

20 May 2024

Jay

Dear ~~the Hon Jay Weatherill,~~

The Front Project is pleased to support Thrive by Five's "Make it Law" campaign. We share the goal of providing children with the best start in life, and to support families in raising children to be happy, healthy, and thriving.

Providing all children with a guaranteed entitlement to a high quality, universal early childhood development system just makes sense.

We recognise that investing in early childhood development and making high-quality early education and care accessible to all children is not only beneficial but essential for the well-being and success of our society.

The early years of a child's life are foundational in shaping their future outcomes. Research consistently shows that children who have access to quality early childhood education and care experience significant long-term benefits, including higher academic achievement, improved social-emotional development, and better economic prospects later in life. By investing in early childhood education and care, we are not only giving children the best possible start in life but also laying the groundwork for a more prosperous and equitable society.

Unfortunately, we know that not all children and families have equal access to high-quality early childhood education and care and parenting support. Too many families face barriers such as high costs and limited availability, which prevent them from accessing the services they need. This lack of access exacerbates existing inequalities and perpetuates cycles of disadvantage.

We support the call for federal government to enshrine in legislation:

- More paid parental leave, with the flexibility to share between parents.
- Better maternal and child healthcare, including additional support for families who need it.
- Three days of affordable and high-quality early learning for all children, with more days for children who need it (including low-income households, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families experiencing family violence, single-parent households, parents/children with disability, and families on certain visa types). This includes consistent access to three- and four-year-old preschools across all states and territories.
We recognise that there is significant detail to be worked through and that there is sector concern about fixed fee or capped prices and are happy to be a part of the policy conversation about options going forward.
- Establishing an independent National body to support better coordination and governance of the early childhood development system by the commonwealth, state, and territory

governments in partnership with families, and the early childhood, human services and health sectors.

We know that making these changes will take time and we look forward to working in partnership with sector leaders, organisations, and governments to make this a reality for Australia's young children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CB' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Dr Caroline Crosser-Barlow