MEDIA RELEASE

Minns Government's so-called "fee relief" a transparent attempt to mislead families in NSW

18 October 2026 – The CEOs of key NSW not-for-profit early childhood education and care providers are expressing their profound disappointment about the Minns Government's funding cuts to early education and care in NSW announced today.

Over 170,000 children aged 3-4 years attend preschool, with 72% of them attending programs in long day care programs. While today's announcement includes a much needed increase in funding for community preschools, this is much less than the $150 million cut to the long day care preschool programs attended by most children.

This means that for the majority of families, funding for high quality preschool that supports children's development is being cut next year.

This comes at a time when parents expect Governments to fund preschool programs that are well resourced and led by qualified teachers to prepare their children for school. This funding cut hits directly the funding that provides that.

The big losers are the 72% of families who rely on long day preschool programs. Working families value the flexibility and support they get from their dedicated preschool teachers in long day care services. All children deserve access to a quality preschool program.

While fee subsidies for families of children accessing preschool in long daycare settings will be increased by 2.4%, this extra benefit is dwarfed by the funding cut which will leave providers scrambling to fully fund their programs in 2027 and parents facing potentially large increases in fees to fill the funding hole.

Comments from Dr Ros Baxter, CEO of Goodstart: **"**This is an incredibly disappointing attempt from the Minns Government to mislead parents in NSW. The fact is they're cutting funding for preschools at a time when parents expect to see quality lifting."

"This so-called fee relief announced today by the Minns Government does not make up for the fact that it is cutting $150 million from long day care, where three in four NSW children attend preschool."

"Goodstart does not pay profits - every dollar we earn goes into children's outcomes and the pay of the workers who support them. This makes us an incredibly good value investment for governments."

Comments from Christine Legg CEO of KU: **"**Families are under enormous pressure from the cost-of-living crisis, and yet the Minns Government is penalising working families by cutting funding for preschools in long day care. Today's announcement hides the fact that most families in NSW with children in preschool will be worse off."

Comments from Nicole Jones, CEO of Gowrie NSW

“The decision to reduce preschool funding comes at a time when investment in children’s learning and development has never been more important.

“High-quality preschool programs play a critical role in giving children the strongest possible foundation for their learning and transition to school. Sustained investment is essential to ensuring all children have access to the opportunities and experiences they deserve.”

Comments from Kim Bertino, CEO of BFS Children’s Services

“Cuts to early education and care impacts children and families, so why does the Minn’s government believe that it is appropriate to cut funding to not-for-profit organisations providing high-quality teaching and learning for preschool aged children at time when families rely on longer hours of education and care to support their working arrangements.

“Choice is important, and that is why we need investment across the early education and care sector to support the needs of families in NSW.

Comments from Kay Turner, CEO of SDN Children’s Services

“Universal preschool must mean supporting high-quality preschool wherever children access it. Reducing funding to providers delivering preschool in long day care risks weakening the capacity of services to provide the quality and inclusive programs children deserve. If we are serious about universal preschool, funding must support a strong and sustainable preschool system for every child, regardless of the setting their family chooses”

Comments from Andrew Montague, Director Communities, Uniting NSW/ACT

"The Government wants families to celebrate a small increase in fee relief while quietly cutting the funding that underpins quality preschool programs. Parents will see through that. They want their children learning from qualified educators in properly resourced services that prepare them for school.”

“Every child deserves the chance to arrive at school ready to thrive. High-quality preschool is one of the most effective ways we can improve outcomes for all children, particularly children experiencing disadvantage. This decision moves us in the wrong direction, risking wider inequality when we should be investing in giving every child the best possible start."

Media contact: Kayla Foster 0447 040 029 kayla.foster@essentialmedia.com.au