



Vic Budget delivers more good news for early childhood sector

20 May, 2021

In the wake of last week's Federal Budget, today's Victorian State Budget brings further good news for the Early Childhood Education and Care sector. The Andrew's Government has pledged in excess of \$407 million in further investment for our sector over the next four years in the form of seven key initiatives.

Of greatest significance is the *Ready for school: Kinder for every three-year-old* initiative that commits a further \$122.4 million over the next four years to support the Government's 2018 commitment to providing 15 hours a week of funded pre-school to three-year-old children. This funding includes more support for the two key enablers to delivering a three-year-old kindergarten program – qualified teachers and appropriate infrastructure.

"We need to retain and attract qualified teachers and we need spaces in which to deliver the expanded three-year-old program and this budget demonstrates that the Government is fully committed to seeing it through," said Early Learning Association Australia CEO, David Worland.

ELAA is also pleased that its ongoing advocacy regarding doing everything possible to create equitable access to early learning for vulnerable children has been heard by the government. Today's Budget includes close to \$120 million for connecting vulnerable children to early learning and monitoring their wellbeing.

"The *Giving vulnerable and disadvantaged kids the best start in life* and the *Child Link* funding initiatives deliver significant outreach and protective support that help to connect vulnerable children with kindergarten and keep them safe so they stand the best chance of reaping the benefits of quality early learning," said Mr Worland.

Other key initiatives in today's Budget include: a further commitment to the National Partnership Agreement on providing 15 hours a week of early learning to four-year-old children; further support for the Early Childhood Language Program; providing further funding for kindergartens with growing enrolments; and supporting Early Years Manager organisations.

"We certainly welcome the commitment of just over \$31 million as a step in the right direction to supporting Early Years Managers to remain viable while providing equitable access to children and maintaining high quality standards."

For more information or to arrange an interview with ELAA CEO, David Worland, contact James Gardener 0413 483 182.

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ELAA is the national peak body for not-for-profit providers of early childhood education and care. Our vision is Excellence and Equity in Early Childhood Education and Care. www.elaa.org.au