

Western Australia: 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 State of Western Australia (WA), represented by their Minister for Education.

- 8 As a schedule to the Agreement, the purpose of this Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how the State of WA 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 Clarification is provided below on how Definitions, (page 15 of the Agreement refers) are applied in WA and have been agreed between WA and the Commonwealth in the case of '*Disadvantaged children*' and '*Preschool program*'

Western Australia's elaboration on how definitions for '*Disadvantaged children*' and '*Preschool program*' are realised

- a WA retains the right to use the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) as supplementary data in relation to '*Disadvantaged children*', if required
- b In WA, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally defined as children enrolled in schools with an Index of Community Advantage (ICSEA) value in the lowest socio-economic quintile within WA. Each public and non-government school's ICSEA is calculated based on the ICSEA profile of every enrolled student of compulsory-age and schools in the bottom quintile are the 20 per cent in WA with the lowest ICSEA
- c Regarding the definition of '*Preschool program*', most preschool programs in WA are provided through school-based Kindergarten, delivered by qualified early childhood teachers, and underpinned by the Western Australian Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum, the Early Years Learning Framework, and the National Quality Standard (implemented across Kindergarten – Year 2) Teachers also use their professional knowledge to develop programs that are aligned with education sector strategic directions, whole school plans and initiatives, and tailored to community contexts

PART 3: FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

Commonwealth Funding Contributions

- 14 The Commonwealth's estimated total financial contribution to the State of WA 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 State of WA

Category	Amount
Estimated YBFS Contribution	\$45,406,138
Adjustment to Estimated YBFS Contribution	N/A
Top-up to maintain 2021 levels	\$1,048,617
Implementation Project funding	\$1,000,000
Total Budget	\$47 454 755

17. **Table 2** should be used to show how the State of WA 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 (Services delivered)	Objectives	Outcomes	Estimated C'th funds allocated
1	Universal access to 600 hours a year of a quality Kindergarten program in school, taught by a degree qualified early childhood teacher	Western Australian children in the year before full-time school are offered access to 600 hours of kindergarten through the public and non-government school systems	To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to compulsory schooling, through maintaining universal access to, and maximising participation in, affordable, high quality early childhood education programs in the year before full-time school, delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers	All Western Australian children have access to an affordable, high quality kindergarten program in the year before full-time school, delivered by a degree-qualified teacher	\$34 727m
2	Preschool program quality, equity, participation, and preparation programs	Programs and initiatives designed to develop and maintain program quality, prepare children for kindergarten, and promote student enrolment and regular attendance, particularly amongst Aboriginal children, children living in remote and very remote communities, and children experiencing significant disadvantage	To facilitate student enrolment, attendance, and preparation for kindergarten, particularly amongst Aboriginal children, children living in remote and very remote communities, and children experiencing significant disadvantage To support and enhance the professional capability of the early childhood workforce, and their provision of quality preschool programs, regardless of the delivery location and/or setting	Student enrolment, attendance, and preparation for preschool is enhanced, particularly amongst Aboriginal children, and children in remote and very remote communities, and communities where there are high levels of disadvantage Continuous development and upskilling of the professional capability and contemporary practice of the early childhood teacher and education assistant workforce	\$11 727m

State context and funding contributions

18. Context influencing the State of WA's delivery of preschool and the States' investment in preschool for 2022 is covered in this section

Historical Context

Since the early 1990s, successive WA governments have championed affordable, universal early childhood education in the school sector throughout the State, ensuring that even children living in regional and remote communities are provided with access. This has been achieved through significant State Government investment in school infrastructure, qualified early childhood teachers and education assistants and resources

- In 1995 the *Good Start* program was introduced in WA, resulting in preschool (referred to as Kindergarten in WA) being expanded to four half-days (11 hours) per week from 1996.
- In 1996, following extensive public consultation, the school starting age was delayed by six months, with gradual implementation over four years.
- The change was cemented in legislation in 1999 through the *School Education Act 1999*, which also entitled four-year-old children (children who turn four on or before 30 June) to enrol, free of compulsory charges, at a public school or a community kindergarten for their first year of pre-compulsory education for a minimum of 11 hours per week. Provision was also made in the Act for non-government schools to deliver kindergarten, with the government significantly subsidising the cost in these school systems. This took effect for all children from January 2001.
- The *Teacher Registration Act 2012* gives paramount consideration to the best interests of school children in WA, and the Teacher Registration Board of WA (TRBWA) has responsibility for the registration of all Western Australian teachers from early childhood to Year 12 who teach in an educational venue.
- With implementation of the previous National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (UANP), and now PRA, since 2013, WA has provided kindergarten for 600 hours per year in public schools, community kindergartens, Catholic and independent schools, with four hours per week funded by the Commonwealth.
- Commonwealth funds for the additional four hours are allocated to education sectors through pro-rata market share based on the annual February enrolment census.
- In 2020, WA continued to have the highest rate in Australia of preschool children educated through school-based kindergarten rather than an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) setting
 - 33 743 (94.4%) of the 35 737 WA children who participated in preschool in 2020 did so at a school-based Kindergarten.
 - Just over 870 Western Australian children participated in 600 hours or more of preschool exclusively in centre-based day care in their year before full-time schooling (ABS Preschool Education, Australia 2020)

In conclusion, over the past two decades, kindergarten participation in schools has been normalised among WA families, and is widely known as the first year of schooling (albeit part-time and pre-compulsory)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

- WA had the highest rate in Australia of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (ATSI) educated through school-based kindergarten
 - 2375 (96.2%) of the 2469 Aboriginal children who participated in preschool in 2020 did so at a school-based kindergarten, ensuring that they were taught by a degree-qualified teacher

(ABS Preschool Education, Australia 2020)

Children in multiple settings

In WA, the vast majority of children participate in preschool as their first year (kindergarten) of school – across public, Catholic and independent schools. The provision of Kindergarten as part of school is embedded in State legislation such as the *School Education Act 1999* and the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997*, and reflected in Kindergarten's incorporation in WA's Kindergarten to Year 10 Curriculum.

This approach ensures children in kindergarten are taught by qualified teachers and have access to whole-school literacy, numeracy and behavioural, social and emotional development and wellbeing strategies. The approach ensures children can access the full range of disability, early intervention and other support services that are available to schools, such as school psychologists and allied health professionals. For these reasons, school-based Kindergarten is considered to be fundamental to ensuring all children in WA continue to have access to and participate in high quality, affordable preschool, no matter where they live in the State.

Legislative Context

In WA, Kindergarten provision in the schooling sector falls under the *School Education Act 1999* (SEA) and its regulations

- The *Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012* does not apply to Kindergarten provision through schools
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) does not apply to Kindergarten provision through schools
- The National Quality Standard (NQS), which is one element of the NQF, is required to be applied, with public and non-government schools implementing the NQS in Kindergarten to Year 2

The ECEC sector is regulated through WA's Education and Care Regulatory Authority within the Department of Communities

- The *Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012* applies to this sector, and
- The NQF is applied in this sector.

Examples of programs and initiatives undertaken by the State that align with and support the objectives of the Agreement

Enhanced Transition to School (ETTS): A joint cross-sectorial initiative

Implemented by Playgroup WA with support from the public and non-government education systems, the program establishes playgroups on or near public, Catholic and independent schools for local children and families to participate in. The objective is to facilitate preparation for Kindergarten and improve Kindergarten enrolment and attendance, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children living in communities where there are high levels of disadvantage.

KindiLink

KindiLink is a play-and-learn initiative for Aboriginal children who are too young to enrol in school. The program is provided at 38 school sites in communities with high levels of disadvantage, and where there is a high proportion and number of Aboriginal children. The children attend with a parent/s, and where there is capacity and after consultation with the local community, non-Aboriginal children and parent/s can also attend.

KindiLink provides six hours a week of high-quality play-and-learn sessions, at no cost to families. The evidence-based Abecedarian Approach Australia (3a) is used as the learning program, along with the *Early Years Learning Framework* and guided by the NQS.

- The program focuses on developing the social, emotional, language and cognitive capabilities of Aboriginal children, aims to boost their learning before they start Kindergarten, and forge strong and supportive links between home and school.
- Early childhood teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers plan and deliver the sessions, which have a dual focus on participating children and their parent/s, to increase the parent/s capability as their child's first educator.

CaLDEYLink

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Early Years Link Program (CaLDEYLink) is established in two metropolitan primary schools with a high proportion of CaLD families with young children from birth to three years of age. Based on the KindiLink model, the program provides six hours a week of high-quality play-and-learn sessions at no cost to families. It seeks to further develop the personal/social, language and cognitive capabilities of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children prior to school entry, build on the capability of families as their children's first and most influential educators, and forge stronger and more collaborative partnerships between home and school.

Implementation Project Funding Contributions

19. This section includes WA's summary of details of implementation project funding provided by the Commonwealth including funding amounts and purpose. WA 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 the State of WA - Statement of Allocations

Implementation Project (details)	Commonwealth funding	Actions (incl. deliverables)	KPI	Timing (incl. delivery schedule)
Prepare for the 'funding to follow the child' (FTFC) reform to apply to the State's Early Childhood Education and Care	\$700 000	Statewide coordination of the implementation of the FTFC and other Agreement reforms affected in the State's ECEC sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement document development and contracting a 		All actions are completed by 30 June 2023

<p>(ECEC) sector from 2023</p>		<p>consultant/agency to execute an Engagement and Communication Strategy with the Western Australia ECEC sector to determine options for FTFC to the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement document development to contract an appropriate entity to receive, administer and distribute the ECEC sector's FTFC funding in 2023 • Work in partnership with the Department of Communities and the ECEC sector to contract an appropriate entity to receive, administer and distribute the ECEC sector's FTFC funding for 2023 • Seed funding to the entity to facilitate its operation in 2023, with it becoming self-funded from the sector's FTFC funding from 2024 	<p>Agency is engaged to determine options for FTFC to the ECEC sector</p> <p>Agency completes all requirements set out in Service Request</p> <p>Consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders</p> <p>Funding entity established</p>	<p>Feb-Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct-Nov 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb/ March 2023</p>
<p>Work to ready the State to provide baseline preschool attendance data in 2023</p>	<p>\$300,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Commonwealth to agree the details of the new enrolment and attendance measures as per Appendix A 1 in the PRA • Public and non-government school systems prepare to provide baseline preschool attendance data in 2023 	<p>Participate in and contribute to scheduled national meetings</p> <p>Communicate with key stakeholders</p> <p>Work collaboratively with the non-government schooling sector to prepare their systems to provide baseline data in 2023</p> <p>Make any necessary</p>	<p>All actions are completed by February 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

			data collection modifications to sector systems	August 2022 – Jan 2023
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³WA expects the full implementation project funding allocation will be used for the above elements. Where any funding is leftover, WA reserves the right to redirect this towards costs incurred by the State to implement other PRA reforms and/or expended in accordance with clause 7 of Appendix A of the PRA

- 20 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 the State of WA agreeing to this Plan.

Risk Management

- 21 The State of WA 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

22. As part of the Agreement, the State of WA and the Commonwealth agree to work collaboratively to implement reforms outlined in the Additional terms in the Agreement.
- 23 The actions that the State of WA 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 State of WA

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>Measures to be undertaken in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working through a contracted agency, liaise and consult with the Department of Communities and peak ECEC sector agencies Co-design and establish a suitable process and entity to administer and enable the FTFC reform to apply to the State's ECEC sector from 2023 Implement the FTFC reform in relation to the State's public, independent and Catholic school sectors, as per agreed process under the previous UANP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA), and the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA) endorsement to continue the agreed process under the new PRA Use annual February kindergarten census data Acquittals from 2023 will be through demonstration of Commonwealth funding being provided to each sector based on a pro-rata kindergarten (preschool) market share Transparency of Commonwealth contribution will be through information provided on the Department's public-facing website <p>Note FTFC for the ECEC sector will be based on the most recent data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) at that time, for children in the YBFS who are enrolled in 600 hours of preschool exclusively through this sector</p>	All actions are completed by 30 April 2023
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 in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Commonwealth to agree to the details of the new national preschool enrolment and attendance measures, as per Appendix A.1 of the Agreement The public, Catholic and independent school sectors will prepare to provide 2023 preschool baseline attendance data, and measure preschool attendance in 2024 	<p>By end of 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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	<p>Measures to be undertaken in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public-school sector will review its annual kindergarten enrolment and attendance campaign 	March – December 2022

<p>agreement, engage those communities and/or representative bodies in the design process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public, Catholic and independent school sectors will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review / develop enrolment and attendance campaign strategies specific for Aboriginal and CaLD children - Provide targeted kindergarten enrolment messaging for schools located in communities where there are a high proportion and number of Aboriginal families to assist them to engage with their communities 	<p>March – December 2022</p>
<p>Reform Element Three: Implement a new national Preschool Outcomes Measure from 2025</p>		
<p>Plans for how the State will work with the Commonwealth to develop the preschool outcomes measure</p>	<p>Measures to be undertaken in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State undertakes to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth on the development of the Outcomes measure 	<p>Throughout 2022</p>
<p>Reform Delivery/Implementation</p>		
<p>State-specific data and implementation issues and strategies for how these will be overcome in the context of assessing performance under the Agreement</p>	<p>Measures to be undertaken in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquittal of Commonwealth funding to be based on funding allocations to each sector • The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) to be used as supplementary data for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, if required 	<p>At point of need</p>

PART 5: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

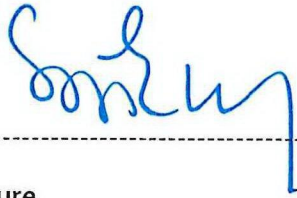
- 24 Part 5 sets out the performance and reporting arrangements for the State of Western Australia for 2022
- 25 Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against the performance milestones and benchmarks and targets in the Agreement, are set out in Part 5 of this Plan and Appendix B of the Agreement
- 26 These data and performance specifications will be used to report the State of WA's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan
- 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 Minimal 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 State of WA as detailed at Table 4
- 29 Performance results and reporting will be signed off by the Commonwealth Minister who will then inform the State of WA's Minister of the outcome through an exchange of letters

Sign off

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

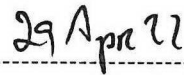
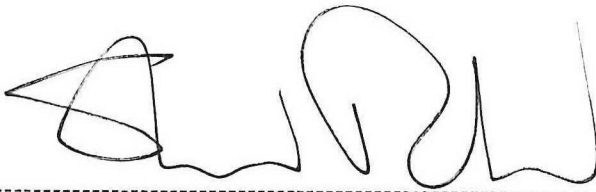


Signature

Date

The Hon Sue Ellery

Minister for Education and Training



Signature

Date

The Hon Stuart Robert MP

A/g Minister for Education and Youth