

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**21 MARCH 2018**

## **BEREJKLIAN GOVERNMENT FAILING OUR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS**

The Parenthood, Australia's leading campaigning and advocacy organisation for parents has today launched its newest campaign calling on the Berejiklian Government to fund preschools fairly.

New South Wales is currently failing to meet national bench marks in early learning and has the worst performance in the country when it comes to children benefiting from a year of preschool before they start school.

Principal Campaign Manager at The Parenthood Nicole Lessio believes the reason NSW is performing so badly is because of the huge inequity in the way the Berejiklian Government funds preschool programs across the State

"The Berejiklian Government is failing our four-year-olds – there are thousands missing out on a critical year of early learning before they start school, and this has got to stop" Ms Lessio said.

"The NSW Government has a history of underfunding and undervaluing the importance of preschool - parents have been left to pay the bill, but it's children who are ultimately paying the price."

"The Berejiklian Government is short changing parents whose children attend preschool programs in long day care centres – and parents have had enough."

On a per child basis, the NSW Government invests less than any other State to give four-year-olds access to a preschool program - just \$2122 per child. That is less than half what Victoria spends on its children, and less than a third of what WA, SA and Tasmania spend.

Low investment coupled with inequity in funding distribution has resulted in only 85 per cent of four-year-olds across NSW participating in a preschool program, lowest rate in the country with majority of States meeting the 95 per cent bench mark set by the federal government.

"Right now, there are about 10,000 children across NSW who are missing out on preschool, due in large part to the huge inequity in funding" Ms Lessio said.

"Out of the \$268 million the Berejiklian Government spends on preschool only 11 per cent is provided to children who participate in a preschool program at a long day care centre,

"This is despite the fact that the vast majority of kids attending preschool in NSW (68%) do so through a long day care centre.

The Parenthood is urging Premier Berejiklian to recognise the huge financial pressure currently placed on NSW parents as they try to afford the early learning their children need whilst balancing their work commitments.

“There are so many great stand-alone community preschools who provide an excellent program, we don’t begrudge the funding of community preschools – recent increases in their funding ended years of underfunding.” Ms Lessio said.

“But, not every community has a community preschool – let alone one without a waiting list. And not every family can manage their work with the more limited hours of a community preschool. So why should the children in these circumstances miss out?

“We’re calling on Premier Berejiklian to be preschool fair and fund early learning for all four-year-olds equally no matter their centre or service.

“Funding for community preschools is great - but why should the vast majority of children attending preschool through a long day care centre get so much less?

“It’s time that kids in NSW were treated fairly. Join our campaign today at [www.theparenthood.org.au](http://www.theparenthood.org.au)

**END.**

**Contact: Nicole Lessio, Principal Campaign Manager, 0416 263 239**

## BACKGROUND

Enrolment data

Jurisdictions	State-specific Year Before Full Time School (YBFS) enrolment rate in preschool as per RoGS 2018 (a)	Enrolment rates of four and five-year-old children in preschool as per UANP 2016 performance reporting (b)		
		All children	Indigenous	Vulnerable & disadvantaged
VIC	98.40%	100%	100%	100%
NSW	84.90%	100%	98%	88%
SA	94.20%	100%	100%	100%
NT	92.50%	100%	100%	100%
WA	96.00%	100%	100%	96.50%
ACT	98.30%	100%	100%	100%
TAS	96.20%	100%	100%	100%
Qld	93.80%	100%	93%	96%
Aust.	92.40%	100%	100%	100%

\*[Minister Simon Birmingham press release 3 February 2018](#)