

# Two years are better than one

## Kindergarten programs in Tasmania

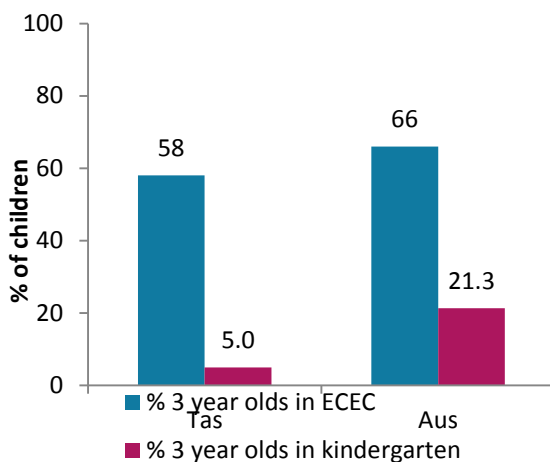
Tasmania is performing above the national average for universal access to kindergarten for 4 year olds. However, a very small proportion of 3 year olds attend kindergarten in Tasmania - although over half of all 3 year olds are in ECEC.

### 3 year olds enrolled in ECEC and preschool

Tasmania has a smaller proportion of 3 year olds attending ECEC than the national average, and only a very small proportion of 3 year olds are attending a kindergarten program.

- 58 per cent of 3 year olds are enrolled in ECEC (in long day care, sessional kindergarten and family day care)
- 5 per cent of 3 year olds are enrolled in kindergarten programs

Figure 1: Proportion of 3 year olds enrolled in all ECEC and kindergarten (Preschool Education, Australia 2015 and ROGS 2016)



### Policy and funding for 3 year old kindergarten programs

Tasmania has some school-based 3 year old kindergarten programs.

Children transferring from interstate and highly gifted 3.5 year olds can be enrolled in 'year before school' programs.

Tasmania's Launching into Learning program is delivered through all government schools. It supports families to be engaged in their children's learning from birth to age 4, and connects them to local services.

Launching into Learning is underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework.

### Progress towards Universal Access for 4 year olds

Tasmania is performing above the national average. Almost all Tasmanian 4 year olds enrolled in kindergarten.

A large proportion of 4 year olds are attending for 15 hours per week (noting data is collected in a reference week and is likely to under-estimate actual attendance across the year).

Tasmania's high attendance rates reflect long history of providing kindergarten programs, generally co-located with primary schools.

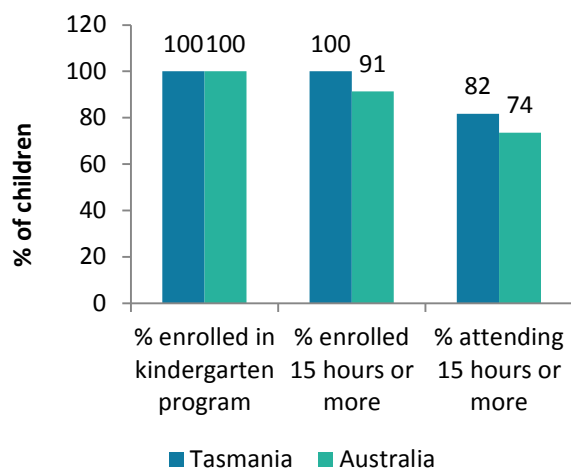
- 100 per cent of children are enrolled in kindergarten programs in the year before school
- 82 per cent are attending for 15 hours or more

## What is kindergarten?

Kindergarten is a play-based, learning-focused program.

In Australia, kindergarten programs are provided for children for 600 hours in the year before school (4-5 years) and are delivered by an Early Childhood Teacher.

There is no national kindergarten program for 3 year olds, but some children attend programs delivered by an Early Childhood Teacher.



## Policy and funding for 4 year old kindergarten programs

In Tasmania, kindergarten is integrated with school provision. The Tasmanian Government uses its National Partnership Agreement funds to make sure all children can access at least 15 hours of preschool through school-based services.

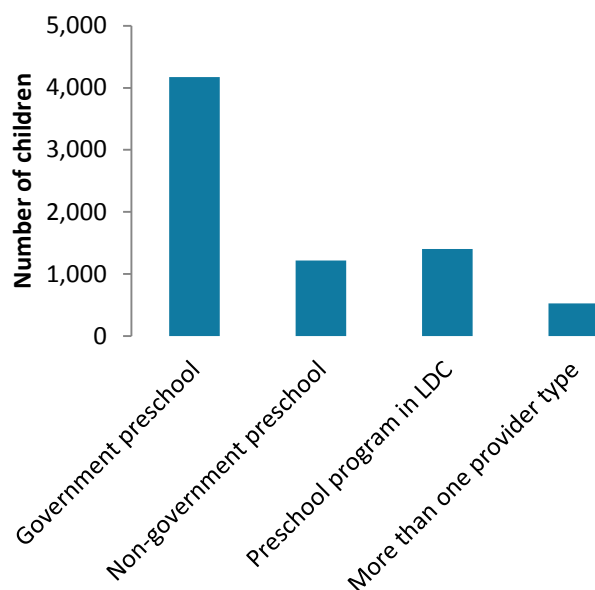
## Strategies to boost attendance of priority cohorts

Tasmania continues delivery of kindergarten through local schools to ensure all children have access. Funding is provided to broader early learning strategies such as the Launching into Learning program (0-4), Child and Family Centres, and Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers.

## Who provides preschool?

Nearly all of children attend government and non-government kindergarten in Tasmania, as it is provided through schools. A small proportion of children attend preschool programs through long day care settings.

Figure 3: Number of children attending preschool per sector (Preschool Education, Australia 2015)



Nearly a quarter of Australian children arrive at school without the foundational skills they need to thrive. A child's risk of being developmentally vulnerable is closely correlated with their socio-economic status, meaning that before they have even started school, these children's chances are more influenced by where they were born than by their own innate abilities. These inequalities often increase as children progress through school.

Access to a high quality preschool program is one of the few proven strategies for lifting outcomes for all children, and evidence suggests that two years has more impact than one, especially for the children most likely to be developmentally vulnerable.

Mitchell Institute's new report, *Two Years are Better than One*, makes the case for preschool programs for 3 year olds.

The report is available at: [www.mitchellinstitute.org.au](http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au)

## Universal Access funding

Total per-child expenditure in Tasmania is around the national average.

The Tasmanian government pays a higher proportion of kindergarten funding than the national average and parent contributions are considerably lower.

Figure 4: Estimated per-child expenditure on preschool (combined Australian Government, state and territory government and parent contributions) 2012-13 (Productivity Commission 2015)

