



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

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ELAA's Budget Submission to the Victorian Government focusses on the big picture

Early Learning Association Australia has released its 2016-17 Budget submission to the Victorian Government.

"Our submission is firmly focused on the big picture and asks the key question: how can the Andrews Government make our early childhood education and care (ECEC) services the best in Australia?" said Mr Shane Lucas, CEO of ELAA.

"We have identified priorities for a strong ECEC service system; framed a longer term vision around the importance of ECEC to longer term outcomes for children and the community; and outlined the key objectives that will help make Victoria the Education State."

Since elected in November 2014, the Andrews Government has acknowledged ECEC as a critical component of our social and economic infrastructure and a major contributor to the wellbeing of all Victorians.

"We congratulate the Government for genuinely consulting with the sector and the broader community on the Education State initiative throughout 2015, and for its commitment to the role of quality ECEC as the foundation for life-long learning," Mr Lucas said.

"In response to the Government's initiative, ELAA developed the *Ten Principles for an Early Education State* in collaboration with partners from across the sector - and we again commend the principles to government as a framework to guide the implementation of the Education State.

Our 2016-2017 Budget submission is based on the *Ten Principles*, and hence we call on the Government to create a strong and sustainable base for service provision by:

- Conducting a fundamental "root-and-branch" review of the 25 year old kindergarten funding model in Victoria
- Providing critical funding support for Kindergarten Cluster Management alongside the proposed implementation of a new policy framework
- Ensuring that attendance at kindergarten is universal with 20 hours funded in the year before school
- Making a minimum of five funded hours of kindergarten available for all 3 year old children

"We are also calling on the Andrews Government to lead a community conversation about the inherent value of ECEC with a view to making kindergarten compulsory for all Victorian children," Mr Lucas said.

Media Release



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“Victoria already has high kindergarten participation rates - with 96.4 per cent of children attending in the year before school - and a long and proud history of regarding kindergarten as a critical component of every child’s educational journey.

“Our submission also argues that short- and medium-term investments are necessary to build on the strong early learning foundations already in place in Victoria, in order to fully realise the benefits of the Government’s longer-term reform agenda.

“This is an exciting time for the early learning sector and we want to ensure that future generations look back on the first term of the Andrews Government as when the hard work was done to make Victoria the genuine Education State.”

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