

Letter from thought leaders to the review of National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NPAUAECE).

Australia can be very proud of its achievements in improving the access of its children to vital early childhood education over the past decade. Successive Australian governments – Federal, State and Territory - have supported this fundamental investment in your nation's youngest children and the men and women who work to support them.

The signatories to this letter come from many nations and differing styles of early childhood systems. We have seen the evidence of the positive impact of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access in your country: Australia has shifted from just over half of all children accessing preschool in the year before school (well below the OECD average) to over 90 per cent now which is above the OECD average.

This and the introduction of the National Quality Framework laid the foundations of your early education sector, but the reform trajectory has just begun. While the Australian Early Childhood Development Census shows that one in five non-Indigenous children and two in five Indigenous children are starting school developmentally vulnerable there is more to be done.

Put simply, preschool is proven to be an effective early intervention to improve equality of educational opportunity, particularly for the most vulnerable children.

We would urge you to join Israel, France, Spain, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Canada, parts of the United States, Korea, Japan and, more recently China, in boosting investment in high quality early childhood education, ensuring all children have access from the age of three.

The review of the National Partnership Agreement is an opportune time to recommit to the vision laid out a decade ago of giving all children access to preschool in the year before school and to better it by investing in two years of early learning before school.

This will ensure that Australia's children have the best possible opportunity to succeed as they commence their learning and life journeys in a world where what and how they learn will increasingly define both personal and national success and prosperity.

Signed



Prof. dr. Paal Leeman
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

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A/PROF. STEVEN HOWARD
EARLY START & SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

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SIR KEVAN COLLINS

CEO

EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

LONDON

kevan.collins@education.foundation.org.uk

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Iram Siraj
Prof. of Child Deupt
University of Oxford.

iram.siraj@education.ox.ac.uk

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CHARLES PASCAL
Président, Université de Toronto
Fondateur, Réseau mondial d'éducation
Ontario

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. A. Bennett', written in a cursive style.

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Jacqueline Barnes
Professor of Psychology, Emerita
Birkbeck, University of London.
UK.

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Edward Melhuus
Professor of Human Development
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