

# Australian Capital Territory's Implementation Plan

## NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NP UAECE or National Partnership) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement.
2. The objective of the NP UAECE is to maintain Universal Access to quality early childhood education program(s), with a focus on improved participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities and ensures that cost is not a barrier to participation.

### PART 2: TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Assistant Minister for Education, and the Australian Capital Territory, represented by the Minister for Education and Training.
4. As a schedule to the NP UAECE, 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 the Australian Capital Territory's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the NP UAECE by the expiry of the National Partnership.
5. This Implementation Plan supports the national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services consistent with the National Quality Framework.
6. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the NP UAECE, including the acceptance of final performance reporting and processing of final payments against performance benchmarks.
7. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers with responsibility for early childhood education under the overarching NP UAECE.
8. 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 IMPLEMENTATION**

**Project information**

9. The NP UAECE supports Universal Access to and improved participation by children in quality early childhood education in the year before full-time school, with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
  
10. Commonwealth, State and Territory governments will collaborate to develop a nationally agreed definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged children over time. This will be progressed through the Early Childhood Development Working Group. In the Australian Capital Territory vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally defined as:
  - those residing in communities identified in the 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as having above the national average rates of vulnerability in two or more domains.
  
11. The project elements planned are as follows:
  1. *Maintain 600 hours of preschool education per year for ACT children in the year before full-time schooling;*
  2. *Strengthening Program Quality and Consistency;*
  3. *Teacher Qualifications;*
  4. *Access to Preschool Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children; and*
  5. *Access to Preschool Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children.*

**Table 1: Project elements**

No	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Maintain access to 600 hours of preschool education to ACT children in the year before full-time schooling at a cost that is not a barrier to participation	1 July 2013	31 December 2014	—
2	Strengthen preschool program quality and consistency by aligning curriculum with the National Quality Framework through implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework.	1 July 2013	31 December 2014	—

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3	<p>Delivery of 600 hours of preschool education to ACT children in the year before full-time schooling by a degree qualified early childhood teacher who meets the National Quality Framework requirements.</p> <p>Ongoing provision of access to teacher scholarships to upgrade qualifications.</p>	<i>1 July 2013</i>	<i>31 December 2014</i>	1
4	<p>Promote awareness, access and participation in preschool programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Preschool Matters Awareness project.</li> <li>• Community support programs and partnerships with ACT Therapy, Family and Community Centres.</li> </ul>	<i>1 July 2013</i>	<i>31 December 2014</i>	2
5	<p>Promote awareness, access and participation in preschool programs for vulnerable and disadvantaged children through delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Preschool Matters Awareness project.</li> <li>• Transition support for vulnerable families to access community services (<i>TAPS, CFC</i>).</li> <li>• Community support programs and partnerships with ACT Therapy, Family and Community Centres.</li> </ul>	<i>1 July 2013</i>	<i>31 December 2014</i>	3

### Estimated costs

12. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth to the Australian Capital Territory for the project is \$10.4 million, payable in accordance with the performance milestones and benchmarks set out in the NP UAECE. All payments are exclusive of GST.
13. The Commonwealth contribution in Table 2 can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

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**Table 2: Estimated financial contributions**

(\$)	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15*	Total
Non-Commonwealth contributions**	-	-	-	-
Total Commonwealth contribution***	\$233,323	\$6,444,151	\$3,728,402	\$10,405,875

\* Funding for the sixth month period to 31 December 2014

\*\* States are responsible for the provision of early childhood education services and allocate their own source funding and provide in-kind contributions accordingly. Funding contributions by each jurisdiction will be considered as part of the review of the National Partnership, consistent with clause 37(a) of the National Partnership.

\*\*\* Commonwealth is also separately contributing \$3 million in 2013-14 and \$1.5 million in 2014-15 nationally for early childhood data development, review and research activities.

Note: This table does not include direct child care assistance to parents, by the Commonwealth, to help improve the affordability of Child Care Benefit approved child care services that provide a preschool or kindergarten program.

### Program logic

14. The project elements detailed in this Implementation Plan will achieve the outcomes and objectives stated in the NP UAECE, including for vulnerable and disadvantaged children as defined in Clause 10, by the Australian Capital Territory.
15. The way in which these project elements will achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the NP UAECE is detailed in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Program logic**

Project elements	Outputs (services delivered)	Outcomes	Reform/Project Objectives	Responsibility
<i>Element 1</i> <i>Maintain 600 hours of preschool education in the year before full-time schooling</i>	Implementing accessible, quality early childhood education programs 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.	All children have access to 600 hours of preschool education in the year before full-time schooling at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.	Provide preschool programs across the ACT that maintain access to 600 hours of quality early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling.	Australian Capital Territory

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<p><i>Element 2</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening Program Quality and Consistency</i></p>	<p>Quality early childhood education is delivered utilising the Early Years Learning Framework.</p>	<p>All children have access to and participate in an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</p>	<p>Improve the quality of preschool education programs through implementation of the National Quality Framework</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
<p><i>Element 3</i></p> <p><i>Teacher Qualifications</i></p>	<p>Implementation of accessible, quality early childhood education programs, delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with the National Quality Framework.</p>	<p>All preschool programs are delivered to ACT children in the year before full-time schooling by a degree qualified early childhood teacher who meets the National Quality Framework requirements.</p>	<p>All children have access to a quality early childhood education program by a suitably qualified teacher.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
<p><i>Element 4</i></p> <p><i>Access to Preschool Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</i></p>	<p>Promote awareness, access and participation in preschool programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children</p>	<p>Participation rates meet National Partnership performance targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p>	<p>Equitable preschool participation rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
<p><i>Element 5</i></p> <p><i>Access to Preschool Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children</i></p>	<p>Promote awareness, access and participation in preschool programs for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p>	<p>Participation rates meet National Partnership performance targets for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>Equitable preschool participation rates by vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>

### Risk management

16. The Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training 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.

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### Australian Capital Territory Context

17. The ACT Government has a strong commitment to early childhood education and this is evident in its investment in preschools over the last 50 years.
18. In 2006 public preschool hours were increased from 10 to 12 hours per week. This ensured that the ACT was well placed to support the implementation of 15 hours of preschool education across the ACT. The schools in the first three years of the rollout (2009-11) were selected based on their location in suburbs with high numbers of disadvantaged or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations or both of these criteria. In addition, AEDI data was used to inform the rollout of increased provision in areas of need. In 2012, the staged implementation continued with a further 28 schools implementing 15 hours of preschool totalling 44 schools.
19. In 2013 all 77 ACT public preschools offer a 15 hour preschool program in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling. The ACT aims that preschool programs are delivered by degree qualified early childhood teachers, aligned with the National Quality Framework, for 600 hours per annum.
20. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to relevant context:
  - a) The implementation plan is focussed on maintaining the achievements of the previous National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education relating to universal access of ACT children to 600 hours of preschool education in the year before full-time schooling;
  - b) A renewed and ongoing focus on maximising the access, participation and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in a quality early childhood program in the year before full-time schooling; and
  - c) A renewed and ongoing focus on maximising the access, participation and attendance of vulnerable and disadvantaged children in a quality early childhood program in the year before full-time schooling.
21. Key factors that have influenced the proposed direction are set out in Table 4.

**Table 4: Links with existing reforms or projects**

	Existing reforms or projects	Complementary nature of activities
1	Aligning teacher qualifications with the National Quality Framework including the delivery of an early childhood program by a suitably qualified teacher.	Ensures a focus on the delivery of a high quality, consistent preschool program.

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2	Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Cross government collaboration to ensure wrap around service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.	Focus of access, participation and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in quality early childhood programs. Early engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
3	Cross government collaboration to ensure wrap around service delivery for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	Early identification and intervention for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

### PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

#### Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

22. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
23. With regard to reporting on attendance, the Australian Capital Territory has agreed targets for 2013 and 2014 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 5 below, and will report on progress towards this target as part of the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection and via progress reports.

**Table 5: Bilaterally agreed attendance target/s**

Baseline data	2013 Target	2014 Target	Nationally Agreed Target
98% in 2012	90%	90%	<i>90 per cent of enrolled children attending an early childhood education program to be achieved over time</i>

<sup>2</sup> 2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection. Calculation of target is attendance divided by enrolment. Attendance is the number of children aged 4 or 5 years old who attended a preschool program for at least one hour in the reference period. Enrolment is the number of children aged 4 or 5 years old who were enrolled in a preschool program in the reference period.

#### Monitoring and reporting

24. 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 NP UAECE are set out in Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
25. These data and performance specifications will be used to report Australian Capital Territory performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan in Schedule H.1 of this Plan.

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26. Reports in the manner stated at (i) and (ii) of Australian Capital Territory progress in achieving the performance milestones and benchmarks, targets and any supplementary data.
- i. Progress Reports must contain:
    - Progress in implementing the project elements undertaken to achieve the performance milestones and benchmarks and the bilaterally agreed annual attendance targets in the reporting period, including challenges and mitigating strategies, where relevant; and
    - Where applicable, supplementary data reports for the performance milestones, benchmarks and targets listed in the NP UAECE or otherwise agreed in this Plan, and set out in Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
  - ii. Progress Reports could include:
    - Case studies of services or children who are benefiting from universal access or from increased access or attendance.
  - iii. 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 National Minimum 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).

### Review

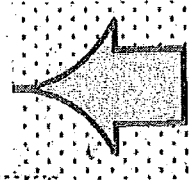
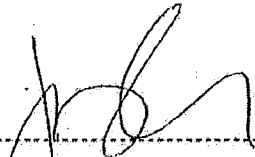
27. Both parties will jointly review the Implementation Plan, prior to June 2014, with regard to progress made by the Parties in respect of achieving the agreed outcomes that are supported by the Implementation Plan.
28. If required, an updated revised Implementation Plan will need to be submitted to the Commonwealth before June 2014. Where a state is not on track to meet its performance benchmarks, the Implementation Plan may require amendment before July 2014 to ensure that its strategies are adequate to achieve its performance benchmarks.



SCHEDULE H

**Sign off**

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



HERE

Signature

Date

7.11.13

Joy Burch MLA

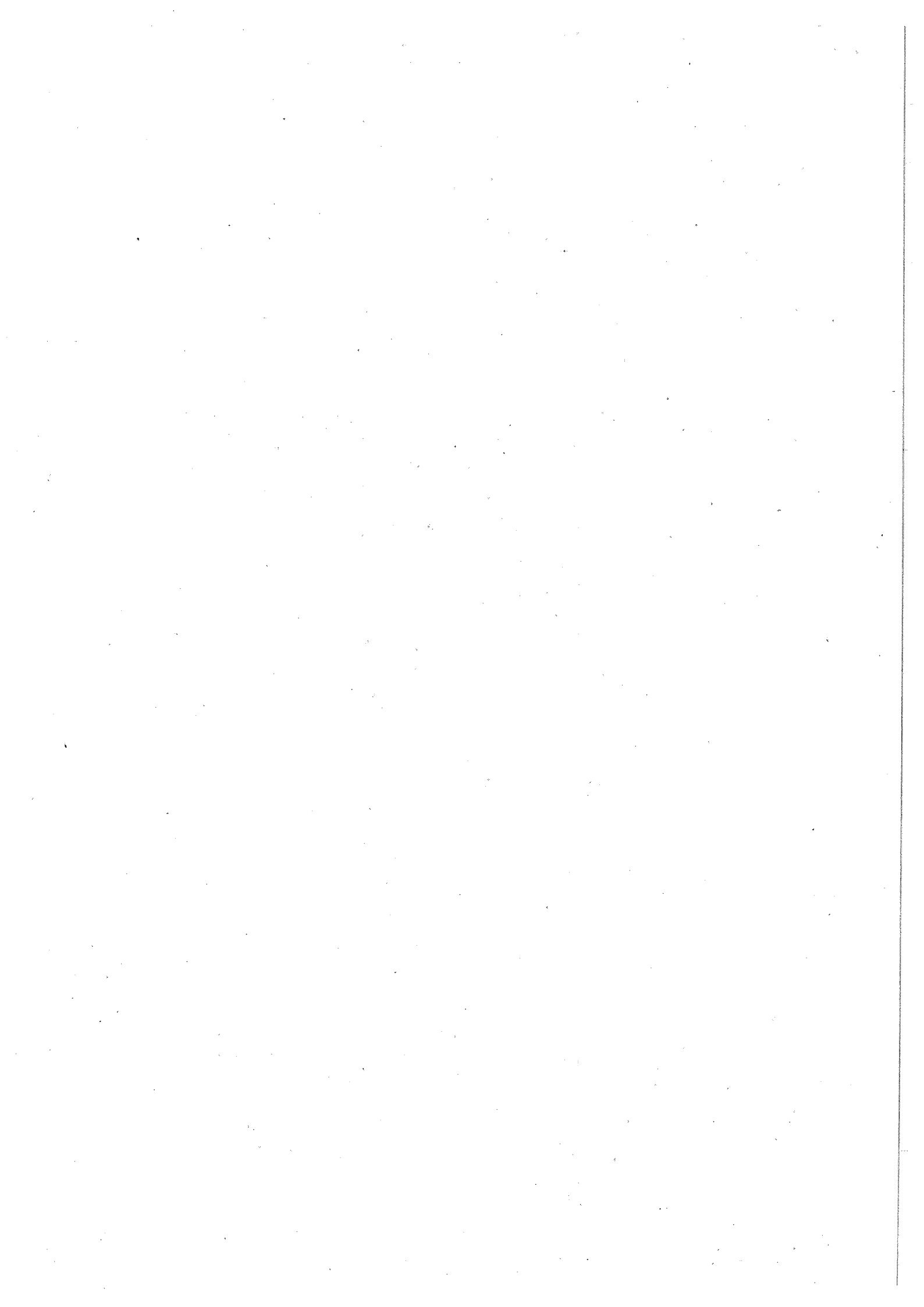
Australian Capital Territory Minister for Education and Training.

Signature

Date

The Hon Sussan Ley MP

Assistant Minister for Education



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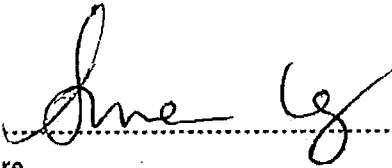
**Sign off**

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

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**Signature**

**Date**

Joy Burch MLA  
Australian Capital Territory Minister for Education and Training.



2/12/13

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**Signature**

**Date**

The Hon Sussan Ley MP  
Assistant Minister for Education.

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## Schedule H.1

### Supplementary Data

**Table 1: Australian Capital Territory supplementary data specifications**

Performance Indicator	Supplementary data specification
<p><i>Identification of vulnerable and disadvantaged children in communities identified in the 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as having above the national average rates of vulnerability in two or more domains.</i></p>	<p><u>Source:</u> Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data collection, ABS Estimated Resident Population, National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.</p> <p><u>Numerator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Enrolments of children enrolled in preschool programs within communities identified by the AEDI results as having a higher proportion of vulnerable children than the national average.</li> <li>(b) Enrolments of children in preschool programs available for 600 hours a year within communities identified by the AEDI results as having a higher proportion of vulnerable children than the national average.</li> </ul> <p>These data to be consistent with the specifications in the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set.</p> <p><u>Denominator:</u> Estimated Resident Population of three and/or four year-olds, calculated as agreed according to its availability by suburb.</p> <p><u>Computation:</u> Where numerator is greater than denominator (i.e. result is greater than 1) in two or more domains, community (at agreed level) is identified.</p> <p><u>Methodology:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Data from the AEDI will be used to identify ACT communities (suburbs) with a greater proportion of children identified as vulnerable on two or more domains than the national proportion.</li> <li>(b) Data from the NECEC collection will be used to measure the participation rate of children in the suburbs identified in step (a).</li> </ul> <p><u>Key Definitions:</u> As per AEDI data collection.</p> <p>In 2012, 9.8% of ACT children were identified as developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI. The Australian proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains was 10.8%.</p> <p>In the ACT, there are 32 local communities (suburbs) where children are developmentally vulnerable at a higher proportion than their Australian peers.</p>