



Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia



*Caring for the future growing up today*

# Early Childhood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Everybody's Business

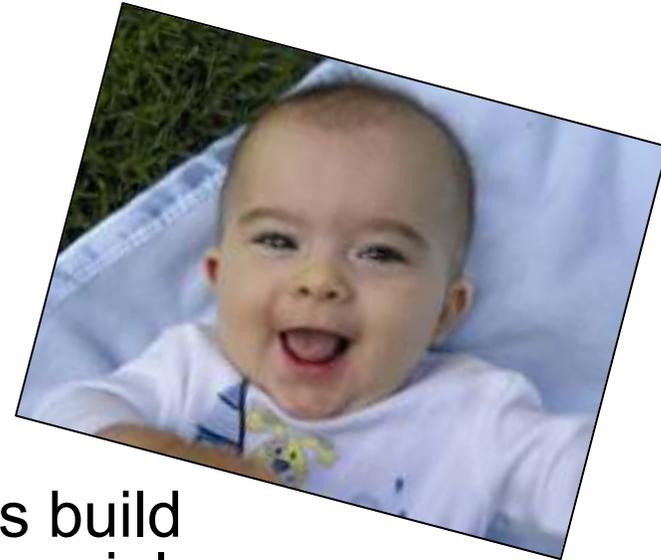
## Independent Commissioner

- Report directly to Parliament
- Advocate for all children and young people
- Listen to, learn from and act on the views of children and young people
- Influence laws, programs and services



## Early years

- Most critical period for development 0 -6 years
- Children's early interactions, relationships and attachments build their foundations for life-long social functioning and learning
- A US study suggests a return to society of more than \$US16 for every tax dollar invested in its early care and education program



## **WA falling behind**

- Australia ranked 23rd out of 25 OECD countries that were compared to set benchmarks for offering a minimum standard of childhood services
- WA is currently 94 maternal health nurses short of meeting the basic health needs of new born children
- Only 5 Aboriginal child health nurses are employed in the whole of WA, 2 of whom are located in regional areas



## Regional areas

- Services and support particularly necessary in regional communities
- More activities for children and young people of all ages
- Need for quality child care
- Committed funding and collaboration toward developing viable services and programs



## Coordination

- Services fragmented, ad hoc and inefficient
- Multiple government and non-government organisations provide programs for children
- Need for new models of collaboration and service delivery
- Follow interstate examples to establish direction



## **Plan for the future**

- **Office of Early Childhood** to be established in WA
- **Early Childhood Plan**, to provide a framework for the way forward
- Develop a set of agreed outcomes for children across agencies, which would be measured at a local level
- Bring cohesion, coordination and vastly improved economic efficiencies



## **Funding models**

- Examine ways to provide funding to issues rather than departments
- Encourage the Department of Treasury and Finance to consider combined budget bids
- Introduce a requirement for Departments to provide combined reports or updates
- Directors to have an element of their performance agreements associated with demonstrating outcomes achieved as a result of collaboration



## Measuring investment

- Develop a **WA Outcomes Report for Children and Young People**.
- A systematic approach would enable the State Government to determine where it should direct its resources to obtain maximum effect
- A monitoring framework is an integral part of an effective childhood agenda.



## **Time to act**

- The health and wellbeing of our children is paramount and cannot be put off
- Close the gap between what we know and what we do
- Time to take action for the future and wellbeing of our children



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## Contact Us

Level 22

221 St Georges Terrace

PERTH WA 6000

T: (08) 6213 2297

Country freecall: 1800 072 444

F: (08) 6213 2220

E: [info@ccyp.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@ccyp.wa.gov.au)

[www.ccyp.wa.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au)



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