



## Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Education and Training  
Senator for South Australia

Our Ref MC17-005723

Mayor David O'Loughlin  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 August 2017 regarding the resolutions carried at the National Government Assembly of Local Government held throughout June 2017.

With regard to Resolution M pertaining to Family Day Care (FDC), I can advise that the Australian Government will invest around \$37 billion on child care support over the next four years. This significant investment includes an increase of around \$2.5 billion to support the implementation of a new child care package that will commence on 2 July 2018, including \$1.2 billion for the new Child Care Safety Net.

A component of the Child Care Safety Net is the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) which will provide grants to child care services to reduce barriers to accessing child care, particularly in disadvantaged, regional or remote communities.

Grants under the CCCF will provide sustainability support for child care services experiencing viability issues, provide community support to reduce barriers in accessing child care, and/or provide capital support to increase the supply of child care places in areas of high unmet demand.

As you are aware, under the new child care package, the Community Support Program (CSP) is a ceasing program and will no longer be available from 1 July 2018. FDC services currently in receipt of CSP funding are eligible to apply for grant funding under the CCCF open competitive grant round, which opened on 23 August 2017. Please note the round closes at 2:00pm AEDT on 2 November 2017.

FDC services not currently in receipt of CSP funding may also be eligible to apply for this CCCF grant round where 50 per cent or more of the educators registered with the FDC service are providing child care within a priority area (as defined in the CCCF guidelines).

More information on the CCCF and the listed priority areas are available on the Department of Education and Training website at: [www.education.gov.au/community-child-care-fund-0](http://www.education.gov.au/community-child-care-fund-0)

With regard to the issues raised in Resolutions N, O, P, and Q, the Australian Government remains committed to ensuring all children have access to affordable and high quality early childhood education. We agree that quality preschool education helps build a strong foundation for successful learning and that this also helps ensure a prosperous future for the Australian society.

On 4 May 2017, I announced \$428 million to extend National Partnership arrangements to continue Commonwealth support for preschool throughout 2018. Since 2008, the Australian Government has contributed \$3.2 billion to state and territory governments to support universal access to quality preschool education for 600 hours per year (or 15 hours per week) in the year before school.

Significant progress has been made since National Partnership arrangements commenced in 2008, with more Australian children enrolling in quality preschool programs each year. Data from 2016 indicates that 93 per cent of children are enrolled in programs that are available for at least 15 hours per week, with 92 per cent of Indigenous children enrolled.

While enrolment data indicates progress, we can no longer afford to conflate enrolment and participation. Available attendance data suggests around 30 per cent of children are not regularly participating for the full 15 hours a week. For Indigenous children this number is even higher, with around 40 per cent not regularly participating for at least 15 hours per week, and in some jurisdictions, this number is as high as 79 per cent.

Under the Federation, preschool is the responsibility of states and territories, with the Commonwealth's funding a contribution to ensure national consistency in the number of hours available. I have signalled my intention to work with states and territories to determine how quality preschool that encourages greater participation can be supported in an enduring way beyond 2018.

I understand how important funding certainty is for the sector and local governments, as well as for families who need to make decisions about work and family arrangements, and will ensure that future arrangements are announced well in advance of the 2019 school year.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



**Simon Birmingham**

cc Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, Minister for Local Government and Territories