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Media release for immediate distribution

C&K urges continuation of kindergarten funding at public hearing

Queensland's largest early childhood education and care provider C&K has urged the federal government to continue Universal Access funding.

C&K CEO Michael Tizard today spoke at the Productivity Commission's public hearing in Sydney, following the release of its draft report into childcare and early childhood learning.

He voiced support for the report's recommendation to continue Universal Access funding.

Mr Tizard said Australian families deserved to know whether children would be supported to access at least 15 hours of kindergarten education for 40 weeks in the year before starting school.

"Universal Access funding has tripled kindergarten participation in Queensland," he said.

"The Commission has acknowledged the benefits of quality preschool education for children in the year prior to starting school are largely undisputed."

"In particular, it has highlighted research which shows improved performance in standardised test results in the early years of primary school as a result of participation in kindergarten programs."

"With uncertainty surrounding universal access funding since the latest budget was announced, this draft report holds promising news for Australian families who want the best start for their children."

"Today Education Ministers at the Education Council meeting are discussing the independent review of the National Partnership on Universal Access prepared by Deloitte Access Economics."

"I encourage the federal and state governments to reveal the contents of this report as soon as possible."

Mr Tizard disagreed with the Commission's recommendation to remove "dedicated preschools" from the National Quality Framework.

"Extension of primary school programs to include preschools/kindergartens, may not be suited to all states, particularly Queensland where kindergarten programs are delivered primarily by non-government organisations in community based locations," he said.

"A national system provides a level of informative data regarding the impact of standards on practice, which is instrumental in improving education and care outcomes. "

Mr Tizard said C&K looks forward to providing further submissions to help ensure that quality education and care is a priority for all Australian children,” Mr Tizard said.

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