

New South Wales Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 2018

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2018 (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 programs for all children.
3. This objective is to be achieved through universal access to quality early childhood education program(s) for 600 hours per year, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher who meets National Quality Framework requirements, and with a focus on participation by Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of the setting in which programs 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 New South Wales (NSW), represented by the Minister for Early Childhood Education.
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 NSW’s capacity to achieve the outcomes of the National Partnership.
7. 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.
8. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Minister responsible for it under the overarching National Partnership.
9. 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.

2	<p>Targeted Initiatives</p>	<p>Start Strong Sector Support Program – provides mentoring support and early childhood education sector-specific advice to support the transition to Start Strong.</p> <p>Local Partnerships (Indigenous and Low Income Families) – supports innovative programs, promotes high expectations, and quality preschool programs for Indigenous and low income children in the year before school for 600 hours per year.</p> <p>Start Strong Community Safety Net – peak bodies will be engaged to establish an early childhood education program in eligible rural and remote communities.</p> <p>Qualified early childhood workforce – the 2018 Incentive Scholarships program is designed to support educators who are working in rural and remote NSW to complete their early childhood education degree. Each scholarship is worth up to \$9,000.</p> <p>Diploma-qualified early childhood educators in rural and remote NSW services who want to upgrade their qualification to that of a four year qualified teacher can apply for a Rural and Remote Early Childhood Teaching Scholarship worth up to \$10,000.</p> <p>Qualified early childhood Aboriginal workforce – Aboriginal Scholarships provide financial incentive alongside mentoring and student support to increase the number of Aboriginal early childhood educators in NSW.</p> <p>Infrastructure – the 2017 \$10 million Start Strong Capital Works Grants funding is designed to create up to 700 new preschool places, with priority given to outer regional, remote and very remote, and Aboriginal communities.</p>	1 Jan 2017	31 Dec 2018 (with a commitment to 2021 by NSW)	N/A
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		<p>Sector Development Program – supports the early childhood education workforce through the provision of training, support and resources to build sector capacity in alignment with NSW Government priorities.</p> <p>Preschool Disability Support Program – supports the inclusion of children with disability or additional needs in community preschools.</p> <p>Intervention Support Program – provides supplementary support to improve educational opportunities, learning outcomes and personal development of children with disabilities.</p> <p>Mobile Preschool Contracts – support the provision of sustainable and improved service delivery and universal access in rural and remote areas. The contracts are designed to recognise the unique and higher costs of mobile service delivery, including increased staffing and travel costs.</p> <p>Long Day Care Grants Program – designed to support participation in quality preschool programs for children in their year before full-time school.</p>			
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12. As required by clause 21 (d) of the National Partnership, strategies are in place to ensure that funding is directed to support participation by all children in all quality early childhood education programs, regardless of whether programs 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.
13. 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) Data accuracy for Indigenous sub-indicators will require careful consideration, given the volatility of estimates of Indigenous cohort level population that are used to calculate performance against these indicators.

Estimated costs

14. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to NSW is **\$123,241,270** payable in accordance with the milestones and performance benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
15. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and NSW retains the flexibility to move funds between components and/or years, as long as outcomes are not affected. The Commonwealth contribution can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

Table 2: Estimated financial contributions*

(\$ million)	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Elements 1 & 2#	37.0	86.3	123.2
*Total estimated budget	37.0	86.3	123.2
less estimated Commonwealth contribution	37.0	86.3	123.2
equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	*	*	*
Total Commonwealth contribution	37.0	86.3	123.2

* States and territories are responsible for the provision of early childhood education and NSW allocates its own source funding accordingly. Table 2 only includes funding under the National Partnership. Funding is based on enrolment growth projected for 2018, based on enrolment data from the ABS' *Preschool Education, Australia, 2016*. Amounts do not add up due to rounding.

The maximum Commonwealth financial contributions have been allocated to each project element on a pro-rata basis and are indicative only.

Program logic

16. 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.
17. The manner 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: Program logic

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Reform / Project Objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Elements 1 & 2 – Start Strong Model and Targeted Initiatives</p>	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programs that 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 programs 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 program.</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</p> <p>All Indigenous four and five-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education.</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 programs for all children.</p>	<p>NSW</p>

Risk management

18. The NSW Department of Education 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.

New South Wales Context

19. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to the NSW context. Key factors that have influenced the proposed direction are below:
 - (a) Changes to the funding system and the resultant Start Strong funding model build on the achievements of the Preschool Funding Model (PFM). The PFM stemmed from a review by Professor Deborah Brennan, which made recommendations to ensure that funding for early childhood education was simpler, better targeted, and

easier to understand to support preschool access, including for three-year-old children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- (b) Community preschools make up approximately 20 per cent of preschool program provision in NSW, with a further 3 per cent located in schools, and the remaining 78 per cent in long day care.¹ This is in contrast to other jurisdictions with smaller long day care sectors.
- (c) The profile of preschool services NSW currently funds using both Commonwealth and NSW government funding includes:
 - i. 100 government-run preschools
 - ii. around 740 community preschools
 - iii. over 2600 long day care providers.
- (d) The NSW Start Strong Preschool Program made \$85 million available for community preschools, targeted at increasing 600 hour enrolments and reducing fees. NSW has committed an additional \$217 million under the 2017-18 NSW Budget to extend Start Strong to 2021.
- (e) The NSW Start Strong LDC Program made \$30 million in funding available to long day care centres in 2017-18. The objective is to increase participation of four and five-year-old children in quality preschool programs the year before full-time school. The Start Strong LDC Program will be assessed, and future options will be developed to support access and enrolment targets irrespective of setting.
- (f) Preschool education has also been supported in not-for-profit long day care centres through a separate NSW initiative, the Long Day Care Grants Program.

PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

- 20. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
- 21. With regard to reporting on attendance, NSW has agreed a target for 2018 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.

¹ Rounding means these numbers add to 101 per cent.

Table 4: Bilaterally agreed attendance target

2016 performance	2017 Target	2018 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
96.4%	90%*	90%	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.

As per previous agreements, the methodology for calculation of performance related to attendance targets will be where a child has participated in a quality preschool program for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

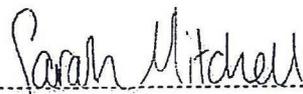
*Performance against the 2017 Target to be assessed as part of final performance assessment for the previous National Partnership for 2016 and 2017, with data expected in the first half of 2018.

Monitoring and reporting

22. 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.
23. These data and performance specifications will be used to report NSW's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Implementation Plan.
24. Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator where the method is not consistent with the Early Childhood Education and Care Minimal Data Set (NMDS):
 - performance Indicator 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:



Signature Date
The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC
Minister for Early Childhood Education



Signature Date
Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training