



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

7 October 2014

### **ELAA launches State Election campaign: *Preschool Matters – and Parents Vote.***

Early Learning Association Australia today launched its 2014 Victorian State Election campaign.

“The future of quality affordable early childhood education in Victoria is under threat,” said Mr Shane Lucas, ELAA CEO.

“While the Commonwealth Government recently – and reluctantly – agreed to provide its share of preschool funding next year, there is no commitment beyond 2015.

“In response, the Victorian Government has consistently said that if the Commonwealth withdraws funding – leaving a shortfall of \$109 million – it will not step in to bridge the gap.

“This is simply unacceptable. Our children’s future – and the many long-term social and economic benefits 15 hours of quality early learning provides – is too important to be caught up in the Commonwealth-State ‘blame game’,” Mr Lucas said.

The Commonwealth contributes one third – and the State Government two-thirds - of the funding that provides 15 hours of early childhood education for all children in the year before school.

“ELAA members - parents and service providers - want 15 hour programs to continue, regardless of where the money comes from,” Mr Lucas said.

“We want the Commonwealth and State governments to reach a long-term agreement that ensures funding for 15 hours of preschool into the future.

“Today, we are providing parents and members with sample letters and emails to write to Denis Napthine and Daniel Andrews, and ask them what they will do if elected to demonstrate their commitment to early childhood education.

“We will also be providing campaign resources to parents and services in marginal seats across Victoria to enable them to write to their local candidates directly.”

ELAA parents and members will be telling politicians of both parties that without a long-term funding commitment to providing 15 hours of early childhood education, they are concerned that:

- families face the prospect of higher fees and lower quality programs
- some services face serious viability issues and may need to reduce the number of places offered or close their doors permanently
- some teachers and educators will lose their jobs or have their hours cut.

“It is time to end the uncertainty for children, families and services and commit the necessary funds to ensure all children get the best possible start in life,” Mr Lucas said.

**Media contact: Shane Lucas, ELAA CEO, Phone: 0417 308 751**