

Funding certainty for preschools

Written by Tony Abbott



Sydney 3 May 2015. The Commonwealth Government will provide \$840 million over two years for preschool programmes across Australia.

The Government will do this by extending funding to the states and territories under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.

This will ensure Australian families can continue to access up to 600 hours of preschool education a year in 2016 and 2017.

For the first time, the new funding will be indexed against the CPI to make sure families do not lose out in real terms. Linking funding to the CPI will mean an extra \$30 million over the 2016 and 2017 calendar years.

Today's announcement provides parents and preschools with certainty, and highlights the Government's commitment to high-quality early childhood education. It's good news for children, families and preschool providers.

The \$840 million is in addition to the 12 month extension provided by the Abbott Government for 2015. Bill Shorten and Labor short-changed preschools by failing to provide any money at all beyond 2014.

The new funding should help improve preschool enrolments and attendance. Since 2008, enrolments and attendance have increased, but there is still some way to go – particularly for indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The Commonwealth has now provided more than \$2.8 billion to the states and territories through a series of National Partnership agreements, raising participation levels and giving children better access to preschool education.

This government is determined to help families. We've recently improved vaccination rules to

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keep children safe, funded a pilot scheme to support Australians who struggle to find affordable child care, and have now committed an extra \$840 million to preschool education.

Universal Access has been raised with the government as part of the consultations for our families package focused on providing more support for families to access child care and early childhood learning. The government will have more to say on this in coming weeks