



Funded quality kindergartens

Glen Eira City Council is seeking to secure commitments from the Federal Government to:

- provide ongoing and permanent funding for five hours of four-year-old kindergarten; and
- work positively and constructively with state governments to secure a long-term commitment for the National Quality Agenda.

SECURE THE FUTURE OF QUALITY KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Research has shown that early education helps set children up for a bright future as they learn skills that they will take with them throughout their life. Kindergarten programs enable children to be more independent and confident and more likely to make a smooth transition to primary school.

In November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This decision formed part of COAG's early childhood reforms and implementation that commenced in 2013.

Under the National Partnership Agreement the amount of government kindergarten funding provided is split between the State and Territory Governments. States and Territories cover about two-thirds of these costs and the Federal Government covers about one-third.

Federal funding is only secured until December 2020 for 15 hours of four year-old kindergarten. The National Partnership Agreement for the National Quality Agenda on Early Childhood Education and Care will also not be renewed. This is the system that oversees regulation and quality assessment of all early childhood education and care services.

All governments, children and families benefit from a joint national approach to the funding, regulation and quality assessment of early childhood education and care services. Australia's jointly governed Partnership Agreements uphold children's best interests through universal access to preschool and a world-class quality system of scale and effectiveness.

The National Partnerships are the mechanisms that bind this system together for the benefit of 1.3 million children and 900,000 families accessing early education and care.

FACTS

Recent reports *Lifting Our Game*; *Gonski Report*; and the *Royal Commission's Report into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse* have all highlighted the need for a stable funding and quality base for our youngest children, with national oversight and investment.

There are more than 2,000 funded four-year-old kindergarten places in Glen Eira. Kindergarten places are offered through the following early years services:

- community kindergartens;
- long day care centres;
- independent schools; and
- government schools.

There are 14 community kindergartens operating in Glen Eira, offering approximately 860 places for four-year-old funded kindergarten. Ten of these kindergartens operate from Council-owned buildings.

The Victorian Government is rolling out funded three-year-old kindergarten in our City from 2022. These reforms will effectively double the number of children currently receiving funded kindergarten programs in our City.

The population forecast for the City of Glen Eira indicates a growth from 155,352 to 180,626 by 2036. By 2036, children aged zero to four years will make up 6.2 per cent (1,700) of the City of Glen Eira's population.

THE ASK

Council is calling on the Commonwealth Government to deliver an enduring funding arrangement for 15 hours of funded four-year-old kindergarten beyond 2020, plus a long-term commitment to the National Quality Agenda.

Permanent kindergarten funding and a quality assessment system are vital because:

- Australian children deserve the best start with a high quality, stable education.
- Victorian families cannot contribute any more funding to send their children to kinder.
- There is irrefutable international and national evidence linking preschool attendance to improved student results in numeracy, reading and spelling.
- For every \$1 invested by governments in early childhood education, there is a \$2 to \$4 return through higher wages, more tax revenue, reduced school and criminal justice expenditure.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The community benefits of funded kindergarten programs and the National Quality Agenda include:

- High quality services driven by continuous improvement through an integrated and unified national system.
- Improved educational and developmental outcomes for children attending early childhood education and care services.
- Reduced regulatory burden for education and care service providers.
- Improved access to information on the quality of education and services to help families understand the quality of education and care provided to their children.

MORE INFORMATION

Advocacy — Glen Eira City Council

(03) 9524 3333

Email: advocacy@gleneira.vic.gov.au