Investment for two years of universal preschool must be new national goal

The National Cabinet should prioritise investment for every child to attend two years of preschool, in the same way Australian governments provide universal primary and secondary education.

The Australian Education Union has written to the Prime Minister and all premiers and chief ministers to urge National Cabinet to support universal access to preschool for three and four-year-olds.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said this would not only benefit children and their families but would ensure a prosperous and productive future for all Australia.

“The evidence is very clear. Children who have access to two years of high quality preschool delivered by a qualified teacher start school ready to learn and have a stronger foundation for their future beyond school,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Children who attend preschool can expect to achieve greater academic success, have better career prospects, better health outcomes and stronger family and personal relationships.

“Access to two years of preschool should not depend on where a child lives, their family’s circumstances or their parent’s employment status. Every three and four-year-old child deserves opportunity to thrive.

“This investment would be the natural extension of the federal government’s 2021 budget commitment for secure, long term funding for preschool in the year before children start school.

“It would also bring Australia in line with comparable nations and help address the decline in Australia’s performance in international benchmark tests like the Program for International Student Assessment.

“We urge the National Cabinet to make investment in three and four-year-old preschool a national priority.”

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