Abbott government must make pre-school funding permanent



The Abbott Government’s decision to fund 15 hours of pre-school for four-year-olds in 2016 and 2017 will give temporary relief to parents and educators, but doesn’t deliver the longterm certainty required, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the Abbott Government’s decision not to extend the funding beyond 2017 meant that parents, educators and unions would need to fight for funding again in two years.

"This decision is a relief, but it does not deliver the long-term certainty that we need to establish high quality early childhood education for all four-year-olds," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is a win for the parents and educators who have campaigned along with the AEU to ensure that all children get the benefits of access to pre-school.

"At least we are not repeating the farce of last year when parents and centres had to wait until September before learning they would get a one-year extension of funding."

"The AEU has been campaigning strongly on this issue, because we know parents feel strongly about the value of quality pre-school to prepare children for school."

"We need to make early childhood education, taught by a university-trained teacher, available to all four-year-olds."

"The Abbott Government has finally listened and made pre-school a priority – but it is disappointing that they have refused to guarantee funding beyond 2017."

"Research shows that investing in quality early childhood benefits children’s development and helps to prepare them for school. It is hard to understand why the Abbott Government is reluctant to commit to this for the long-term.

"It is now up to the States and Territories to ensure that the 15 hours of pre-school education is delivered to all four-year-olds next year."

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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