More funding and support for community preschools: new initiatives from 2016

- A new Preschools for Sustainable Communities program
- A new Community Preschool 600 Hours Incentive
- An increase in Preschool Funding Model base funding and loadings
- A new Local Partnerships to Enhance Preschool Participation by Aboriginal and Low Income Families
- Enhanced Community Outreach Grants
- New Capital Works Grants

Further information on how these initiatives will benefit services and families can be found in an updated FAQ fact sheet for Providers and FAQ fact sheet for Families.

Webinar for services in December 2015

The Department will hold a webinar to take services through the funding changes for 2016 before the summer holiday close-down.

Watch out for more information coming to you directly by e-mail.

PRESCHOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A new Preschools for Sustainable Communities program will provide additional funding to community preschools in rural and remote areas where access to preschool services may be limited.

The program will commence in 2016 and run for a period of four years. The Department will notify eligible services by the end of November 2015, and the first payment will be made in December 2015.

Preschools for Sustainable Communities guidelines will shortly be available on the Department’s web pages.

COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL 600 HOURS INCENTIVE

A new 600 Hours Incentive will provide bonus funding for community preschools to encourage services to increase their enrolment of 4 and 5 year old children in quality preschool programs for 600 hours per year (or 15 hours per week) in 2016. This is consistent with national targets under the National Partnership for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.

Under this program, services that maintain 4 and 5 year old enrolment levels will receive a bonus if they increase, by at least 5 percentage points, the proportion of these 4 and 5 year olds participating in preschool for 600 hours per year. The level of bonus will be proportionate with the level of increase. Services that maintain an already high level of 600 hours participation will also be eligible.

600 Hours Incentive guidelines will shortly be available on the Department’s web pages.

PFM FUNDING TO INCREASE

PFM payments to community preschools for 2016 will include increased base rates and loadings. Click here for more details. The technical funding specification for providers has also been updated.
COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL FUNDING CALCULATOR UPDATED

Community preschools are asked to note that two new funding calculators (v2.1) are available for use – an updated calculator for centre-based preschools and an updated calculator for mobile preschools. In using these, services may also find it helpful to delete the previous calculator (v1.1) they may have downloaded.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE UNTIL 2018

Operational support for preschools will continue until June 2018. Community preschools that require operational support will be able to access this program.

Click here for more details on Operational Support Program.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE PRESCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY ABORIGINAL AND LOW INCOME FAMILIES

This new partnership will support innovative programs that focus on promoting high expectations and quality preschool programs for Aboriginal and low income children in their year before school for 600 hours per year.

Further details will be announced in 2016.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH GRANTS

Grants of $7,000 are being made to inner regional community preschools in December 2015, following an earlier payment of $7,000 to outer regional, remote and very remote services in October 2015. These grants help services improve engagement with the local community, and encourage initiatives to increase preschool participation.

In 2016/17 application based grant payments of up to $15,000 per project will commence. Applications should demonstrate how the service would use the funding to increase the number of 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in quality preschool programs for 600 hours per year, with a focus on Aboriginal and low income families.

Further details will be announced in 2016.

CAPITAL WORKS GRANTS

This program is for not for profit community and mobile preschools. Grants will be awarded through a competitive tender process. It is based on the Capital Works Grants program previously undertaken by the Department.

Funding is available from mid-2016 over four years, to deliver up to 500 new community and mobile preschool places for 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in quality preschool programs for 600 hours per year, with a focus on Aboriginal and low income families.

The initiative will target providers proposing to build new preschools, extend existing preschool facilities, or deliver innovative solutions to increase the number of preschool places available, in areas where there is a demonstrated shortage and where the market has not responded.

Further details will be announced in 2016.

LONG DAY CARE CENTRE SURVEY

The Department is currently undertaking a survey for all long day care centres in NSW, to inform more targeted policies to improve support for early childhood education.

Information being collected in the survey includes operating times, preschool programs, child participation, staff qualifications and a Transition to School evaluation. The survey concludes with a reminder of the importance of completing the preschool indicator on CCMS.

If you receive the long day care survey, please take a few minutes to complete it for your service(s) – it should only take 15 minutes.

Further information on the survey can be found at www.srcentre.com.au/long, or by contacting the Department’s Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation on (02) 9561 1926.

EXCELLENT RATING FOR KU – CORRIMAL EAST

Another Excellent rating has been awarded, taking to ten the number of services to achieve this level. Congratulations to KU - Corrimal East, which was found to be exceptional in its commitment to collaboration, professional development and inclusive partnerships, and for support of children’s behaviour.

In announcing the rating, ACECQA Board Chair Rachel Hunter commended KU – Corrimal East Preschool’s active leadership within the community and the wider childhood sector and congratulated educators at the service for their continued efforts to raise the bar on quality education and care.

Services that receive an overall rating of ‘Exceeding the National Quality Standard’ can apply for the Excellent rating. More information is available on the ACECQA website.