

## Access to universal pre-school must be made available to all children

*The Australian Primary Principals Association calls on all Australian states and territories to implement universal pre-school for children across the country*

**Adelaide, August 31, 2023, The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)** has welcomed the findings of the South Australian Royal Commission into early childhood that has recommended 30-hours of pre-school for three year old's.

“Early education is a crucial part of a child’s development in preparing them for school, which is why APPA welcomes the recommendations of the SA Royal Commission into Early Childhood Care and the intent to positively influence the life trajectory of vulnerable children,” said APPA President Angela Falkenberg.

Ms Falkenberg has described the proposed investment in the early years, along with aligned support and services and quality early learning experiences will benefit individual children and the broader community.

“The number of children who begin school developmentally vulnerable is of concern and the goal to reduce this is most welcome.”

“We applaud the South Australian government adopting the recommendations from the Royal Commission headed by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard and strongly encourage all governments across Australia to implement these recommendations and measures that have been outlined by Ms Gillard in all states and territories,” Ms Falkenberg said.

The Royal Commission made 43 recommendations to the South Australian government including:

- that the state government provides early childhood services directly in some circumstances to address ‘childcare deserts’.
- improving the quality of government school ‘Out of School Hours Care’ service via more direct control by the department of education
- rebooting the ‘Office for the Early Years’ to oversee system changes
- establishing a state-wide childhood development data system
- that the state government commits \$14 million per year to an early childhood workforce fund

With the South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas announcing an initial \$70 million investment into early childhood, with a commitment to implement universal preschool for 3-year-olds by 2032, which will see South Australia as the first Australian state to provide up to 30 hours of pre-school per week for vulnerable children.

Ms Falkenberg in welcoming the decisive action of the South Australian government in accepting the recommendations of the Royal Commission stated that APPA is committed to working collaboratively with both government and community supports and services to ensure all children are set up for lifelong learning success.

“Access to quality early childhood care is a critical step in the development of children and their preparedness for primary school, all children deserve the same opportunities, regardless of background or financial circumstances,” said Ms Falkenberg.

**ENDS**

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**About APPA:** The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) is the national professional association for primary school principals in Australia. APPA represents affiliated state and territory Government, Catholic and Independent primary schools across the nation with over 7,600 members. It is the national voice on national issues and speaks directly to the Federal Government on matters that concern school principals and their school communities. For further information please visit <https://www.appa.asn.au>.