

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## BUDGET COMMITMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES WILL HELP

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Independent Schools Australia (ISA) welcomes the Australian Government's Budget commitment to increase the number of early childhood educators.

Many Independent schools provide early childhood services on site and they share the same workforce pressures as other providers.

The Budget commitment to create 1,469 more university places for early education teachers will help groups that are under-represented at Australian universities, such as those from poorer backgrounds, Indigenous Australians and students from rural and remote Australia, to become early childhood educators.

ISA Chief Executive, Ms Margery Evans said, "Many families who enrol their children in Independent schools also seek early childhood services at that school.

"Yet, many Independent schools that provide early childhood care and education are struggling to meet the demand for places.

"Transitioning from early childhood services to schooling at the one site can be beneficial for children because of the continuity and familiarity it provides.

"It can also be more convenient for busy families to have early childhood services and schooling at the one Independent school.

"Yet, just as many childcare providers struggle to provide enough places to meet demand, so do those in Independent schools," she said.

There are approximately 49,300 degree-qualified pre-primary teachers across Australia in pre-primary settings and demand is still increasing. Predictors indicate that the early childhood sector will need another 34,000 new early childhood teachers over the coming five years to meet projected sector growth.

"To keep it in perspective, the extra places won't do much to address the overall shortage of childhood educators, but this measure does recognise where the greatest needs are.

"Opening up the childcare subsidy to more families will also help recognise the universal value of early childhood services.

"Any measures that improve access to early childhood services for families is welcome," Ms Evans said.

ISA is the peak body representing 1,187 Independent schools with 667,259 enrolled students.

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