



media release

2 May 2016

Victorian State Budget – What’s in it for early childhood?

“Victoria is on the cusp of making some profound differences, to the lives of thousands of Victoria’s most vulnerable children” says Dr Anne Kennedy, Chairperson of Community Child Care Association (CCC).

CCC is pleased to see some initiatives in this year’s State Budget targeted directly at early childhood education services, and also welcomes a raft of innovative initiatives across several portfolios that will make a huge difference to communities and thousands of families and children across Victoria.

“It is fantastic to see a Government that is prepared to use a healthy fiscal position to build a stronger and more equitable society. The Government is investing millions in child protection and family violence initiatives which will make a real difference to children in their early years.” said Dr Kennedy

Dr Kennedy says universal early childhood services such as long day care, occasional care, kindergartens and family day care are often the first and only trusted community connection for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families and children. The 2015 3rd wave of the Trends in Community Children’s Services Survey, found that 82% of education and care services identified children in their service as experiencing some form of vulnerability; with 37% of these noticing increases in vulnerability within their community.

“We know that the best outcomes for children occur when child protection, family support and education and care services work together. We are hopeful that this significant investment in early intervention and crisis services will make a collaborative approach to working with families more possible.”

As part of the Education State agenda, the Victorian Government has consulted widely with the early childhood sector about priority areas for reform. The ‘Stakeholder and community engagement key findings report: The Education State, Early Childhood’ released in March 2016, reiterates the Victorian Government’s commitment to strengthening early childhood services and making improvements in

- Earlier engagement in learning
- A boost to educational quality
- More support for parents
- More support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Better connection between services.

The direct investment in early childhood education and care services in this Victorian State Budget includes

- \$10 million over 2 years to build kindergartens and children’s centres in fast growing areas
- \$4.4 million over 4 years for a new initiative offering financial viability support to new small rural kindergartens
- Ongoing rollout of the National Occasional Care Programme
- Investment in Healthy Relationships Programs across schools and early years services aimed at preventing family violence.



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Dr Kennedy said *"This Victorian Budget addresses several core priorities for early childhood reform and sets the scene for strong communities. Moving towards universal access to early childhood education for all children 2 years and above is the next challenge."*

For further comment:

Dr Anne Kennedy

Chairperson

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