



## Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

### Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA on 13 November 2023: Ms Efthymiades took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard proof transcript 13 November 2023 [PAGE 13]

In relation to: Four-year-olds accessing government preschool centres.

**MR HANSON:** For four-year-olds, then, how many are actually enrolled in government centres. Is everyone just enrolling in a government centre now? What is the percentage, and what is available if you are not in a government centre?

**Mr Moysey:** I can answer the second part.

**MR HANSON:** Is it too hard to answer? You can take that on notice.

**Mr Moysey:** All services that have four-year-olds must provide a four-year-old program. The national law talks about that and says what those requirements are. Historically, the ACT has very high uptake of four-year-olds, whether it is in a service in ACT government preschools or any other service. I think usually we track between 95 and 100 per cent uptake.

**MR HANSON:** In ACT government preschools is that five days a week?

**Ms Efthymiades:** Six hundred hours a year is the consistent national definition of universal access for four-year-olds. I think, Mr Hanson, about 72 per cent of those four-year-olds are in public preschools; then there is another slice that I cannot quantify—sorry, but we can get it on notice for you if you like—in non-government school four-year-old programs; and then there is another slice in the broader early childhood education care sector. Again, though, they are four-year-old preschool programs.

Similar parameters apply for those services to be eligible for the commonwealth universal access money. They must have a qualified teacher in front of the four-year-olds et cetera. We administer it, but we are like a postbox, if you like. We do not control that program, because it is commonwealth money. As Mr Moysey said, our four-year-old uptake is very close to 100 per cent, and some of those children participate in two settings.

**Ms Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—**

There were 3,100 four-year-old children enrolled in government preschool services at the August 2022 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection (NECECC) as published by the ABS in cat 4240.0 *Preschool Education, 2022*.

Fifty-eight percent of four-year old children in the ACT were enrolled in government preschool services. Of these, 31 percent were only enrolled in a government service and 27 percent were enrolled at both a government service and other services including independent preschools and preschool programs in centre-based day care centres.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date: 27/11/23

By the Minister for Early Childhood Development, Ms Yvette Berry MLA.