



## System Change – the Victorian Perspective

The Early Years: From Research to Policy Practice Seminar

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## System Change – the Victorian Perspective

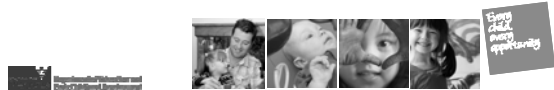
Presentation outline:

- Victorian Reform
- National Reform
- Bringing it together for children and families



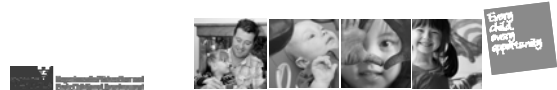
## Recent Organisational Changes within the Department

- A new Office for Children and Portfolio Coordination
- A new Deputy Secretary
- A new Executive Director
- A continued commitment to early childhood development



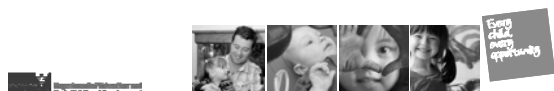
## Our challenges

- Rate and pace of change in early childhood development is unprecedented
- Fundamental transformation of infrastructure, service coordination, and workforce are at the core
- Cultural change is significant and requires time and support
- A challenging time – pushing all of us to be innovative, flexible and creative about meeting those challenges



## An approach built on partnerships

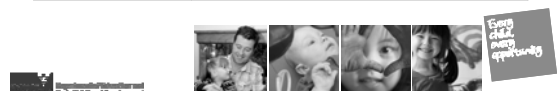
- Collaborations and partnerships particularly with local governments, communities, non government organisations and families are crucial
- Key formal examples:
  - Victorian Children's Council
  - Early Childhood Development Advisory Group
  - A Municipal Association of Victoria / DEECD Partnership Agreement



## Strong case for early years investment

In Victoria, the importance of investing in the early years is well accepted

	<i>The evidence tells us that:</i>
Health, Development, Learning and Wellbeing	Human brain development is most rapid around birth to three years of age and increasingly becomes hard wired over early childhood
Human Capital / Productivity	To be internationally competitive we will need a greater proportion of high skilled workers
Disadvantage and Social Inclusion	The effects of disadvantage are evident at birth and accumulate each year without intervention
Labour Market Participation	It is now a reality that most parents need to work and that most children over three years of age are cared for outside the home



## Context of substantial reform

- Release of the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* (2008) following the creation of DEECD
- The Blueprint builds on *Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood* (2007) and the *Blueprint for Government Schools* (2003)
- A new Commonwealth-State context aligns policy and effort in key areas nation-wide



## Blueprint overview

### Vision

Every young Victorian thrives, learns and grows to enjoy a productive, rewarding and fulfilling life, while contributing to their local and global communities

### Goals (early years)

1. All Victorian children will have the best start in life to achieve optimal health, development and wellbeing
2. By the time Victorian children start school they will be ready to learn at school and schools will be ready for them



## Blueprint priorities and key actions

**Key priority:** *Improve outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians*

### Victoria has:

- Continued to strengthen Municipal Early Years Plans
- Supported the most needy families to receive an enhanced MCH service
- Provided free kindergarten to 4 year-old children in low-income families
- Initiated Best Start partnerships in 30 communities

### Through the Blueprint, Victoria is:

- Rolling out an additional 1,000 places for children with a disability or developmental delay
- Providing free kindergarten to 3 year-old children known to child protection
- Supporting up to 2,000 vulnerable families to promote the home as a positive learning environment



## Blueprint priorities and key actions

**Key priority:** *Integrate services for children and families*

### Victoria has:

- Committed funding for 95 children's centres across the state
- Funded kindergarten programs in child care centres
- Introduced scholarships for kindergarten teachers in child care centres

### Through the Blueprint, Victoria is:

- Developing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Introducing Transition Learning & Development Statements for each child entering school



## Blueprint priorities and key actions

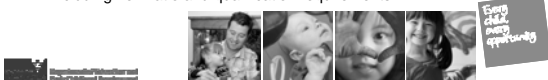
**Key priority:** *Increase access to high-quality early childhood health, education and care services*

### Victoria has:

- Responded to the baby boom through substantial new funding
- Improved the pay and career structure for kindergarten teachers

### Through the Blueprint, Victoria is:

- Rolling out the revised Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Key Ages and Stages Activity Framework
- Developing an early childhood workforce strategy
- Introducing new kindergarten and child care quality regulations, including new ratio and qualification requirements



## A Case Study of System Change at the Local Level: Early Start Kindergarten for 3 year old children known to child protection

- Funding for 5 hours per week at no cost
- Challenge:
  - a particularly vulnerable group
  - "finding" these children is difficult for services
  - accessing kindergarten can be difficult for families/case workers
  - respecting privacy is crucial
- What we are doing in collaboration with our partners:
  - building on existing partnerships to form Early Start Kindergarten Partnerships to identify children and link them to quality kindergarten programs in a non-stigmatising way
  - forging a new way of working out of our existing strong relationships



## Victoria is well placed

- Blueprint provides clear direction - building on significant progress
- Vibrant and innovative local partners
- Blueprint provides a common reference for ongoing conversations
- Continued collaboration is the key to success



## National Reform

*The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed:*

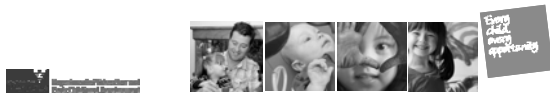
1. Universal access to 15 hours of quality kindergarten
2. National Early Childhood Development Strategy
3. Quality Reforms
  - Early Years Learning Framework
  - Regulation Impact Statement consultation



## National Reform

### 1. Universal access to 15 hours of quality kindergarten

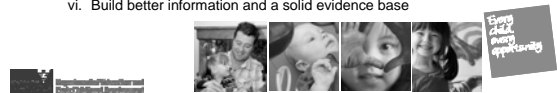
- Agreed between the respective Ministers in June 2009
- Includes achievements by 2013 of:
  - i. Universal access to a 15 hour kindergarten program
  - ii. 95% participation for disadvantaged children
  - iii. 95% participation for indigenous children



## National Reform

### 2. National Early Childhood Development Strategy

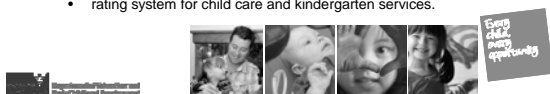
- Architecture for comprehensive and coordinated reform
- Further areas of work, are to:
  - i. Strengthen universal maternal, child and family health services
  - ii. Support for vulnerable children
  - iii. Communicate the importance of early childhood
  - iv. Improve early childhood infrastructure
  - v. Strengthen the workforce
  - vi. Build better information and a solid evidence base



## National Reform

### 3. Quality Reforms

- Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
  - Victoria has led on this work nationally – implementation to commence shortly on the 0-8 Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Regulation Impact Statement consultation
  - the introduction of a national quality ratings system
  - streamlined regulation arrangements
  - rating system for child care and kindergarten services.



## Bringing it together around children and families

- Blueprint provides clear direction - building on significant progress
- Central to our success, will be a focus on children and families
- At the state level this means partnerships with communities and services

