



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

## **Media Release**

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### **EARLY CHILDHOOD THE FOUNDATION FOR AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

Federal Labor's announcement of the first plank in its education revolution - a \$450 million *New Directions for Early Childhood Education* program - will assist those children who are currently missing out on preschool in our region, Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said today.

Reports earlier this year suggest that in some parts of the Hunter the number of children attending preschool or other early education is more than 30% below the state average.

"We need to invest in the earliest years of education to give our kids the best possible start," Ms Grierson said.

Federal Labor will legislate to give all four-year-olds an entitlement to 15 hours of preschool or early learning per week, for a minimum of forty weeks a year, delivered by a quality teacher in existing stand-alone preschools or kindergartens, integrated in Long Day Care Centres or delivered in partnership with Family Day Care Schemes.

"With child care expenses increasing by 82% under the Howard Government, Labor's plan is designed to ensure the cost to parents of early childhood education do not rise."

"We will also tackle the skills shortage in the early childhood workforce."

Federal Labor will fully fund 1,500 new university places in early childhood education and provide a 50% HECS remission for 10,000 early childhood graduates working in areas of need. This is in addition to Labor's already announced policy of eliminating TAFE fees for childcare trainees and building childcare centres on primary school grounds.

"Our early childhood plan is the first plank of the comprehensive education revolution being promoted by Federal Labor to ensure the continued economic prosperity of the nation and the Hunter."

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