

Media Release

10 October, 2018

Debating the key questions on early and middle childhood education.

The recent announcements by the Federal Opposition and Andrews Government in Victoria will guarantee ongoing funding for 15 hours of early learning, including extending it to three-year-old children, should the parties be successful come the Federal and State elections. These announcements represent landmark policy commitments; however, there are still more issues to be tackled and long-term cross-government support is needed before early years programs in Victoria (and Australia) compare to OECD countries like Britain and New Zealand.

In the lead up to the Victorian election on November 24, Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA), Community Child Care Association (CCC) and Early Childhood Australia (Victoria Branch) have invited the ALP, Liberal and Greens spokespeople on early and middle childhood education and care to present their case for delivering the early years services and support that Victorian families, service providers, and educators need.

The spokespeople include:

Jenny Mikakos - Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education, and Minister for Youth Affairs

Georgie Crozier - Shadow Minister for Families and Children

Nina Springle - Deputy Leader for the Victorian Greens and Spokesperson for Women, Families and Children.

"This Policy Debate sets the agenda for early and middle childhood education and care going into the Victorian election," said ELAA CEO David Worland. Extending on this, Julie Price from Community Child Care Association said "It's a real opportunity to learn how the Government will see its Early Childhood Reform Plan through and to find out if the other parties are serious about matching or bettering that plan."

Registrations for the debate are almost booked out so there will be a full room of passionate early and middle years providers, educators, carers and parents eager to hear how our politicians plan to:

- Ensure access for all children to quality education and care and ultimately extend that access to two years of funded preschool.
- Ensure early and middle years learning and care programs in Victoria are supported and regulated to maintain quality standards.
- Build the capacity of Victoria's early years workforce so education and care staff are recognised, rewarded and developed appropriately as the professionals they are.

- Plan for future program development and infrastructure based on real community need, projected population growth and changing approaches to learning.

“The Victorian early childhood education and care sector has worked collaboratively on this election submission and we urge our political leaders to take action now to improve quality outcomes for the children of Victoria,” said ECA Vic Branch President, Marie Howard.

What: Victorian Early Years Policy Debate

When: Thursday, 11 October 5.30pm - 7.30pm

Where: Mantra Bell City, 215 Bell Street, Preston. East Wing: Beijing Room.

ENDS

ELAA Media contact: David Worland, CEO, ELAA 0499 411 299 or 03 9489 3500

CCC Media contact: Julie Price, Executive Director, 0455 028 542 or 03 9486 3455

ECA Vic Media contact: Marie Howard, ECA Victoria Branch President, 0438 444 502.