



MEDIA RELEASE

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3 to 1 return on *early years* Why are our politicians refusing to back a sure thing?

“Politicians have failed to walk the talk. Political parties have long articulated and recognised the significant social and economic benefits of investing in early childhood education. The Government’s own research shows economic returns exceeding three to one. Despite the evidence Victorian children do not have access to two years of fully funded early childhood education” Emma King, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria, the peak body representing early childhood education in Victoria, said today.

Kindergarten Parents Victoria announced its election priorities for the upcoming State election during Universal Children’s Week which celebrates the rights of children, highlighting inclusion, wellbeing and protection.

“As advocates for universal access to early childhood education for all Victorian children, we would like to remind politicians contesting the upcoming State election that such access should be a fundamental right for all Victorian children and not a privilege.”

“Whichever party wins the forthcoming election they must implement the COAG commitment that *by 2013 every child has access to a quality early childhood education program in the year before formal school* ^{1.} This means fully funding national quality reform costs, fully funding four year old and three year old kindergarten programs and importantly investing in physical infrastructure to house these programs” said Ms King. “Australia currently invests less public expenditure in our children than the OECD average, with nations such as Mexico spending more than Australia.”

“While governments frequently commit to investing in the early years it often slips down the policy agenda. Because the returns are not reaped in the short term, it is easy to overlook the importance of making the investment in early childhood education. The rhetoric of politicians needs to be put into action now” said Ms King.

1. Council of Australian Governments’ *National Reform Agenda Victoria’s Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood* March 2007

Download the *KPV Key Election Priorities* at www.kpv.org.au

Emma King, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria is available for interview on 0417 387 491 or 03 9489 3500.

KPV is the voice promoting quality early childhood education for Victorian children. Our membership represents over 1000 early education and care providers including independent kindergartens, cluster managers, long day care services and local governments.

End media release