



MEDIA RELEASE

ELECTION CALL FOR COMMITMENT TO TOY LIBRARIES:**NSW families need equitable access and opportunities to recycle.**

What strategy invests in our children and their families, reduces costs to families, builds relationships, provides more play and learning opportunities and invests in our environment by reducing waste all at the same time? Toy libraries.

Toy libraries in NSW are calling on all parties to broaden the reach of toy libraries in NSW, through funding and inclusion as strategies to support the Early Years Commitment. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/early-years-commitment.html>

Toy libraries do so much more than lend toys. They

- create community and support networks for parents with young children,
- facilitate play and learning opportunities,
- capacity build parents and carers in their role as the child first and most important teacher,
- become a support when there are concerns about a child's development,
- provide volunteering pathways to employment including for migrants and women looking to return to the workforce,
- help reduce the cost of living for families , and on top of all that
- recycle toys and reduce waste.

Toy Libraries are cost effective because they are supported by volunteers and save the environment through recycling by reducing waste. Find attached to this email a full paper on the recommendations for toy libraries in NSW.

Not all children attend or have access to pre-school or childcare. Funding toy libraries through Start Strong Pathways and Brighter Beginnings will bring equity of access to play-based learning opportunities to *all* young children.

Toy libraries align with the Brighter Beginnings strategy to 'scale up state-wide family and child development programs that are proven to make a positive difference in the vital first 2,000 days of children's lives.' Start Strong Pathways' objectives "support educational engagement of children too young to receive a preschool education, support pathways to preschool and promote the importance of early childhood education to parents and communities." Researchers and educators agree that the home learning environment makes an independent and substantial impact on children's development, school readiness and long-term educational outcomes.

Toy Libraries Australia is requesting a one-off funding of \$5.34 million over the next four years to:

1. Deliver **program coordination funding** to allow Toy Libraries Australia (TLA) to provide leadership and capacity building for the 65 existing toy libraries in NSW as they recover from the impacts of COVID
2. Fund a **toy libraries annual grant program to establish new toy libraries**, including in rural and remote communities, and to support the operations of existing toy libraries
3. Promote the establishment of **toy libraries in existing services funded by Brighter Beginnings** as part of the Early Years Commitment^[3]
4. Provide a subsidy so that 5,000 families who are struggling with the cost of living and in receipt of a **concession card, can access toy libraries free of charge**
5. Support the establishment of **free Toy Well toy libraries in school-based community hubs for socially disadvantaged children and families, including on migrant and refugee families .**

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^[3] NSW Department of Education. (June, 2022). Early Years Commitment