

# BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



An agreement between

the **Commonwealth of Australia** as represented  
by the Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations  
(**the Commonwealth**)

and

the **State of Victoria** as represented by the  
Department of Education and Early Childhood  
Development(**Victoria**)

Through this Agreement the Commonwealth will fund Victoria to facilitate it achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Programs by 2013 in its jurisdiction.

# Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

## Intergovernmental Agreement

**Parties** **Commonwealth of Australia** as represented by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations of 16-18 Mort Street, Braddon in the Australian Capital Territory

**The State of Victoria** as represented by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne in Victoria.

### RECOGNISING THAT:

- A. The Commonwealth and Victoria are committed to implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE) and to working together to improve the accessibility, quality and quantity of Early Childhood Education for Australian children. In particular, the NP ECE is the means by which the Commonwealth and the States and Territories have committed to ensure that, by 2013, every child will have access to Early Childhood Education Programs in the year prior to formal schooling.
- B. Under the NP ECE the Commonwealth provides funding to Victoria to help achieve the aims of the NP ECE.
- C. The Commonwealth provides funding to the States and Territories for the purposes of and subject to this Bilateral Agreement, the NP ECE and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA). These agreements provide the framework of the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Program (the Program).

### THE PARTIES HAVE REACHED THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT

#### 1. PURPOSE

- (a) The Parties agree to cooperate in the implementation of this Bilateral Agreement, as part of the NP ECE and in accordance with the IGA, as agreed by all governments at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 29 November 2008.
- (b) The Parties have further agreed to cooperate in multilateral intergovernmental arrangements established under the NP ECE, with particular reference to the Roles and Responsibilities outlined in part 3 of the NP ECE, including developing and implementing:
  - a. agreed data for performance measurement;

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

- b. a national early years workforce strategy; and
- c. a national strategy for achieving universal access to early childhood education for Indigenous children (including in remote communities).

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this Agreement are to establish a framework for:

- (a) the provision of funding by the Commonwealth to Victoria;
- (b) the management and implementation of the program in Victoria; and
- (c) reporting on performance against the Performance Indicators and Deliverables.

### **3. DELIVERABLES**

Victoria will achieve the Deliverables:

- (a) at the times and in the manner specified in table 1 of item C and table 2 of item D in of schedule 1; and
- (b) in accordance with the terms of this Bilateral Agreement, the NP ECE, the IGA and assisted by the Guidelines.

### **4. FUNDING AND REVIEW**

- (a) Subject to clause 34 of the NP ECE and paragraph 4(b), the Commonwealth will make payments to Victoria in the manner specified in item A of schedule 2. The Commonwealth's obligation is subject to Victoria's delivery of the Reports and the Commonwealth's acceptance of the Reports.
- (b) If Victoria does not meet the agreed Deliverables as specified in tables 1 and 2 of schedule 1, the Commonwealth will consider whether or not further payments should be made, and the timing and amount of such payments. Such consideration will be subject to clauses 7 and 8 of this Agreement, and clauses 37 to 40 and 45 of the NP ECE.
- (c) If Victoria does not make progress against the agreed Deliverables as specified in tables 1 and 2 of schedule 1, this will trigger a discussion between the Commonwealth and Victoria.

### **5. DISCONTINUANCE OF FUNDING**

- (a) In carrying out their responsibilities under this Bilateral Agreement and the NP ECE, the parties confirm they will operate in an open and collaborative manner. However, the Commonwealth reserves the right to withhold or discontinue funding if Victoria does not fulfil its obligations under this Bilateral Agreement or the NP ECE. Notification will be provided in writing.

## **6. REPORTS**

Victoria will provide to the Commonwealth:

- (a) the financial reports at the times and in the manner specified by paragraph D.33 of the Intergovernmental Agreement; and
- (b) the Reports at the times and in the manner stated in item E of schedule 1 of Victoria's progress against the Performance Indicators and in achieving the Deliverables and of Victoria's Data Capability.

## **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- (a) The Parties agree that progress against the Performance Indicators and achievement of the Deliverables as detailed in this Bilateral Agreement will be jointly monitored by both parties in accordance with the relevant provisions of the NP ECE (part 4) and the IGA (schedule C).
- (b) The NP ECE and this Bilateral Agreement will be reviewed at least 18 months after 29 November 2008. The review will have regard to the progress made by the Parties against the NP ECE and this Bilateral Agreement, and will specifically address:
  - i. the adequacy of funding to achieve specified outcomes and outputs;
  - ii. the appropriateness of timelines;
  - iii. achievement of agreed outcomes, outputs and performance indicators;
  - iv. satisfactory compliance by governments with all financial reporting requirements of the NP ECE; and
  - v. annual bilateral discussions to review the progress against this Bilateral Agreement, and outcomes and outputs set out in the NP ECE.

## **8. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

- (a) The Parties confirm that the relevant dispute resolution clauses of the NP ECE (clauses 37 to 40) apply.
- (b) In order to facilitate the collaborative implementation of this Bilateral Agreement and the NP ECE, the Commonwealth will be invited to participate in any Victorian implementation oversight or management committee that may be established, thereby giving effect to shared responsibilities under clause 24 of the NP ECE.

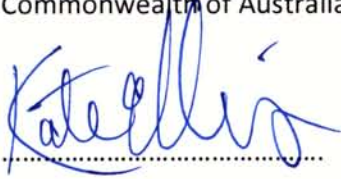
## **9. STATUS OF THIS AGREEMENT**

- (a) This Bilateral Agreement forms part of and is subsidiary to the NP ECE. This Bilateral Agreement ceases to have effect if the NP ECE is terminated by either party in accordance with clause 46 of the NP ECE. The Bilateral Agreement will be reviewed if the NP ECE is amended in accordance with clause 45 of the NP ECE.
- (b) This Bilateral Agreement is not intended to, and does not, create legally binding obligations between the Parties.
- (c) This Bilateral Agreement is entered into on the date set out at page 5 below.

**Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education**

The Parties have executed this agreement as follows:

**Signed** for and on behalf of the  
Commonwealth of Australia by



.....

The Hon Kate Ellis MP  
Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth

Date 22.6.09

**Signed** for and on behalf of the  
State of Victoria by



.....

The Hon Maxine Morand MP  
Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Date 22/6/09.

**Schedule 1**

**A Program and Guidelines**

**Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Program**

For details on the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Program, refer to the NP ECE.

For details on the administration processes and procedures of the Universal Access Program, refer to the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Program Guidelines. The Program Guidelines specify the roles of the Commonwealth and State-Territory Program Delegates, outline the relevant coordination and consultation arrangements between the parties, address administrative processes in support of the Program, and provide relevant templates for reporting under Item E of Schedule 1.

**B Performance Objectives**

In accordance with clauses 17 and 18 of the NP ECE:

- By 2013 every child will have access to a preschool program in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling.
- The preschool program is to be delivered by a four year university qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with a national early years learning framework, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. Reasonable transitional arrangements—including potentially beyond 2013—are needed to implement the commitment to preschool program delivery by four year university qualified early childhood teachers, as agreed in the bilateral agreements.
- The program will be accessible across a diversity of settings, in a form that meets the needs of parents and in a manner that ensures cost does not present a barrier to access.
- In the first two years of implementing the NP ECE (2009 and 2010), national priorities include:
  - increasing participation rates, particularly for Indigenous and disadvantaged children
  - increasing program hours; ensuring cost is not a barrier to access
  - strengthening program quality and consistency
  - fostering service integration and coordination across stand-alone preschool and child care.

The strategies for addressing these priorities may differ on a state-by-state basis.

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

### C Planned Performance

Victoria is responsible for achieving the performance indicators as agreed with the Commonwealth and specified in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Early Childhood Education Program planned/indicative trajectory<sup>1,2</sup>

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline Position <sup>3</sup>	Indicative trajectory				
			31 December 2009	31 December 2010	31 December 2011	31 December 2012	30 June 2013
Children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year.	The proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.	60,969 <sup>4</sup> children are enrolled in state funded kindergarten in the year before school	<i>Aim to maintain high participation in a period of population growth, while increasing average program hours per week.</i>				
			<i>(Source: Victoria in Future, preliminary estimates)</i>				
			60,000 – 63,000	62,000 – 65,000	64,000 – 67,000	64,000 – 67,000	64,000 – 67,000
		95.8% <sup>5</sup> of children eligible to attend kindergarten in the year before school, are enrolled in state funded kindergarten	<i>Maintain participation at 95 percent or higher.</i>				
			<i>(Source: Report on Government Services, 2009)</i>				

Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline Position <sup>3</sup>	Indicative trajectory				
			31 December 2009	31 December 2010	31 December 2011	31 December 2012	30 June 2013
	The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified. <sup>6</sup>	<i>Currently 806 early childhood teachers in state funded kindergarten programs are four year university trained and early childhood qualified</i>	<p><i>Aim to ensure a supply of teachers that will support the increased move from 10 to 15 hours of kindergarten, and meet increased demand during a period of population growth.</i></p> <p><i>In 2008, approximately 39% of teachers (806 teachers) in state funded kindergarten programs had at least a four year Early Childhood Teaching qualification. Victoria's primary focus is to meet the substantial challenge in recruiting or developing the approximately 600-800 further early childhood teachers required to move from a ten to a 15 hour program by 2013. While our aspiration is to ensure that over time four year qualifications are the base level qualification, transitional arrangements as outlined in the National Partnership are required beyond 2013.</i></p>				
			850	850	900	900	1000

Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline Position <sup>3</sup>	Indicative trajectory				
			31 December 2009	31 December 2010	31 December 2011	31 December 2012	30 June 2013
	<p>Hours per week of attendance (where possible to measure) at an Early Childhood Education Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The proportion of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education Program that is available for at least 15 hours a week</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>6.5%<sup>7</sup> of those children participating in a state funded kindergarten program, are participating in a program that is available for at least 15 hours per week</i></p>	<p><i>Aim by 2013 to achieve universal access to a 15 hour kindergarten program amongst children participating.</i></p>				
			10%	10%	20%	50%	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The average number of hours per week of attendance at an Early Childhood Education Program.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>10<sup>8</sup> hours is the average available hours per week of state funded kindergarten programs</i></p>	<p><i>Aim by 2013 to increase the average hours of kindergarten provision to 15 hours amongst children participating.</i></p>				
			12	12	13	14	15

Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline Position <sup>3</sup>	Indicative trajectory				
			31 December 2009	31 December 2010	31 December 2011	31 December 2012	30 June 2013
Universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program is delivered across a range of settings at a cost which is not a barrier to access	<p>Distribution of children who attend an Early Childhood Education Program by weekly cost per child as defined by jurisdictions.<sup>9 10</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average weekly fee</li> <li>Median weekly fee</li> </ul>	<p>\$30.08</p> <p>\$17.05</p>	<p><i>Aim to maintain the relative proportion of government (65%) and parent (35%) contributions for Victorian funded kindergarten programs in the year before school, recognising the effect of consumer price adjustments and other unavoidable impacts on service costs.</i></p>				
Disadvantaged children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program.	The proportion of disadvantaged children enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program. <sup>11 12 13</sup>	<p>91% of children living in a disadvantaged area are enrolled in a state funded kindergarten program located in the area</p>	<p><i>Aim to achieve a comparable rate of kindergarten participation for children from disadvantaged groups relative to the rate of kindergarten participation in the overall population.</i></p>				
			91%	91%	92%	93%	95%

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline Position <sup>3</sup>	Indicative trajectory				
			31 December 2009	31 December 2010	31 December 2011	31 December 2012	30 June 2013
Indigenous children (including those in Remote Indigenous Communities) enrolled in and attending an Early Childhood Education Program	The proportion of Indigenous children (by geographic location as identified by the Australian Standard Geographic Classification), who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program. <sup>14 15 16</sup>	64% of Indigenous children are enrolled in a state funded kindergarten program	<i>Aim to achieve a comparable rate of kindergarten participation for Indigenous children relative to the rate of kindergarten participation in the overall population.</i>				
			64%	65%	70%	80%	95%

### Notes:

1. This table should be read in conjunction with the Deliverables at Table 2 below.
2. Victoria is committed to working on ongoing improvements in data on funded kindergarten service activity and is collaborating closely with the Commonwealth and other stakeholders to improve data quality and availability, including through the National Early Childhood Data Strategy. Where agreed reliable data is not available, Victoria will establish with the Commonwealth a strategy for developing an appropriate data set, as part of the Victoria's Data Capability Report. The data reported against these indicators should be revised as more accurate and appropriate data becomes available.
3. All baseline figures reported are for state funded kindergarten services in Victoria. Data is collected from all state funded kindergartens every April as part of the accountability conditions of funding, a copy of which is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/datacollection.htm>. Information on kindergarten funding policies and guidelines is detailed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/default.htm>. All data relates to children in the state funded kindergarten services in the year before school, unless otherwise described.
4. Source for 2008 figure is the Report on Government Services 2009. Indicative trajectory estimated using Victoria in Future (preliminary estimates) population projection data.
5. Victoria's objective is to maintain its high rate of participation during a period of population growth, while increasing the average hours to 15 per week. Source for this data is the report on government services 2009, proportion of residential population using state government funded kindergarten services in the year before school for 2007/08 as reported in table 3a.12. The figure includes children participating in their first and approved second year of state funded kindergarten in the year before school.

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

6. A national workforce survey will provide additional information regarding early childhood education teachers across the sector. Planned performance may be revisited on the basis of this information and reported through the Data Capability Report.
7. The baseline reflects the weekly hours of service offered by state funded kindergarten services in non-Long Day Care (LDC) funded settings in 2008. State funded kindergarten services in LDC funded settings have been excluded as data on kindergarten specific hours in an LDC setting is not generally available.
8. The baseline reflects the weekly hours of service offered by state funded kindergarten service in non-Long Day Care (LDC) funded settings in 2008. State funded kindergarten programs in LDC funded settings have been excluded, as data on kindergarten specific hours is not generally available. Data reported for 2008 baseline is the current number of hours per week for kindergarten participation in the year before school as supported by the Victorian Government policy for eligibility of the per capita grant.
9. The figures reported represent the average and median estimated weekly fee per state funded kindergarten provider in a non LDC funded setting. This figure does not take into account the Victorian Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS) which effectively makes kindergarten free to disadvantaged families (i.e. generally holding a Health Care Card). For eligible families, the KFS offsets fees associated with a Victorian funded kindergarten program. It is not available in Long Day Care settings.
10. It is proposed that there will be a nationally agreed approach to gathering and reporting fees data in Long Day Care settings. In 2007, approximately, 14 per cent of state funded kindergarten program enrolments were in Long Day Care settings.
11. Victoria does not collect the residential location of children attending state funded kindergarten and only collects the location of the kindergarten service provider. As parents may and do use kindergarten services outside their local area for a variety of reasons, a measure of the disadvantage of children based on the location of the service provider may be misleading and should be read with caution. In Victoria, support to disadvantage families to attend state funded kindergarten is provided through the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. In 2008, 32% of children (outside LDC funded settings) in the year before school were receiving Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
12. The baseline reflects the number of children in state funded kindergarten in the year before school who participated in services located in disadvantaged areas (measured using lowest 20% of disadvantaged Statistical Local Areas identified in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage IRSD, ABS Cat No. 2033.0.55.001) as a proportion of the total number of number of 4 year old children in the same disadvantaged areas. IRSD is limited, particularly as that it relates to 2006 (prior to the impact of the Global Financial Crisis), will not be updated until after the next Census in 2011 and is not a child/family specific measure of disadvantage. The development of a more accurate annual measure of child/family disadvantage is a national priority.
13. Achieving a comparable rate of kindergarten participation for children from disadvantaged groups relative to the rate of kindergarten participation in the overall population is based on an assumption that 2006 demographic patterns will remain constant.
14. There is no accurate annual estimate of the population of Victorian indigenous children in the year before school. Victoria is committed to working with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to develop an accurate measure of Indigenous participation in kindergarten. The baseline reflects the number of indigenous children participating in state funded kindergarten in the year before school as a proportion of the total (estimated) number of 4 year old indigenous children in the population identified through the Australian Bureau of Statistics Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (cat 3238.0.55.001, June 2006). The population of indigenous 4 year old children in Victoria is estimated by dividing by five the estimated overall number of indigenous children aged birth to 4 years of age.
15. Achieving a comparable rate of kindergarten participation for Indigenous children relative to the rate of kindergarten participation in the overall population is based on an assumption that 2006 demographic patterns will remain constant.
16. The Commonwealth will provide data on geographic location on a national basis.

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

### D Deliverables

Victoria is responsible for achieving the Deliverables as agreed with the Commonwealth and specified at Table 2 below.

Table 2: Early Childhood Education Program Deliverables<sup>1</sup>

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
<p><b>Preliminary Comments in Relation to Victoria's Deliverables</b></p> <p>The achievement of universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten in the year before school (universal access) will require major sector transformation in Victoria and be dependent upon strong and sustainable working partnerships with the Commonwealth Government, local governments, community organisations and private providers.</p> <p>Victoria's implementation plan reflects that deliverables need to be carefully sequenced in order to support the achievement of universal access by 2013. Foundational infrastructure and workforce strategies and 15 hour program pilots in the first years of implementation are required to build sector capacity and provide the basis for increased participation in a 15 hour kindergarten program towards 2013. In summary Victoria's five-year strategy will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate detailed planning that responds to the unique needs of different local communities;</li> <li>• build an evidence base for effective implementation, including trialling and assessing of innovative approaches with the Commonwealth;</li> <li>• identify effective strategies to remove barriers to access, with a particular focus on vulnerable children;</li> <li>• support new or modernised infrastructure, consistent with the <i>Victorian Children's Capital Program</i>; and</li> <li>• fast-track early childhood education and care workforce reform to improve the overall number of kindergarten teachers and the quality of service delivery in line with the <i>Victorian Workforce Reform Strategy</i>; and</li> <li>• lift participation and deliver access from the current 10 hour program to a 15 hour kindergarten program.</li> </ul> <p>This translates into seven key areas for action, outlined in Diagram 1. Actions are closely linked and in many instances will be pursued in parallel, rather than sequentially.</p> <p>Victoria's key deliverables, as set out in Table 2 of the bi-lateral agreement, are mapped against the seven key areas for action identified in Diagram 1 above.</p> <p>This reform is substantial. The move from 10 to 15 hours will require 50 per cent increase in program delivery. The recent devastating bushfires in Victoria, the global financial crisis, the ABC Learning collapse and delayed decisions around further investment in Early Learning and Care Centres (ELCCs) mean that original assumptions underpinning planning for the implementation of universal access will be tested. The implementation plan prepared in September 2008 assumed Commonwealth investment in 65 Victorian ELCCs, continuing private sector growth at 8.31 per cent per annum (as per the past seven years), and pre-school utilisation of long day care places at 1.6 children per licensed place. The impact of testing these assumptions is significant. The National Partnership provides for a review at the 18 month mark of implementation. The Review will ensure that jurisdictions can assess progress and reconsider solutions in the light of emerging information.</p>				
<p>Diagram 1</p>				

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
Children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year.	1. The proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.	ECE in Victoria operates in both stand-alone ECE settings and settings where ECE is integrated with child care. Victoria has a high level of participation (approximately 95 per cent) in ECE/ kindergarten programs. The focus for this deliverable to ensure participation can be sustained in the context of this transformational 50 per cent increase in service delivery (from a 10 hr program to a 15 hr program), record recent birth rate growth, recent reform to provide kindergarten for three year old children and factors affecting infrastructure supply. <sup>2</sup>		
		1.1 The Victorian Government does not directly deliver kindergarten programs. Local Government is a key planner and deliverer of children's services. Each local govt will develop a foundational plan to implement universal access to a 15 hr kindergarten program for their community. <sup>3</sup> <b>(Action 1)</b>	1.1 A local govt plan for each local govt area or cluster of local govt areas <sup>4</sup>	1.1 2008-09 - 2009-10
		1.2 Infrastructure availability will be a substantial challenge for Victoria. Each local govt will establish and implement a planned approach to optimise service and infrastructure use in their LGA, including priority allocation for vulnerable children. <b>(Action 2)</b> This action builds on Action 1 and will be sustained until 2013.	1.2 Establish and maintain a local govt approach and process for optimising capacity in each local govt area or cluster of local govt areas	1.2 2009-10 - 2012-13
		1.3 Substantial new or modernised infrastructure is required to meet additional demand for services, and in the context of infrastructure supply challenges. Grants will leverage third party funding to deliver integrated services and additional kindergarten capacity. <b>(Action 6)</b>	1.3 Number of grants issued	1.3 2009-10 - 2011-2012
		1.4 Victoria proposes to regulate to increase the availability of ECE, by ensuring that an ECE teacher is delivering an ECE program in all long day care centres. <sup>5</sup>	1.4 2008-09	1.4 2008-09
		1.5 As set out in the National Partnership, the Commonwealth Government will meet the ongoing costs of implementing new approved child care places under child care assistance legislation.	1.5 Ongoing	1.5 Ongoing

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
	<p>2. The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p>	<p>Substantial increased demand for services will require a focus on attracting or developing new and existing ECE teachers, retaining these teachers, and ensuring teachers are four year trained. Victoria has programs to support pathways into ECE careers and attract new ECE teachers. Consistent with the National Partnership, transitional arrangements beyond 2013 are needed in Victoria to implement the commitment to program delivery by four year university qualified early childhood teachers.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>2.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive Workforce Strategy to support universal access to kindergarten that addresses: <b>(Action 7)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment and retention;</li> <li>- Qualifications and skills; and</li> <li>- Workforce integration</li> </ul> <p>This strategy will be consistent with the proposed national workforce strategy.</p>	<p>2.1 A finalised Workforce Strategy<sup>7</sup> &amp; implementation of actions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment and retention;</li> <li>- Qualifications and skills; and</li> <li>- Workforce integration</li> </ul>	<p>2.1 2009-10 2009-2013</p>
	<p>3. Hours per week of attendance (where possible to measure) at an Early Childhood Education Program.</p>	<p>The Victorian Government does not directly deliver kindergarten programs, but provides <i>per capita funding</i> that meets part of the cost of program delivery in both standalone and integrated settings. The remaining cost is met through parent fees and fundraising. For low income families, Victoria provides a subsidy to offset the remaining cost and make kindergarten effectively free. The Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to ensure child care is accessible in a range of settings.</p> <p>This deliverable focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- program pilots and innovation trials in partnership with the Commonwealth Government to establish the policy and delivery supports of a 15 hr program, ensuring these align with the Commonwealth and Victorian Government focus on quality and integration</li> <li>- per capita funding to support the increase from 10 hr to 15 hr program delivery expanding each year in line with funding</li> </ul>		

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
		3.1 Piloting a direct increase in access from 10 to 15 hrs to determine effective and efficient strategies for implementing 15 hrs in a range of settings (incl. standalone kindergarten and long day care). Pilots will assist in determining an accurate unit price level to support the shift from a 10 hr to a 15 hr kindergarten program drawing on Commonwealth funding, identify different ways to deliver a 15 hr program and inform the 18 month Review. <b>(Action 3)</b>	3.1 Detailed specification of pilots  Pilot 15 hr program implementation at an estimate of six locations (incl. a combination of standalone kindergarten, long day care, metropolitan, and rural/ remote areas)	3.1 Sept 2009  2009-10 - 2011-12
		3.2 Trial innovative models of 15 hr kindergarten program delivery, incl. wrap-around care through access to the approved Child Care Benefit in standalone kindergartens. These Cwth/ Vic joint trials will provide a national evidence base, available for application in all jurisdictions, for the implementation of universal access in subsequent years of reform. <b>(Action 4)</b>	3.2 Detailed specification of trials  An estimate average of three trials p/a	3.2 Dec 2009  2009-10 - 2011-12
		3.3 Raise the per-capita grant to support an increase in the average weekly teaching time by early childhood education teachers.	3.3 Per capita grant raised	3.3 2009-13
		3.4 Support 15 hr kindergarten programs, using Commonwealth funding to expand the per capita grant from supporting a 10 hr to a 15 hr kindergarten program. The number of children supported each year will grow in line with funding.	3.4 15 hr per capita funding made available to services meeting program policy guidelines <sup>8</sup>	3.4 2009-13

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
Universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program is delivered across a range of settings at a cost which is not a barrier to access	Distribution of children who attend an Early Childhood Education Program by weekly cost per child (after subsidies) as defined by jurisdictions.	<p>Ensuring cost is not a barrier to ECE access is a shared responsibility for State and Commonwealth Governments. Victoria offers a kindergarten fee subsidy, making effectively free a 10 hr kindergarten program for low income families. The extent to which this can be extended to a 15 hr program will need to be determined through pilots and trials. The Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to ensure child care integrated with ECE is affordable, particularly for low income and vulnerable families.</p> <p>4.1 See 3.1 -3.3 above</p>	4.1 See 3.1 - 3.3 above	4.1 See 3.1 - 3.3 above
		<p>4.2 Identify barriers to kindergarten access, particularly vulnerable groups, and implement locally relevant solutions in coordination with home learning and parent support programs. Solutions will include a mechanism for priority allocation of children from vulnerable groups. <b>(Action 5)</b> This action builds on Action 2 to plan and optimise service use, including priority allocation for vulnerable children.</p>	4.2 Appoint and maintain p/t coordinator for DEECD regions to identify barriers and implement locally relevant solutions	4.2 2008-09 - 2012-13
Disadvantaged children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program.	The proportion of disadvantaged children Enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.	<p>Removing barriers to participation in an ECE program is a shared responsibility.</p> <p>5.1 See 4.2 above</p>	5.1 See 4.2 above	5.1 See 4.2 above
		<p>5.2 Victoria currently offers free three year old kindergarten for children known to child protection and free kindergarten for low income families.</p>	5.2 Improved access to three and four year old kindergarten for disadvantaged children	5.2 2008-09

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Deliverables	Quantity/Target	Timing
Indigenous children (including those in Remote Indigenous Communities) Enrolled in and attending an Early Childhood Education Program	The proportion of Indigenous children (by geographic location as identified by the Australian Standard Geographic Classification), who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.	Removing barriers to indigenous participation in an ECE program is a shared responsibility.		
		6.1 See 4.2 above	6.1 See 4.2 above	6.1 See 4.2 above
		6.2 Victoria currently offers free three year old kindergarten for aboriginal children and free kindergarten for low income families.	6.2 Improved access to three and four year old kindergarten for aboriginal children	6.2 2008-09
		6.3 The Commonwealth Government will lead the development of the Indigenous (including remote communities) universal access strategy, with state involvement to ensure relevance to the Victorian context.	6.3 Indigenous universal access strategy	6.3 tbc

### Notes:

1. This table should be read in conjunction with the Planned Performance at Table 1 above.
2. Factors negatively affecting existing and new supply include: reduced private investment due to the global financial crisis, delayed decisions around further investment in Early Learning and Care Centres and the ABC Learning collapse.
3. Action 1 and progress on other actions will inform the review at the 18 month mark of implementation provided for in the National Partnership. The Review will ensure that jurisdictions can assess progress and reconsider solutions in the light of emerging information.
4. Victoria's recent bushfires have devastated a number of local government areas. Affected councils will be additionally supported but will likely be delayed in reform planning.
5. This is subject to the current Regulatory Impact Statement process.
6. It is a requirement that all Victorian funded kindergarten programs be planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. Approximately 60 per cent of ECE teachers hold an approved three year qualification.
7. The development of a comprehensive Workforce Strategy is an Action in Victoria's Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) and will align with the workforce strategy currently being developed through the Council of Australian Governments.
8. Victoria's Kindergarten Policy Guidelines are produced annually and can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/>. Only services meeting these guidelines are eligible for state funding.

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

### E Reporting

E1 The State Delegate is responsible for providing the Program Delegate with two hard copies and an electronic copy of Reports as follows:

Details of Report	Due Date*
Data Capability Report	31 July 2009
2009 Progress Report	30 September 2009
2009 Annual Report	31 March 2010
2010 Progress Report	30 September 2010
2010 Annual Report	31 March 2011
2011 Progress Report	30 September 2011
2011 Annual Report	31 March 2012
2012 Progress Report	30 September 2012
2012 Annual Report	31 March 2013
Final Report	30 September 2013

\* Where the due date falls on a weekend or a public holiday, the due date is taken to be the next business day.

E2 Data Capability Reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator:

- (a) Collection Name(s)
- (b) Data (i.e. the figure(s) for the Baseline Data position)
- (c) Methodology (of the underlying data and sources)
- (d) Coverage (i.e. the participant coverage in the collection)
- (e) Data Quality Assessment
- (f) Future Data Developments.

E3 Progress Reports must contain the following details:

- (a) Title of the Program
- (b) Description of the Program
- (c) Program activities commenced in the reporting period 1 January to 30 June
- (d) Program activities completed in the reporting period
- (e) A statement of issues of concern that may impact on the achievement of any of the Deliverables
- (f) be signed by the State Delegate or the Delegate's authorised representative.

## Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

- E4 Annual Reports must contain the following details:
- (a) Title of the Program
  - (b) Description of the Program
  - (c) Program activities commenced in the reporting period
  - (d) Program activities completed in the reporting period
  - (e) Progress against:
    - i. Deliverables and performance indicators
    - ii. the national priorities, as outlined in paragraph 18 of the NP ECE
  - (f) A statement of issues of concern that may impact on the achievement of any of the Deliverables
  - (g) Copies of all reports, evaluations, analysis and /or survey outcomes Victoria has undertaken or had commissioned in relation to achieving any of the performance indicators or deliverables
  - (h) A Data Capability Exception Report reflecting any changes from the previous year
  - (i) be signed by the State Delegate or the State Delegate's authorised representative.
- E5 As part of the Annual Report, the State Delegate or State Delegate's authorised representative will attend a meeting with the Commonwealth to present and discuss the Annual Report.
- E6 The Final Report must contain the information to be included in Annual Reports described in item E4, except for the information described in paragraphs (f) and (h).

## Schedule 2 - the Commonwealth's Obligations

### A Funding

- A1 The total funding for the Agreement is \$210,626,000 (exclusive of GST) payable by the following instalments:

Amount	Payable on acceptance by the Commonwealth of the:	No later than:
\$7,363,000	<b>Signing of this agreement</b>	<b>7 July 2009</b>
\$7,761,000	<b>Data Capability Report due by 31 July 2009</b>	<b>7 Oct 2009</b>
\$7,562,000	<b>Progress Report due by 30 September 2009</b>	<b>7 Dec 2009</b>
\$15,920,000	<b>Annual Report due by 31 March 2010</b>	<b>7 Jul 2010</b>
\$3,383,000	<b>Progress Report due by 30 September 2010</b>	<b>7 Dec 2010</b>
\$29,551,500	<b>Annual Progress Report due by 31 March 2011</b>	<b>7 Jul 2011</b>
\$29,551,500	<b>Progress Report due by 30 September 2011</b>	<b>7 Dec 2011</b>
\$54,767,000	<b>Annual Report due by 31 March 2012</b>	<b>7 Jul 2012</b>
\$54,767,000	<b>Progress Report due by 30 September 2012</b>	<b>7 Dec 2013</b>

- A2 The Commonwealth will not provide any additional funds to Victoria to meet any GST liabilities Victoria incurs as a result of subcontracting any part of the performance of Victoria's obligations under this Agreement.