

Victoria'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 State of Victoria represented by the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development.
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 Victoria'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 Victoria, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally defined as children living in communities with Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) in the lowest quintile.
11. The project elements planned are as follows:
 - a) Maintain universal access to 600 hours of quality early childhood education for children in the year before full-time school, including targeted support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
 - b) Expand places and infrastructure;
 - c) Workforce development; and
 - d) Planning

Table 1: Project elements

No.	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Maintain universal access - Provision of funding to maintain universal access to 600 hours of quality early childhood education for children in the year before full-time school , including targeted support for vulnerable children	1 July 2013	31 Dec 2014	Element 1 of Table 4
2	Expand places and infrastructure - measures that support the management of existing infrastructure and contribute to the expansion of infrastructure to meet existing and future demand	1 July 2013	31 Dec 2014	Element 3 Table 4
3	Workforce development – measures that support the attraction, retention and skills of the early childhood education workforce to meet existing and future demand.	1 July 2013	31 Dec 2014	Element 4 Table 4
4	Planning – measures that support the sector to respond to current and future challenges	1 July 2013	31 Dec 2014	Element 2 Table 4

Estimated costs

12. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to Victoria is \$158.1 million payable in accordance with the performance milestones and benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
13. The budget is indicative only and Victoria retains the flexibility to move funds between components and/or years, as long as outcomes are not affected. 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***	\$3,544,857	\$97,905,572	\$56,645,367	\$158,095,796

* Funding for the sixth month period to 31 December 2014

** In recognition of States' responsibilities in relation to the provision of early childhood education services, States 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.

***The 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 Victoria.
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	Responsibility
<i>Element 1 - Maintain universal access</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide per capita grants and other program funding to ensure all children have access to, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving participation in affordable, quality early childhood education programs, 	Victoria

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Project elements	Outputs (services delivered)	Outcomes	Responsibility
	<p>participate in 600 hours of high quality kindergarten programs delivered by an early childhood teacher for children in the year before full-time school (up from an average of 430 hours in 2012).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide targeted support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children to ensure cost is not a barrier to their participation 	<p>for 600 hours per year in the year before full-time school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children have access to and participate in affordable, quality early childhood programs for 600 hours per year in the year before full-time school • Cost is not a barrier to participation for children attending kindergarten programs in the year before full-time school 	
<p><i>Element 2</i></p> <p><i>Expand places and infrastructure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions that support the management of and contribute to the expansion of infrastructure to meet existing and future demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to, and participation in affordable, quality early childhood education programs, for 600 hours per year in the year before full-time school. • Kindergarten places meet local demand 	Victoria
<p><i>Element 3</i></p> <p>Workforce development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions that support the attraction, retention and skills of the early childhood education workforce to meet existing and future demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality kindergarten programs are delivered by degree qualified early childhood teachers who meet the National Quality Framework requirements 	Victoria
<p><i>Element 4</i></p> <p>Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions support the sector to respond to current and future provision planning challenges (e.g. population growth or decline). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to early childhood education is available to every child. 	Victoria

Risk management

16. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 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.

Victorian Context

17. The continued well-established and highly valued partnership approach with local government and the Municipal Association of Victoria is critical to achievement of the objectives and outcomes set out in the National Partnership in Victoria.

In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has also been given to relevant context. This includes:

- the historic community ownership of kindergartens
- the maturity of the kindergarten system which is operating at close to full capacity (spaces and teachers)
- the extent to which the full range of early years services (kindergarten for both 3 and 4 year olds, playgroups, etc.) are embedded in and valued by local communities
- anticipated continuation of the high participation rate in Victorian kindergarten programs
- the parallel reform processes from the National Quality Agenda
- a period of significant population growth in Victoria.

18. Key factors that have influenced the proposed direction are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Links with existing reforms or projects

Proposed project elements	Existing reforms or projects	Complementary nature of activities
Element 1 Maintain universal access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Cluster Management • Kindergarten Fee Subsidy • Early Start Kindergarten • Access to Early Learning • Preschool Field Office Program 	Supports delivery of kindergarten programs in Victoria
Element 2 Expand places and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Facilities Capital Program • Child and Family Centres (NP IECD*) 	Supports delivery of kindergarten programs in Victoria
Element 3 Workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development support for educators in kindergarten settings 	Supports delivery of kindergarten programs in Victoria
Element 4 Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Early Years Plans (local government) 	Supports delivery of kindergarten program in Victoria

* NP IECD is the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

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, Victoria 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
96% 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. The figures above are calculated by dividing attendance by enrolment. Attendance is the number of children aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are attending a kindergarten program in the year before full-time schooling. Enrolment is the number of children aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are enrolled in a kindergarten 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 the 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 Victoria's performance, except for any supplementary data agreed by the Parties.
23. Reports in the manner stated at (i) and (ii) of Victoria'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, and expected trajectory towards the 90 per cent attendance target, 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.

Sign off

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

Signature **Date**

The Hon Wendy Lovell MLC
Victorian Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Signature **Date**

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education

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Signature Date 26-11-13

The Hon Wendy Lovell MLC
Victorian Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development



Signature Date 13/1/14

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education