

## **Early Childhood Development Expert Reference Panel meeting Communique, 4 April 2017**

---

**The third meeting of the Expert Reference Group was held on Tuesday 4 April 2017.**

The meeting focused on elements of the Plan and reached broad agreement on key aspects.

### **The strategy is an investment partnership across the sector: governments and the non-government sector**

The Strategy will be a powerful statement on the goals we have for all our children.

The OECD has said that the single greatest thing Australia could do to improve economic development is invest in early childhood. The Plan will be framed as an investment into human capital that will provide social and economic returns.

Governments already invest significant sums in services and supports for growing families, we need to work collaboratively and transparently to ensure this investment is getting the best returns and meeting the needs of Territory families.

The Strategy aims to portray a shared understanding of our aims and measures of success.

### **The power of early intervention and prevention**

The Plan is an opportunity to highlight the importance of getting the beginning right to have a transformative impact on people's lives.

All parents need quality, caring services and guidance to support them from before their baby is born. Support needs to be at the right time and in the right place for each family. Culturally responsive, non-judgemental staff and services will assist families to access the services they need.

Some children and families will have their futures transformed to the positive through the right support. For some families that may be a single event while for others longer ongoing care and services might be needed, especially if children or families live with disabilities or chronic stress in their lives such as mental illness.

### **Building on success and focusing on our strengths**

The ERP members have also discussed the strengths and resilience of Territory families. The Territory is a great place to raise children. We have many excellent education and childcare facilities and strong and accessible health services. This Plan will help us to identify where and how we can achieve greater equity to ensure all Territory children achieve their potential. Members are in agreement that targets for improvement need to be set. A greater focus on outcomes for reporting on our services will be vital to understanding how all children and families are benefitting.

The panel is due to meet again in May.