



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **State budget should continue to invest in early childhood education**

Kindergarten Parents Victoria urges the government to continue investment in quality early childhood education for all Victorian children building on last year's 'baby boom budget', Meredith Carter, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria, the peak body for early childhood education in Victoria, said today.

'The Victorian Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development sets out an ambitious reform agenda to raise quality and participation in early childhood education. To ensure the full benefits of this agenda for all children it is vital kindergarten is fully funded and all children can attend.' Ms Carter said.

Parents, parent committees and community agencies that serve as kindergarten cluster managers (group employers) already make a substantial voluntary and financial contribution to early childhood education in Victoria. They should not have to rely on fundraising to ensure the costs of the foundations of children's educational journey are met.'

KPV recommends the subsidies available for four year olds in families with concession cards should be extended to all children in disadvantaged localities.

In addition KPV supports the OECD has recommendation that Government fund two years of kindergarten for all children. The Victorian government has extended funding for a second year to some very disadvantaged children but most parents pay the full cost for three year old kindergarten, Ms Carter said. Children with disabilities and those in low income areas would particularly benefit from two years of kindergarten.

'Ageing infrastructure, strategies to recruit and retain teachers and address ongoing workforce shortages as well as improved support to enable kindergartens to expand hours and programs available to families are all issues on which Kindergarten Parents Victoria hopes to see new initiatives put in place.'

'Early childhood education enhances the general development of young children, especially those experiencing disadvantage. Prioritising investment in early childhood education can also deliver significant benefits to the economy and workforce participation. This has been recognised in the US, with significant commitment to funding early childhood education despite the difficult economic climate', said Meredith Carter.

**Meredith Carter, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria is available for interview on 0400 511 763 or 03 9489 3500.**

**Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) is the peak organisation and employer body promoting the voice of parents in quality early childhood education for Victorian children, representing over 1000 centres serving more than 200,000 Victorian children and families each year.**