Turnbull government turning its back on early childhood education

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State School Teachers' Union of WA



The Turnbull government is abandoning Australia's preschool children with its plan to cut nearly $500 million in funding to the early childhood education sector (ECE).

Media reports today revealed that federal government spending on the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education agreement will end in 2020. Reports also showed the government plans to cut the National Quality Framework program for early childhood education.

Australian Education Union Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the Turnbull government cuts to ECE were short-changing children at a critical stage of their development. She said it was vital that the government instead boost funding to the early childhood education sector.

"Malcolm Turnbull's plan will be devastating to the children and their families who rely on Universal Access of 15 hours funding for preschool," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Preschool education is critically important to ensure that all children have the foundational skills that they need to be successful learners. We need to boost funding to early childhood education, not cut it."

"It is critically important for young children to have the opportunity to attend pre-school. Early-childhood education supports children's development and improves school readiness, as found by the Productivity Commission in 2015," Ms Haythorpe said.

"ECE also prepares children to succeed as adults. Research clearly links pre-school participation with better school performance, and with improved job prospects and higher wages on entering the workforce."

Ms Haythorpe said the uncertainty over ECE funding was demoralising for families and for preschool educators.

"Having to regularly face funding insecurity takes a huge toll on both services and families," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This uncertainty affects planning for budgets, staffing and most importantly how early education is delivered to children during what is an optimal time for them to learn."

"The Turnbull Government must immediately address the vitally important issue of Universal Access funding of 15 hours per week of preschool for all four year old children. They must commit to expanding this funding to include three year old children as well," Ms Haythorpe said.

"To do anything less is a shameful abrogation of their responsibilities as a Federal Government to the children of Australia."

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