

# South Australia's Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS  
TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 2016 AND 2017

## PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2016 and 2017 (the National Partnership) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement.
2. The objective of the National Partnership is to facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children.
3. This objective is to be achieved through universal access to quality early childhood education programmes for all children enrolled in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher who meets National Quality Framework (NQF) requirements, and with a focus on participation by Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of the setting in which programmes are delivered.
4. Children living in remote Indigenous communities remain a focus for universal access.

## PART 2: TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Training, and the State of South Australia (SA), represented by the Minister for Education and Child Development.
6. As a schedule to the National Partnership, the purpose of this Implementation Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how universal access is intended to be delivered and demonstrate SA's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the National Partnership.
7. This Implementation Plan supports the national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services consistent with the NQF.
8. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the National Partnership, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against performance benchmarks or milestones.
9. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for it under the overarching National Partnership.
10. The Parties to this Implementation Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to the plan and its full implementation.

## PART 3: STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN IMPLEMENTATION

### Project information

11. The National Partnership reaffirms the commitment to provide universal access to, and improved participation by, children in quality early childhood education programmes in the year before full-time school, with a focus on Indigenous<sup>1</sup> and vulnerable and disadvantaged children and in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.
12. In SA, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are defined as children who reside in a location assessed as being in the lowest quintile of the ABS Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, Australia, 2011 – Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage).
13. The project elements planned are detailed in Table 1: Project elements.

Table 1: Project elements

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Affordable access for all children to 600 hours of preschool	<p><u>Funding allocations to government and non-government preschool programme providers</u></p> <p>Continue provision of additional funding to government preschools</p> <p>Continue to administer funding grant payments to approved child care centres, non-government schools and preschools</p>	4 Jan 2016	29 Dec 2017	NA
2	Access for Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children	<p><u>Programmes and projects to improve participation in early childhood education</u></p> <p>Preschool subsidies (targeted to Indigenous children, concession card holders, and children with a disability) that will facilitate access to preschool in approved child care centres, non-government schools and preschools</p>	4 Jan 2016	29 Dec 2017	1

<sup>1</sup> Within this plan the word 'Indigenous' has been used to be consistent with the National Partnership. Agencies of the SA Government have a preference to refer to the first Australians in SA as Aboriginal, particularly in targeted services and programmes as well as in official reporting.

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<p>Preschool Support Program and Speech and Language Program – supporting access to Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) preschools for children with additional needs and disabilities</p> <p>Inclusive Preschool Programs – supporting access to DECD preschools for children with a disability</p> <p>Indigenous Children with Impaired Hearing Preschool Program – supporting access to DECD preschools for Indigenous children</p> <p>Preschool Bilingual Program – supporting access to DECD preschools for children from non-English speaking backgrounds</p> <p>Dedicated early childhood leadership position to support DECD preschools in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to implement the National Quality Standards and Early Childhood Development Plan, and to improve Indigenous participation</p> <p>Attendance Improvement Project – improving regular attendance at preschool for all children enrolled in DECD preschools, primarily targeting Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Hospital Based Preschool Program – individually tailored preschool programs for children confined to hospital</p>			

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
3	Professional development	<p><u>A professional development and mentoring support programme</u></p> <p>Maintain contractual agreement with Gowrie SA for the delivery of a professional development and mentoring support programme for staff delivering preschool programmes in non-government universal access funded services</p>	4 Jan 2016	30 Dec 2016	NA

14. As required by clause 21(d) of the National Partnership, strategies are in place to ensure funding is directed to support participation by all children in all quality early childhood education programmes, regardless of whether programmes are delivered through schools (government and non-government), standalone preschools or long day care centres. These strategies are included as project elements throughout this plan.
15. As required by clause 21(e) of the National Partnership, State-specific data and implementation issues are identified below. Each of the identified issues includes strategies to overcome or address them.
  - (a) There is a potential issue resulting from a decision by the Catholic Education Office of South Australia (CESA) that Catholic schools can commence offering a mid-year school intake from 2016 if they opt to do so. This may impact on children who commence preschool at the beginning of 2016 if the families accept the offer of a mid-year placement at one of these schools, resulting in these children only receiving six months of preschool provision. DECD will continue to work with CESA to minimise the impact of the mid-year intake on children's access to 600 hours of preschool in the year before full-time school.

## Estimated costs

16. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to SA is \$55,375,796 payable in accordance with the milestones and performance benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
17. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and SA retains the flexibility to move SA contributions between components and/or years, as long as outcomes are not affected. However, the Commonwealth's contributions can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

Table 2: Estimated financial contributions\*

(\$ million)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total
Element 1	13.3	26.3	13.0	52.6
Element 2	0.6	1.3	0.7	2.6
Element 3	0.1	0.1	-	0.2
Total estimated budget	14.0	27.7	13.7	55.4
less estimated Commonwealth contribution	8.2	27.6	19.6	55.4
equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions **	5.8	0.1	-5.9	-
Total Commonwealth contribution	8.2	27.6	19.6	55.4

\*Figures may not add due to rounding. All figures are estimates, including estimated allocations by element.

\*\*States and territories are responsible for the provision of early childhood education and SA allocates its own source funding accordingly.

## Programme logic

18. The project elements detailed in this Implementation Plan will achieve the outcomes and objectives stated in the National Partnership, including for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and Indigenous children.
19. The way in which these project elements will achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the National Partnership is detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Programme logic

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Element 1 – Affordable access for all children to 600 hours of preschool</p>	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programmes which meet the needs of parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Supporting all children's quality early childhood education participation, regardless of whether quality early childhood education programmes are delivered through schools (non-government and government), standalone preschools or long day care centres</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p>	<p>To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children</p>	<p>SA</p>

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
Element 2 – Access for Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programmes which meet the needs of parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of Indigenous children, including in remote areas</p> <p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Supporting all children's quality early childhood education participation, regardless of whether quality early childhood education programmes are delivered through schools (non-government and government), standalone preschools or long day care centres</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education</p>	To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children	SA
Element 3 – Professional development	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programmes which meet the needs of parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Delivery of a professional development and mentoring support programme for staff delivering preschool programmes in non-government universal access funded services</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p>	To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children	SA

## Risk management

20. The SA DECD has a risk management plan in place. Risks have been actively identified, entered into a risk log and categorised in terms of impact and likelihood.

## South Australian Context

21. DECD is the agency responsible for leading the implementation of the universal access to early childhood education strategies in SA. SA is using the following approaches to maintain the universal access initiative:
  - (a) Increased service provision in existing preschool services: Children enrolled in State funded preschools have an increased annual provision from 480 hours to 600 hours of preschool for children in their year before full-time school.
  - (b) Expanded service provision to provide new preschool places: funding and service agreements have been, and will continue to be, entered into with child care operators and non-government schools to provide access to 600 hours of preschool to children not accessing, or unable to access, State funded preschools.
22. Government preschool service providers set fees. These fees are not compulsory and children are not excluded from attending preschool if their parents/carers cannot afford to pay. The average annual fee charged per child charged by government preschools in 2015 was \$405.
23. Preschool is funded by the SA Government. Under the current DECD preschool enrolment policy, four and five-year-old children, three-year-old Indigenous children and children under the guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development (that is, children in care) may access an annual provision of up to 480 hours of SA Government funded preschool. Provided that a SA Government funded preschool (including 19 non-government services<sup>2</sup> and a Preschool of the Air service provider) has the capacity to do so, an early entry preschool programme is also provided to children with additional needs including children with a disability and newly arrived children from a non-English speaking background.
24. As at August 2015, 90 per cent of children enrolled in preschool programmes receive their access to 600 hours from one of 407 SA Government funded service providers (including 19 non-government services and a Preschool of the Air service provider), with 84 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the universal access budget plan for 2016 and 2017 to support this strategy. The remaining 10 per cent of all children enrolled in preschool programmes were receiving their access to 600 hours in universal access to early childhood education funded preschool programmes from one of 119 non-government service providers, with 16 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the universal access budget plan for 2016 and 2017 will be utilised to support this strategy.
25. Subsidies allocated for approved universal access to preschool programme service providers (which includes non-government child care centres, preschools and schools) ranges from \$1,130 to \$2,260 annual allocation in 2016 for each child enrolled in 600 hours of preschool depending on the socioeconomic area that the service is located. Service

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<sup>2</sup> The 19 non-government preschool services have funding and service agreements that existed prior to the original National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. These services are funded by the SA Government with funding allocations for preschool staffing comparable to the staffing allocations of DECD operated preschool services.

providers also attract an additional \$1,690 per enrolment if the child is Indigenous or a concession card holder and a further \$2,820 if the child has a disability. Indexation of the per capita subsidies of 2.5 per cent has been included in 2016 and 2.5 per cent will be added for 2017.

26. In terms of progress on early childhood development, the latest Australian Early Development Census conducted in 2015, when compared to the results in 2012, indicated the proportion of children determined to be developmentally vulnerable in SA was about the same (23.7 per cent in 2012 and 23.5 per cent in 2015). One of the positive trends in the results for SA was a notable improvement in the proportion of Indigenous children reported as developmentally vulnerable, with a 4.6 percentage point reduction from 51.4 per cent in 2012 down to 46.8 per cent in 2015. Participation in preschool is seen as one method of lowering the proportion of developmentally vulnerable children who enter school.
27. New preschool facilities are now built to accommodate child care programmes and, since 2005, SA has embarked on a programme to establish Children’s Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting (Children’s Centres) that provide an integrated approach to service delivery for families.

## PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

### Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

28. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
29. With regard to reporting on attendance, SA has agreed a target for 2015, 2016 and 2017 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 4 below, and will report on progress towards this target as part of the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.

Table 4: Bilaterally agreed attendance targets

2014 performance	2015 Target	2016 Target	2017 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
98.5 per cent	90 per cent	90 per cent	90 per cent	Annual targets agreed in Implementation Plans taking into account a jurisdiction’s starting point and moving to 90 per cent over time.

Payments under this agreement are not tied to achievement of attendance targets.

The methodology for calculation of performance related to attendance targets will be where a child has participated in a quality preschool programme for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

### Monitoring and reporting

30. Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against the performance milestones and benchmarks and targets in the National Partnership, are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.

31. These data and performance specifications will be used to report SA's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Implementation Plan.
32. Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator (PI) where the method is not consistent with the Early Childhood Education and Care NMDS:
  - PI calculation description (numerator, denominator, computation and presentation)
  - numerator information (collection name and population description)
  - denominator information (collection name and population description)
  - calculation notes (including any information about how the PI is calculated)
  - methodology
  - rationale for supplementary data and reporting (including any additional information to explain how and why the specifications for the supplementary data differ from the specifications in the NMDS).

**Sign off**

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

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**Signature**

**Date**

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The Hon Susan Close MP  
Minister for Education and Child Development

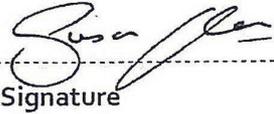
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**Signature**

**Date**

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Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham  
Minister for Education and Training

**Sign off**

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

  
Signature

2/5/16  
Date

The Hon Susan Close MP  
Minister for Education and Child Development

  
Signature

3 May 2016.  
Date

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham  
Minister for Education and Training