

Australian Capital Territory: Implementation Plan and Performance Report (Plan) - 2022

PRESCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT – 2022 TO 2025

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Plan is a schedule to the Preschool Reform Agreement 2022 – 2025 (the Agreement) and should be read in conjunction with the Agreement. It covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.
2. The Agreement reaffirms a national commitment to provide universal access to, and improved participation by, children in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school (YBFS), with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and disadvantaged children. These programs should be delivered in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.
3. The objective of the Agreement is to facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school by maintaining universal access to quality preschool programs for all children, improving participation in preschool programs and maximising the benefit of the preschool year by improving outcomes for children.
4. The Agreement supports the delivery of 15 hours a week, or 600 hours a year of quality preschool programs, by a degree qualified early childhood teacher for all children, regardless of the setting in which programs are delivered, in the year before school.
5. The Agreement has a focus on improving preschool participation and outcomes including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and disadvantaged children.
6. This Plan is the first of four annual implementation plans that will build on each other to deliver the reforms outlined in the Agreement.

PART 2: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF THIS PLAN

7. This Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Youth, and the Australian Capital Territory, represented by their Minister for Early Childhood Development.

8. As a schedule to the Agreement, the purpose of this Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how the Australian Capital Territory demonstrates its capacity to achieve and deliver the outcomes of the Agreement.
9. This Plan will cease on completion of the final performance reporting and the processing of final payments against the performance benchmarks or milestones set out within it for 2022.
10. The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and central agencies will develop a new template for Implementation Plans from 2023 in consultation with States and Territories. The Commonwealth will require new and additional information in accordance with the Preschool Reform Agreement and the Federal Funding Agreements Principles from 2023.
11. This Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and the responsible State Minister.
12. The Parties to this 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.
13. States may also use this section to clarify or elaborate on how terms or definitions for '*Disadvantaged children*' and '*Preschool program*' are realised in their specificity within that jurisdiction as per the Agreement (Definitions, p.15 of the Agreement refers).

PART 3: FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

Commonwealth Funding Contributions

14. The Commonwealth's estimated total financial contribution to the Australian Capital Territory is set out in Tables 1a (program year) and 1b (financial year) of the Agreement.
15. However, the Commonwealth's financial contribution in individual program years is adjusted in accordance with the notes to Tables 1a and 1b of the Agreement. Consistent with the agreed adjustment process, the final amounts for 2022 are set out in **Table 1**.
16. The Commonwealth contribution can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

Table 1: 2022 Commonwealth financial contribution to the Australian Capital Territory

Category	Amount
Estimated YBFSContribution	\$9,248,666
Adjustment to Estimated YBFSContribution	N/A
Top-up to maintain 2021 levels	\$405,810
Implementation Project funding	\$500,000
Total Budget	\$10,154,476

.Table 2 should be used to show how the Australian Capital Territory will use Commonwealth funding to meet the objectives of the Preschool Reform Agreement. This may include strategies to facilitate preschool attendance by children in the year before full-time school.

Table 2: Program/activities objectives and outcomes

	Program/activity	Outputs	Objectives	Outcomes	Estimated C'th funds allocated
1.	Provide financial contribution of 600 hours of free government preschool programs	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	All children have access to a high quality and free preschool program in the year before school	All children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, free quality early childhood education programs	\$9.6 million
2.	Promotion of participation in quality early childhood education – all service providers	Delivery of the ACT Government's strategy <i>Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT</i>	Increased participation in quality early childhood education	All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in affordable, quality early childhood education programs	

State context and funding contributions

17. Context influencing the Australian Capital Territory delivery of preschool and the States' investment in preschool for 2022 is covered in this section.
 - a. Quality early childhood education in the ACT is delivered in a range of settings including government preschools, non-government preschools and long day care centres.
 - b. The ACT Government funds 12 of the 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of quality early childhood education in government preschools in the YBFS. This provision is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher under the National Quality Framework.

- c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT can access an additional 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of a free culturally safe early learning program aligned through the ACT Government funded Koori Preschool Program.
- d. Refer to the ACT Budget 2021-22 Statement F – Education via https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1870201/2021-22-ACT-Budget-Statement-F-Education.pdf, or the ACT Education Directorate’s website <https://www.education.act.gov.au/> for further information.

Implementation Project Funding Contributions

18. This section will include a State’s summary of details of implementation project funding provided by the Commonwealth including funding amounts and purpose. States will be required to provide details of how Implementation Project Funding will be used to deliver reforms, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and timing. Details will be captured at **Table 3**.

Table 3: Overview of Implementation Project Funding for Australian Capital Territory - Statement of Allocations (updated by 31 January 2022)

Implementation Project (details)	Commonwealth funding	Actions (incl. deliverables)	KPI	Timing (incl. delivery schedule)
Scope and design of system and process capabilities needed to support cross-sectoral data collection	\$0.5 million	- Scoping data collection system and capabilities including business rules, data definitions and data sharing requirements	Data collection system and capabilities scoped and designed	Q1 – Q4, 2022

- Any funding remaining after the scoping and design of system capabilities will be utilised to support implementation of cross-sectoral data collection in 2023.

19. Consistent with the terms of the Agreement, Commonwealth funding for Implementation Projects will be provided as part of the first milestone payment of the Agreement, subject to the Commonwealth and State agreeing to this Plan.

Risk Management

20. The Australian Capital Territory will actively identify, monitor and manage the risks associated with delivering outcomes under the Agreement, such as through maintaining a risk management plan.

PART 4: REFORMS

21. As part of the Agreement, the Australian Capital Territory and the Commonwealth agree to work collaboratively to implement reforms outlined in the Additional terms in the Agreement.
22. The actions that the Australian Capital Territory will undertake to meet these commitments are detailed in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Planned Actions for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 for the Australian Capital Territory

Reform Element	Actions	Timing
Reform Element One: Implement Commonwealth Funding Follows Child		
Steps to ready the state to ensure Commonwealth Funding Follows Child can be implemented in 2023.	<p>The ACT will consult service providers on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT plan for a funding mechanism and/or planned actions to develop funding mechanisms to sectors how the ACT will seek to engage unenrolled children in preschool programs The ACT's plan to acquit, or plan to establish acquittal mechanism to provide transparency of Commonwealth contribution <p>Based on consultations, the ACT develop an approach to outline implementation of funding follows child from 2023.</p>	Throughout 2022
Reform Element Two: Implement a new national preschool attendance measure		
Work to ready the State to measure preschool attendance in 2024 and provide baseline data to the Commonwealth in 2023.	<p>Measures to be undertaken 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and ACT service providers on the development of the attendance measure The ACT will scope and consult on the data system requirements to enable measurement of attendance in 2024 <p>Subject to EMM endorsement of attendance measures, the ACT will implement actions to prepare for provision of baseline data in 2023.</p>	Throughout 2022
Strategies to facilitate preschool attendance by children in the YBFS. For strategies relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, consistent with the Closing the Gap agreement, engage those communities and/or representative bodies in the design process.	<p>The ACT will deliver the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Entry to government preschool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children Koori Preschool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at select government schools Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through 2 x Early Years Engagement Officers Engaging vulnerable and disadvantaged families through 2 x Early Childhood Community Coordinators Providing supported transitions and inclusive practices through 4 x Preschool Pathways Partners 	Throughout 2022
Reform Element Three: Implement a new national Preschool Outcomes Measure from 2025		

Plans for how the State will work with the Commonwealth to develop the preschool outcomes measure.	Measures to be undertaken 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and ACT service providers on the development of the Outcomes measure 	Throughout 2022
Reform Delivery/Implementation		
State-specific data and implementation issues and strategies for how these will be overcome in the context of assessing performance under the Agreement.	Measures to be undertaken 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to identify appropriate targets that take into account the impact of small numbers when measuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's enrolment and attendance in preschool. • The ACT undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to identify a suitable measure of disadvantage in the ACT context. • The ACT undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and service providers to identify children attending multiple preschool settings. 	Throughout 2022

PART 5: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

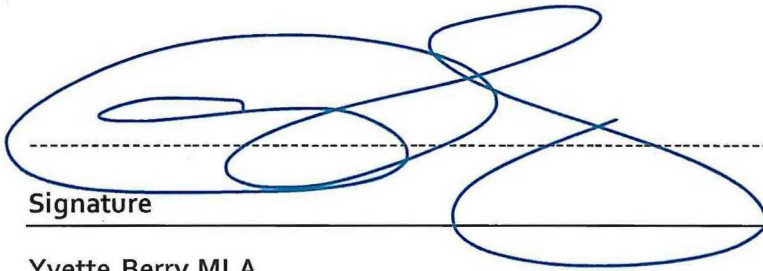
23. Part 5 sets out the performance and reporting arrangements for the Australian Capital Territory for 2022.
24. Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against the performance milestones and benchmarks and targets in the Agreement, are set out in Part 5 of this Plan and Appendix B of the Agreement.
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.
26. The Australian Capital Territory may provide supplementary data related to students with special needs and Indigenous students enrolled in specialist ACT public preschool programs where program design impacts on ABS counting rules.
27. 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 National Minimum Data Set (NMDS):
 - a. PI calculation description (numerator, denominator, computation and presentation)
 - b. numerator information (collection name and population description)
 - c. denominator information (collection name and population description)
 - d. calculation notes (including any information about how the PI is calculated)
 - e. methodology
 - f. 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).

Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary 2022

28. Performance Reporting for 2022 will capture progress against planned actions undertaken by the Australian Capital Territory as detailed at Table 4.
29. Performance results and reporting will be signed off by the Commonwealth Minister who will then inform the Australian Capital Territory Minister of the outcome through an exchange of letters.

Sign off

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

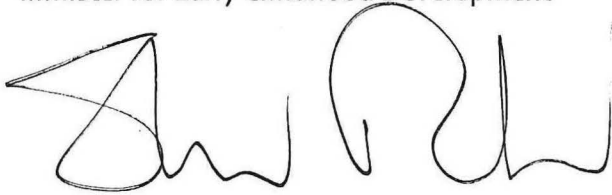


Signature

Date 05/04/22

Yvette Berry MLA

Minister for Early Childhood Development



Signature

Date 5/4/22

The Hon Stuart Robert MP

A/g Minister for Education and Youth