

Section 2: Outcomes and planned performance

2.1 OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Outcomes are the impacts or consequences of government interventions to improve the circumstances of specific groups in the Australian community. Each outcome statement states the intended result the government is seeking and proposed action to achieve it. Agencies deliver programs which summarise government actions taken to deliver the intended result.

The overall impact of departmental activities should be viewed within the context that programs delivered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations form part of a wider set of factors that affect the Outcome. Outcomes are not solely controlled by the government but achieved in partnership with various external stakeholders.

Each outcome is described below together with its related programs, specifying the key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets used to assess and monitor the performance of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in achieving government outcomes.

The projections into forward years are based on current or known circumstances. In some cases they are based on anticipated changes and Treasury forecasts. They do not take into account speculative changes in economic conditions, global or local, or future changes in government policies.

Outcome 1: Improved access to quality services that support early childhood learning and care for children through a national quality framework, agreed national standards, investment in infrastructure, and support for parents, carers, services and the workforce

Outcome 1 Strategy

The provision of high quality early learning and care across a range of settings, including child care and preschool is critical to achieving long-term participation and productivity gains for Australia. A large body of literature has established that high quality early childhood education programs have a positive effect on children's development and transition to school¹.

In the 2008–09 Budget, the government set out its agenda for early childhood education and care, including Universal Access to early learning for all four year olds

¹ For example, the National Institute for Early Education Research, 2004, 'The Universal vs. Targeted Debate', in *Preschool Policy Matters*, Issue 6, April 2004 and Heckman, James J., 2005, 'Lessons from the Technology of Skill Formation (February 2005)', National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. W11142, February 2005.

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by 2013, increasing the rate of Child Care Tax Rebate and commencing the development of strong quality standards in child care and preschool. The agenda is positioned as a key strategy under the Education Revolution. Between now and 2013 the government is investing \$3.7 billion in new funding for early childhood education and care. Around a quarter of this is dedicated to improving preschool education.

The Council of Australian Government's (COAG) has set the following targets for access to early learning and for Closing the Gap:

- universal access to early learning for all four year olds by 2013
- in five years all Indigenous four year olds in remote Indigenous communities will have access to a quality early childhood program.

The government is working in partnership with the states and territories to ensure that early childhood education and care services are high quality, accessible and affordable and assist parents to balance the challenges of work and family life. The government is also working closely with key stakeholders to position these services with other forms of support for children such as health programs, child protection and parental support for which policy responsibility rests with other agencies.

The government is targeting critical factors that have an impact on the lives of children including social inclusion, social disadvantage and educational opportunity by working alongside state and territory governments to develop the draft National Early Childhood Development Strategy which will be presented to COAG in July 2009. The National Strategy will embrace a child centred perspective and identify the early childhood development outcomes that Australian governments are seeking to achieve for children by 2020.

In 2009–10, the department will progress the following key government initiatives in an integrated manner:

- Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.
- Early Years Learning Framework.
- National Quality (Reform) Agenda.
- New Early Learning and Care Centres.
- Children and Family Centres.

To support the Universal Access commitment the department is developing bilateral agreements with individual states and territories. These agreements will specify the state or territory's planned approach to the delivery of the commitment.

The Universal Access to quality early childhood education initiative will ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood education, delivered by university qualified early childhood teachers, for a minimum of 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year in the year before formal schooling by 2013. The table below illustrates the expected increase in preschool participation rates over the forward years.

Trend projection 2.1: Estimated proportion of children in the year before formal school using state government funded and/or provided preschool services.

	2007–08 Benchmark	2008–09 Projection	2009–10 Projection	2010–11 Projection	2011–12 Projection	2012–13 Projection
Participation ^{2,3}	70%	71%	73%	75%	83%	95% ⁴
Indigenous participation ⁵	58%	59%	62%	66%	78%	95%

The department will also be working in consultation with state and territory governments and early childhood experts and educators to develop the Early Years Learning Framework to ensure it is a world class, evidenced-based document. The framework is a key component of the government's National Quality Agenda. It will underpin universal access to early childhood education and be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

To help improve the access to the quality services the department will deliver the 38 priority sites announced for the New Early Learning Centres with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders and work towards the establishment of the 35 Children and Family Centres.

The details of how the department provides support for these and other initiatives is summarised under programs 1.1 to 1.3 described below.

² Proportion of residential population using state government funded and/or provided preschool services in the year before full-time school. Source: *2009 Report on Government Services*.

³ These projections represent a proportional increase of the gap between participation in 2007–08 and 95 per cent participation in 2012–13, based on the proportion of total funding available in each year. They do not represent targeted projections as agreed with states and territories as the bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and states and territories are still being negotiated.

⁴ Participation in preschool in Australia is voluntary. Given this, a national participation rate of 95 per cent is considered to equate to universal access.

⁵ DEEWR estimate based on a projection from 2007 National Preschool Census.

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Table 2.1A: Budgeted Expenses and Resources for Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Improved access to quality services that support early childhood learning and care for children through a national quality framework, agreed national standards, investment in infrastructure, and support for parents, carers, services and the workforce	2008-09 Revised budget	2009-10 Budget
	\$'000	\$'000
Outcome 1 Totals by Appropriation type		
Administered Expenses		
Ordinary Annual Services (Appropriation Bill No. 1)	388,062	432,232
Other Services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)	50,267	-
Special Appropriations	3,105,997	3,093,044
Special Accounts	-	-
Departmental expenses		
Ordinary Annual Services (Appropriation Bill No. 1)	103,439	86,461
Revenues from Independent Sources (Section 31)	-	-
Special Accounts	-	-
Expenses not requiring Appropriation in the Budget year	292	292
Total expenses for Outcome 1	3,648,057	3,612,029
	2008-09	2009-10
Average staffing level (number)	489	467

Contributions to Outcome 1

Program 1.1: Support for the Child Care System

Program objective

To improve access to quality services that support early childhood education and care through the provision of support for child care services. The program helps families to participate in the social and economic life of the community it:

- promotes and supports quality child care
- assists services to improve access and inclusion for children and families with special and/or additional needs
- provides professional support to build the capacity of the child care sector
- supports the sustainability of child care for all Australian children and families including in areas and/or under circumstances where services would not otherwise be available
- develops, maintains and disseminates information to assist families to make informed decisions about child care and the related support programs and services provided or funded by the government.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) that measures the health and development of children in a geographical area is being rolled out nationally to determine how children in a community are growing compared with other children around Australia. The index provides a 'snapshot' of all children in a community and does not report individual children's performance. This means that in the future, governments and community organisations can target communities that need extra help to improve the wellbeing and school readiness of children.

The effectiveness KPIs listed in Table 2.1.1 provide details on the trend in the number of children with additional needs using government approved child care services. This is seen as a good measure of the overall effectiveness of access to quality child care and early learning services, as families with children from the target groups identified often find it more difficult to access child care that is appropriate to their special needs. Table 2.1.1 provides further information on the number of services.

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Administered items

- *Child Care Services Support*—the main sub-elements of this administered item include:
 - Community Support—delivers improved access to child care through support for establishment of new services and maintenance of services especially in areas where the market would otherwise fail to provide child care services.
 - Child Care Quality Support—aims to ensure that children in care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that will foster all aspects of their development and promote quality care for all children in approved Australian child care services.
 - Inclusion and Professional Support—promotes and maintains high quality care and inclusion for all children in eligible child care services, by increasing the capacity of the service and the skill level of carers and staff through the provision of professional development and inclusion support.
 - Program Support—supports the development, maintenance and dissemination of information to assist families to make informed decisions about child care and the related support programs and services provided or funded by the government. A range of products and services are funded to assist parents and service providers.
- *Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance*—provides eligible parents with extra help with the cost of approved child care while undertaking activities such as job search, work, study or rehabilitation to help them to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Table 2.1.1: Administered expenses and key performance indicators for Program 1.1

	2008-09 Revised budget	2009-10 Budget	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Administered item expenses (\$000)					
Annual Administered Expenses:					
<i>Ordinary Annual Services (Appropriation Bill No.1)</i>					
Child Care Services Support	332,730	376,074	339,303	338,600	353,643
Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance	54,332	53,158	52,779	53,849	53,849
<i>Other Services (Appropriation Bill No.2)</i>					
Child Care Services Support	50,267	-	-	-	-
Total program expense	437,329	429,232	392,082	392,449	407,492

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	2008 Revised budget	2009 Budget	2010	2011	2012
Quantity for key deliverables					
Child Care Services Support					
Number of child care services receiving sustainability assistance	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Number of child care services receiving establishment assistance	250	250	250	250	250
Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance					
Number of children in child care	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Number of parents assisted	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Program effectiveness					
Trend in the number of children with additional needs using government approved child care services—by target group:					
• Children with disability	22,100	22,100	22,100	22,100	22,100
• Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander children	14,300	14,300	14,300	14,300	14,300
• Children from non-English backgrounds	84,500	84,500	84,500	84,500	84,500
• Total number of children with additional needs using government approved child care services ⁶	116,000	116,000	116,000	116,000	116,000

⁶ The trend in the number of Commonwealth funded child care places that are used for work-related purposes has been removed as a KPI as the data for this measure is no longer available. As well, access by families with children from the target groups identified above is seen as a more effective measure; as these families often find it more difficult to access child care that is appropriate to their special needs.

Program 1.2: Child Care Fee Assistance

Program objective

To assist parents with the cost of child care. Through the provision of this assistance more families are able to access quality services that support early childhood learning and care.

The effectiveness indicator in Table 2.1.2 provides details on the child care out-of-pocket expenses as a proportion of weekly disposable income after child care subsidies. This is seen as a good measure of overall affordability of access to quality services that support early childhood learning and care. Table 2.1.2 provides further information on the number of families and children assisted.

Administered items

- *Child Care Benefit (CCB)*—assists parents with the cost of approved and registered child care. The payment of CCB varies depending on family income, the number of children in care, the hours of care, and the type of child care used. This means families who are on the lowest incomes and use approved services, receive the highest rate of CCB.
- *Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR)*—is an additional payment to help families with their out-of-pocket costs after CCB has been received. This assistance will help eligible working parents with the cost of child care, if they are using approved child care for work-related reasons. Out-of-pocket expenses are child care fees for approved care not already covered by CCB.

Table 2.1.2: Administered expenses and key performance indicators for Program 1.2

	2008-09 Revised budget	2009-10 Budget	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Administered item expenses (\$000)					
Annual Administered Expenses:					
Special Appropriations:					
<i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i>					
Child Care Benefit	1,983,917	2,021,232	2,067,620	2,108,999	2,159,571
Child Care Tax Rebate	1,122,080	1,071,812	1,097,563	1,120,596	1,148,628
Total program expense	3,105,997	3,093,044	3,165,183	3,229,595	3,308,199

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	2008 Revised budget	2009 Budget	2010	2011	2012
Quantity for key deliverables					
Child Care Benefit					
Number of approved child care places available	701,400	713,200	713,200	713,200	713,200
Number of eligible approved services	11,600	11,700	11,700	11,700	11,700
Number of eligible families using approved child care services	603,500	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
Percentage of families using approved child care services and receiving Child Care Benefit	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Percentage of families claiming maximum rate Child Care Benefit	32%	33%	33%	33%	33%
Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR)					
Number of families receiving CCTR	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
Program effectiveness					
Child care out-of-pocket expenses as a proportion of weekly disposable income after child care subsidies (based on one child in full-time long day care depending on income up to \$100,000 per annum)	10 to 14%	10 to 14%	10 to 14%	10 to 14%	10 to 14%

Program 1.3: Early Childhood Education

Program objective

To improve access to quality and nationally consistent early childhood education programs delivered in a diversity of settings, including through preschool and child care, to support optimal child development in the early years and prepare children for formal schooling irrespective of where they live⁷.

The effectiveness indicators listed in Table 2.1.3 provide details on the preschool participation rates of all children (including Indigenous children). An increase in the participation rate is expected as a result of the Universal Access initiative.

Linked to: Treasury's Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs)—refer to Budget Paper 3 (Australia's Federal Relations) which includes SPP arrangements with the states and territories.

⁷ The Indigenous Education Program funding of \$12 million per annum for preschools under the *Indigenous (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* will provide assistance to early education providers to ensure access for Indigenous children. The Indigenous Education Program is reported under Outcome 2.

Administered items

- *Universal Access*—aims to improve access and the quality and national consistency of early childhood education programs delivered in a diversity of settings, including through preschool and child care, to support children’s development in the early years and prepare children for formal schooling irrespective of where they live. It provides funding to support the reforms needed to achieve universal access to quality early childhood education by 2013, for example to reduce the barriers to access especially for Indigenous and other disadvantaged children, improve quality and information, increase the average weekly hours of early childhood education programs, and foster service integration.
- *New Early Learning and Care Centres*—will increase the availability of convenient early learning and child care for families in areas of need. The centres will be, where possible, located on school, TAFE, university grounds or other community land. The commitment is a central part of the government’s early childhood education and child care agenda and includes the provision six Autism specific Early Learning and Care Centres.
- *Children and Family Centres*—as part of the Indigenous Early Childhood National Partnership, a minimum of 35 Children and Family Centres are to be established across Australia by June 2014 to deliver integrated services that offer early learning, child care and family support programs.

The government is working in partnership with the states and territories under COAG and through the new Commonwealth-State financial relations to ensure the effective implementation of this program. Funding for Universal Access and Children and Family Centres has been incorporated into the National Partnership Agreements with the states and territories⁸.

Funding for the New Early Learning Centres is provided via the Support for Child Care appropriation.

⁸ *Budget Paper 3 (Australia’s Federal Relations)* includes a consolidated picture of the financial arrangements with the states and territories.

Table 2.1.3: Administered expenses and key performance indicators for Program 1.3

	2008-09 Revised budget	2009-10 Budget	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Administered item expenses (\$000)					
Annual Administered Expenses:					
<i>Ordinary Annual Services (Annual Appropriation Bill No. 1)</i>					
Universal Access	1,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Total program expense	1,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000

	2008 Revised budget	2009 Budget	2010	2011	2012
Quantity for key deliverables					
Universal Access to Preschool (NP)					
Key performance indicators for this item are still being developed	During 2009 the department will be developing bilateral agreements with individual states and territories. These agreements will specify the state or territory's planned approach to the delivery of the commitment. KPIs will be developed once these agreements are finalised.				
Program effectiveness					
Preschool participation rates of all children ^{9, 10}	70%	71%	73%	75%	83%
Indigenous children preschool participation rates ¹¹	58%	59%	62%	66%	78%

⁹ These performance indicators will depend on state and territory implementation of the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education.

¹⁰ Based on Report on Government Services 2009.

¹¹ DEEWR estimate based on a projection from 2007 National Preschool Census.

Table 2.1B: Performance information for departmental outputs for Outcome 1

Performance Indicator	2009–10 Estimate
Program Management	
<i>Quality</i>	
Payments are made in accordance with approved timelines	All programs to meet relevant administrative targets set by quality assurance processes in DEEWR
Payments made are based on calculations which are accurate and in accordance with approved guidelines	All programs to meet relevant administrative targets set by quality assurance processes in DEEWR
High quality Ministerial replies as measured by the level of satisfaction of Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary with the quality and timeliness of the replies	Qualitative evaluation of satisfaction using feedback from the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary
Services provided by Australian Government agencies (e.g. Centrelink) satisfy performance requirements	DEEWR requirements met
Policy Services	
<i>Quality</i>	
High quality policy advice as measured by the level of satisfaction of Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary with the quality and timeliness of policy advice	Qualitative evaluation of satisfaction using feedback from the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary
High quality research and evaluation reports as measured by the level of satisfaction of Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary with the quality and timeliness of the reports	Qualitative evaluation of satisfaction using feedback to the Secretary from Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary
Research activities are completed according to plan	At least 90 per cent completed to plan