

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Community Services**  
**Minister for Women**  
**The Hon. Linda Burney MP**



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**Thursday, 17 September 2009**

### **NEW PARTNERSHIP BOOSTS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Eighty-five percent of NSW community preschools will receive an increase in their funding this year, thanks to a new national partnership to ensure all children in NSW can access preschool programs in the year before starting school.

NSW Minister for Community Services Linda Burney said that under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, NSW will receive an additional \$278.6 million over five years to increase access to early education, including community preschools.

“This is the first time in many years that the Federal Government has made early childhood education a national priority,” Ms Burney said at KU Rushcutters Bay Preschool today.

“Kate Ellis, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, has recognised how important it is that our children receive the best start in life by making such a significant investment in children’s services.”

The national partnership builds upon NSW’s current Preschool Investment and Reform Plan - the biggest reform to preschools in NSW in over 20 years.

Ms Burney said that under the national partnership, new funding will be directed to community preschools providing services to those children who are most in need of quality early childhood education, such as Aboriginal children and children from low income families. Increased funding is also being provided across all Local Government Areas, with the greatest increases in low income LGAs.

“I am pleased with the feedback I’ve been receiving from services who are saying, among other things, they will be able to lower their fees. This will result in improved access to quality early childhood education – especially for disadvantaged groups.”

Ms Burney said that children’s services have already started to receive increased funding, with positive results.

“One service in western Sydney that caters for children with special needs as well as Indigenous children has been able to drop its fees significantly, with their lowest fee being just \$5 a day.

“They’ve also employed an Indigenous teacher’s aide who is fostering links with the Indigenous community.”

Ms Burney said that another service in a disadvantaged area of the Hunter region has received an increase of \$100,000 as a result of the new partnership.

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As well as investing in community preschools, funds available under the national partnership will also be invested in quality early childhood teaching.

“From mid-2011, funding will be paid to every licensed centre-based or mobile service in NSW employing an Early Childhood Teacher,” said Ms Burney.

“We know that leadership and teaching quality provided by early childhood teachers is one of the strongest contributors to quality outcomes for children.

“That is why providing funds to support the employment of university-qualified teachers is a priority under the national partnership.”

Christine Legg, General Manager Early Childhood Education and Care, KU Children’s Services, welcomed the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education and the additional funding for the sector.

“This is an exciting time for children’s services as it is the first time in many years we’ve seen all governments around Australia working together to improve early childhood education and care,” she said.

“KU is pleased to see funding increased in all LGAs, particularly in the areas of greatest need. Where affordability has been an issue in the past, this additional funding will mean more families can now access a high quality service for their child.

“We have long recognised that one of the key contributors to early childhood education and care is the qualifications of staff. It is wonderful that many more children and families throughout NSW will now benefit from the unique learning experiences that teachers can provide.”

Ms Burney said some of the best experiences children can have in the early years take place in quality children’s services.

“By making it more affordable for families to access quality early childhood education, this new partnership is laying the foundation for healthy communities well into the future.”

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