

**Media Release**

Thursday 20 June 2019

## **New research of universal early childhood education in the year before school reveals significant benefits to the nation**

An Australian-first study reveals that investment in early childhood education demonstrates the potential for more children and families to live healthier, happier and more productive lives, boosts productivity and increases workforce participation.

'A Smart Investment for a Smarter Australia', commissioned by The Front Project and conducted by PwC, analysed the benefits of early learning in the year before school.

The findings showed that "for every dollar invested into quality early childhood education, Australia receives \$2 back over a child's life". Through universal access to quality education in the year before school, benefits also include better overall health and wellbeing for children, families being able return to work or increasing their hours of work, educational achievement and a more educated workforce.

ECMS Chief Executive Officer – and member of The Front Project – Kim Bertino attended the launch of this report today in Melbourne. Ms Bertino says "These crucial findings contribute to an evidence base that allows us to continue our work towards a financially sustainable and scalable organisation – and increase the impact we have on positive outcomes for children, particularly before they start school."

"The Front Project's Vision, *All Australian children are thriving from the start and driving our future prosperity*, strongly aligns with ECMS' renewed Vision – launched in May 2019 – *for every child to realise their right to a strong foundation for lifelong success*".

Chief Executive Officer of The Front Project, Jane Hunt, said "We all want our children to be more and have more than we had, and this report demonstrates that early learning is a vital part of making this possible."

"This data highlights the importance of governments committing to ongoing funding for the National Partnership Agreement. The report also highlights the need to address the variability of quality in early childhood education."

Ninety-eight per cent of ECMS' services are currently 'Meeting' or 'Exceeding' the National Quality Standard compared to the national figure of 79 per cent. "This new research demonstrates a necessity to ensure every child has the right to access a high quality early childhood program that enhances their learning and development," Ms Bertino said.

PwC Chief Economist Jeremy Thorpe said "As an employer, we are hiring people with inquisitiveness and creativity. We are beneficiaries of early childhood education – collectively, business benefits from an educated society."

This report is the beginning of a journey and we look forward to working with The Front Project and following the outcomes of this study to improve quality and care and create positive change in Australia's early childhood education system.

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