

Quality early learning: a sound investment for a brighter future

15 August 2017

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Mark Morrissey today welcomed the Tasmanian Government's commitment to investing in quality, play-based learning programs for Tasmanian three year olds who are most in need.

The Government's announcement means that Tasmanian families who are most in need will have the opportunity to access an additional year of pre-school for their children at no cost.

Evidence clearly indicates that quality play-based early learning leads to significantly improved educational, social, health, and economic outcomes for children.

"This decision is a sound investment in a brighter future for many Tasmanian children who currently need extra support. Education is the key to our future prosperity and quality early learning is a great place to increase our investments," said Mr Morrissey.

"All children benefit from quality early childhood education before they enter formal schooling, but research shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit the most.

"This initiative aims to level the playing field in terms of equity of access to quality early learning programs.

"There is no doubt that cost is a significant barrier to participation in early childhood education programs for some children. I understand that other obstacles like transport, social factors and family violence will also be considered in the design phase of the initiative, as will methods to overcome them.

"I am really pleased to see the Government working closely with the early childhood education and care sector to co-design this new initiative.

"I think it's important to acknowledge the Government's willingness to listen to the sector and others regarding the potential social and economic impacts of implementing a voluntary earlier school starting age. The *Working Together for 3 Year Olds Initiative* is a good alternate approach to improving outcomes for Tasmanian children while ensuring the early childhood education and care sector continues to play its very important role in this space.



“I congratulate the Minister for Education for his willingness to take account of community concerns and expert advice to develop an enhanced policy which aims to build on the original intention to achieve improved outcomes for our children especially in the very important early years. This is a sign of mature and healthy policy development.

Mark Morrissey
Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tasmania)