

CPD Welcomes Joint Commitment to Transform Early Education

- *Announcements are a critical, long-term commitment to improve outcomes for children and families across New South Wales and Victoria*
- *Demonstrates the opportunity and importance of collaboration for successful early childhood reform*
- *Commitments represent a significant step toward implementing the universal entitlement outlined in CPD's [Starting Better](#) report*

Thursday 16 June 2022 – The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) welcomes today's joint announcement that Victoria and New South Wales will introduce a universal preschool year as a critical systemic reform with major long-term benefits for children and families. This bipartisan, interstate collaboration is a leading example of the joint effort required between all governments to deliver early childhood reform across the nation.

The \$9 billion and \$5.8 billion packages in Victoria and New South Wales respectively will mean that over the next decade, every child in both states will experience a full year of play-based learning before they start school.

The announcement extends Victoria's existing 15 hours of three- and four-year-old kinder, to deliver 30 hours of fully subsidised play-based learning as a year of 'pre-Prep'. Victoria has also committed to establishing 50 early childhood education and care services in areas with the greatest unmet demand.

New South Wales will move to establish a universal, five day a week 'pre-Kindergarten' year, with this investment following a suite of commitments by the New South Wales Government earlier this week. These announcements include the "Brighter Beginnings" package to expand child development programs, incentives for providers to offer more high-quality early childhood education and care places in areas of need, preschool fee relief, and investment in the early childhood workforce.

These announcements come at a time of increasing momentum on early childhood reform across the nation, with the Commonwealth committed to ambitious investment and a universal child care guarantee. Other states and territories, such as South Australia and Queensland, have also made significant commitments.

This represents a once in a generation opportunity for national, systemic early childhood reform along the lines of the national guarantee that CPD has been calling for as part of its [Starting Better](#) report.

The Starting Better guarantee is a universal entitlement including free or low-cost high-quality early childhood education and care, more paid parental leave shared between parents, boosts to maternal and child health services, and greater integration of current services.

Collaboration between all states, territories and the Commonwealth is crucial to building a holistic national early childhood system that meets the needs of all children and families. Tomorrow's First



Ministers meeting is a critical opportunity to put the national foundations in place for a universal entitlement for all children and families regardless of where they live.

Centre for Policy Development Senior Fellow and Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Development Council Leslie Loble said the commitments are holistic and necessary for young children and families across the states:

“Early childhood is the launchpad for life, and introducing a universal year of high-quality preschool is a major step toward ensuring every young child and family has what they need to thrive, regardless of where they live or their families’ circumstances.”

“*Starting Better* showed that for early childhood reform to achieve significant outcomes, we need long-term vision and joint effort between all governments. CPD congratulates the New South Wales and Victorian Governments for leading bold collaboration to deliver an additional year of high-quality, universal early education.”

Centre for Policy Development Deputy CEO Annabel Brown said the announcement reflected the interstate collaboration that CPD’s research has identified as crucial for successful national reform.

“We welcome today’s joint commitment as a major step in the growing momentum on early childhood reform across Australia, and encourage similar collaboration to continue between states, territories and the Commonwealth.”

“The meeting of First Ministers is an opportunity to build the foundation for a holistic national early childhood system. What we need now is a national plan that everyone can sign up to so that we build an early childhood system centred on what children and families need.”

“Working together across jurisdictions is absolutely vital if we want Australian children of today and tomorrow to flourish throughout their lives.”

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