



EARLY LEARNING ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA – THE VOICE FOR PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

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ELAA's early learning priorities for the new Victorian Government: programs, policy and people

Early Learning Association Australia today released its 2015-16 Budget Submission to the new Victorian Government.

"ELAA congratulates the new Government – and new Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos – on coming to office at the recent election," said Mr Shane Lucas, CEO of ELAA.

"The early learning sector is passionate about quality programs, progressive policy – and most importantly about our people: service providers, educators, families and children," Mr Lucas said.

"We believe the new Government needs to act quickly to address three key priorities in its first budget to ensure that quality early learning continues to enrich the development of all children."

ELAA is calling on the new Government to:

- negotiate a long-term and transparent funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government that will ensure funding for 15 hours of quality early learning continues to be available to all children in the year before school – beyond 2015
- ensure that the National Quality Framework is not diluted in Victoria and continues to deliver quality early learning outcomes
- act promptly to help resolve the ongoing industrial dispute between not-for-profit and local government kindergarten providers, and the Australian Education Union.

"These are the priority issues - but our submission also details a range of other opportunities for the new Government to strengthen the early learning sector in Victoria by providing additional funding and leadership," Mr Lucas said.

"We believe the Government has made a good start. Minister Mikakos has been quick to raise the 15 hours funding issue directly with the Commonwealth and to advocate strongly for a long-term funding arrangement.

"We also welcomed the commitment made by Premier Daniel Andrews during the election campaign that his Government – as the principal funder of kindergarten programs – would help resolve the industrial dispute with the AEU.

"That is vital and urgent - without quality teachers, there is no quality early childhood education.

"ELAA is committed to working in partnership with the Government, our members and other organisations in the early learning sector to progress our priorities and explore other opportunities to improve the early education and care system in Victoria."

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