

Tasmania'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, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, and the State of Tasmania, represented by the Minister for Education and Skills, the Hon Nick McKim MP.
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 Tasmania'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 delivery of quality education and care services consistent with the National Quality Standard.
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 Tasmania, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally defined as those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and low-socio economic communities. For the purposes of reporting, Tasmania will continue to use the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure (in particular the first quintile of statistical local areas) as a proxy measure of vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
11. The project elements planned are as follows:
 - (a) *Continued universal access to free provision in government schools to all Tasmanian children of eligible age;*
 - (b) *Continued provision of existing services to ensure access by all eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities; and*
 - (c) *Continued provision of additional programs which support participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged children.*

Table 1: Project elements

No.	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Universal access to 600 hours of free provision in government schools	1 July 2013	31 December 2014	-
2	Maintain existing service provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote locations	1 July 2013	31 December 2014	-
3	Maintain additional programs supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children	1 July 2013	31 December 2014	3,4,5 of Table 4

Estimated costs

12. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to Tasmania is \$15.6 million, payable in accordance with performance milestones and benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. 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.

Table 2: Estimated financial contributions

(\$)	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15*	Total
Non-Commonwealth contributions**	-	-	-	-
Total Commonwealth contribution***	\$327,064	\$9,033,192^	\$5,226,347	\$14,587,602

* 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.

^An additional \$1 million is payable in 2013-14 once the Commonwealth has received and accepted Tasmanian's Progress Report due on 20 December 2013.

*** 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 National Partnership including for vulnerable and disadvantaged children as defined in Clause 10, by Tasmania.
15. 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: Program logic

Project elements	Outputs (services delivered)	Outcomes	Reform/Project Objectives	Responsibility
<i>Element 1</i>	Ensure that the legislative provision of 600 hours of free kindergarten in government school locations accessible by all Tasmanian children	Free Universal Access	This provision is maintained	Tasmania
<i>Element 2</i>	Kindergarten programs are accessible by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities	All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities can access a kindergarten program	This provision is maintained	Tasmania

Element 3	Programs are run which facilitate participation in kindergartens by vulnerable and disadvantaged children	Participation rates of disadvantaged and vulnerable children are at agreed levels	This provision is maintained but reviewed if agreed levels are not maintained.	Tasmania
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Risk management

16. The Tasmanian 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.

Tasmania

17. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to relevant context.
- a. There are three existing state funded projects which focus on pre-kinder years education (birth to four years) that complement the Implementation Plan projects by supporting participation in learning by vulnerable and disadvantaged or Aboriginal children. These are Launching into Learning (in all government schools), Child and Family Centres (in 10 communities), and Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers (5 state-wide);
 - b. The Education Department has provided state funded kindergartens linked to primary schools since 1911, along with others provided by the Kindergarten Union and parents. In 1968, a review recommended the provisions of kindergarten as part of the school system which led to a rapid expansion of places. By 1980 the state was responsible for most kindergartens in Tasmania. Rates of participation were high, the minimum age of enrolment was set at 4 on 1 January and the entitlement to enrolment was legislated in 1994. Non-government schools gradually established kindergartens during the 1980's and now all deliver a program. Child care providers have also delivered the program (being registered by the Schools Registration Board to do so) but currently none do – cost to parents is provided as the main reason for lack of enrolments as well as the fact that, given the history above, parents see Kindergarten as the first year of school.
 - c. Given the dispersed nature of the population in Tasmania, most children are in classes of less than 20. Because schools are required to enrol any eligible child, many schools need to run classes which combine kindergarten children with older age groups. Tasmania's high numbers of low SES families who could not afford to support community kindergartens, was a significant factor in the 1968 decision to embed kindergartens in the education system – *there is evidence that the children who are most in need of pre-school education are those most likely not to be receiving it.*
18. 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	National Quality Standard	Ensures a focus on the delivery of high quality kindergarten programs through quality improvement processes.
2	Closing the Gap	Focus on access, participation and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early childhood education programs.
3	Launching into Learning (LiL)	LiL provides resources to all government primary schools to develop and lead initiatives with families and their community to support children's early learning from birth and prior to Kindergarten. Schools focus on the needs of their community and make connections with other groups, services and agencies in the area. There is a focus on disadvantaged families with some of these families being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
4	Child and Family Centres CFCs	CFCs are places for families with children birth to 5 to access a range of services. Their purpose is to improve the health, well-being, education and care of Tasmania's very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community.
5	Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers (AEYLOs)	AEYLOs engage parents/carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from birth to four years in the education of their children. Their role will contribute to improved kindergarten enrolment and attendance by providing parents with knowledge and skills to enhance their support for children's learning and preparedness for school entry.

PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

19. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the NP UAECE.

20. With regard to reporting on attendance Tasmania has agreed targets for 2013 and 2014 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 5 below, and will report on progress towards these targets 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% ¹	90%	90%	<i>90 per cent of enrolled children attending an early childhood education program to be achieved over time</i>

¹ 2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection. Calculation of target is attendance divided by enrolment. Attendance is the number of child aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are attending a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling. Enrolment is the number of child aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling.

Monitoring and reporting

21. Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against performance milestones and benchmarks and targets in the NP UAECE are set out in Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
22. These data and performance specifications will be used to report Tasmania's performance. At this time Tasmania does not intend to rely on any supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan.
23. Reports in the manner stated at (i) and (ii) of Tasmania's 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
 - 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

24. 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.
25. 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.

Sign off

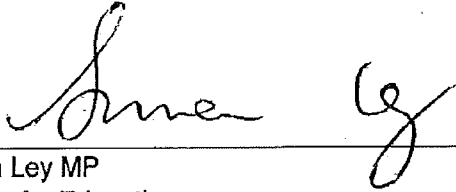
The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature

Date

The Hon Nick McKim MP
Minister for Education and Skills

Signature



Date 2/12/13

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education

Sign off

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

Signature

Nick McKim

Date

30/10/13

The Hon Nick McKim MP
Minister for Education and Skills

Signature

Date

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education