The Brennan Review of NSW Government Funding for Early Childhood Education recommended that mobile preschools be funded on fixed term contracts to improve service delivery and universal access in remote areas.

The NSW Government supports this recommendation. A four stage approach will be taken to transition mobile preschools (that meet the definition of a mobile service) to ‘opt in’ fixed term contracts.

Four stage approach to address the unique circumstances of mobile preschools

1. Mobile preschool eligibility criteria will be established for entering in to a three year fixed term contract.
2. The Operational Support Program will be extended to include mobile preschools. Once mobile preschools complete this program they will be considered for a fixed term contract.
3. From 2016 new fixed term contracts will be offered to mobile preschools (that meet the definition of a mobile service) and will include agreed service delivery targets.
4. The contracts will include a new loading to recognise the unique costs of mobile service delivery.

The contracts will be phased in to align with the transition to the Preschool Funding Model.

What are the eligibility criteria for a mobile preschool to be offered an ‘opt in’ fixed term contract?

Previously, the characteristics of a mobile preschool had not been defined. As a result, some services that historically operated as mobiles may now be centre based.

A preschool will now have to meet the following criteria to be considered a mobile preschool:

1. operates from multiple venues that are not purpose-built centre based preschools, or operates as a ‘pack away’ service at one venue
2. delivers a preschool program designed by an early childhood teacher
3. has a minimum of five children enrolled at each venue
4. operates in areas where centre based preschools are not readily available (eg rural/remote areas where no other preschool provision exists)
5. holds the required service and provider approvals.

What will be included in the fixed term contracts?

Fixed term contracts will be offered to all mobile preschools after they have completed the Operational Support Program.

All mobile preschool contracts will be based on outputs, require the development and implementation of a yearly business plan and participation in the annual preschool census.

All ‘opt in’ contracts will include a new loading to recognise the unique costs of mobile service delivery.
What is the Operational Support Program?

The Community Preschool Operational Support Program offers general business and sector-specific support at a practical and operational level to eligible community preschools funded under the NSW government’s Preschool Funding Model.

There are two stages to the program.

During the first stage, mobile preschools will receive assistance from a small business advisor, which will include up to four face-to-face sessions. These small business advisors are part of the Government’s Small Biz Connect program. Small Biz Connect funds a network of mobile business advisors to provide advice to local small businesses, not-for-profits and social enterprises. The advisors will assist mobile preschools in areas such as:

- financial planning
- cash flow management
- marketing
- strategic planning.

During the second stage, mobile preschools will also be able to access mentoring support from sector specialists, commissioned to provide early childhood education sector-specific advice to assist them in maximising funding under the Preschool Funding Model. It will include areas such as:

- maximising enrolments through outreach
- modelling and implementing an appropriate fee structure
- attracting, retaining and developing qualified staff.

The program will provide face-to-face support and development across these two stages.

When will the Operational Support Program start?

Local Small Biz Connect advisors, located in regional centres across NSW, are waiting for mobile preschools to call and make their first appointment. By contacting Small Biz Connect on 1300 134 359, mobile preschools will be automatically directed to their local Small Biz Connect advisor.

What will it cost my mobile preschool service?

There is no cost for eligible mobile preschools. The program is fully funded by the NSW Government.

For preschools not eligible for the wider program, a number of free Small Biz Connect advisory sessions funded by the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner can still be accessed.

Next Steps

To take advantage of the assistance provided under the Operational Support Program, eligible mobile preschools should:

- Call Small Biz Connect on 1300 134 359 to be directed to a local advisor.
- Reply to the eligibility confirmation email you received on 11 November 2014 from ECEC.OperationalSupport@det.nsw.edu.au and confirm your consent to participate.

Further Information

Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
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