth Death [elizabeth@elacca.org.au](mailto:elizabeth@elacca.org.au) or 0438 552 152.

Kind regards,



Lyn Connolly *CEO*  
**ACA NSW**



Prue Warrilow *National Convenor*  
**ACCS NSW**



Jenni Hutchins *CEO*  
**Big Fat Smile**



Meg Mendham *CEO*  
**CCSA**



Michele Carnegie *General Manager*  
**Community Early Learning Australia**



Wendy Boyd *Senior Lecturer, SCU representing NSW ECTEC*  
**Early Childhood Teacher Education Council**



Elizabeth Death *CEO*  
**Early Learning and Care Council of Australia**



Carol Burgess *NSW State President*  
**ECA NSW**



Gary Carroll *Managing Director*  
**G8 Education Group**



Tom Hardwick *CEO*  
**Guardian Early Learning Group**



Julia Davison *CEO*  
**Goodstart Early Learning**



Christine Legg *CEO*  
**KU Children's Services**



Cathie Zammit *Chairperson on behalf of*  
**Local Government Children's Services**



Professor Mary Ryan (PFHEA) *Head,*  
*Department of Educational Studies*  
**Faculty of Human Sciences**



Carla Yeates *Chair of the Forum*  
**NSW Children's Services Forum**



Robyn Munro Miller *Chief Executive Officer*  
**Network of Community Activities NSW**



Anita Jovanovski *CEO*  
**NSW Family Day Care Association**



Carla Yeates *President*  
**Occasional Childcare Australia NSW**



Anna Learmonth *CEO*  
**Only About Children**



Janet Keegan *Children's Services Manager*  
**Penrith City Council**



Kay Turner *CEO*  
**SDN Children's Services**



Helen Gibbons *Assistant National Secretary*  
**United Voice**



Rod Nadwie-Smith *Head of Early Learning*  
**Uniting NSW.ACT**