Call for Submissions into 3-year-old Preschool
Submissions close 28 February 2023

Preamble
The Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care is accepting submissions from parents, caregivers, families, organisations, educators, members of the community, experts, and unions.

You can make a submission to the Royal Commission online or in paper form. Guiding questions have been provided to assist in guiding your submission.

The Royal Commission will deliver two reports. The Interim Report (April 2023) will focus on planning for 3-year-old preschool from 2026.

The focus of this call for submissions relates to our Terms of Reference for the development of universal 3-year-old preschool. The call will close on 28 February 2023.

Submissions on the wider Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission will be accepted until 19 May 2023 – there will be a call with guiding questions for these issued in March 2023.

The Royal Commission is a forward-looking, policy focussed inquiry into early childhood education and care for the future of South Australian children. It will not be investigating past matters of concern, individual cases or family or children's interactions with early childhood services. It will not be investigating questions around individual educators or services or compliance with the National Quality Framework. The Royal Commission cannot resolve current or historic matters of individual access, affordability, or other concerns.

How to make a submission
The Royal Commission is accepting submissions relating to the delivery of universal 3-year-old preschool.

Below you will find some guiding questions that draw upon the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission. Addressing the guiding questions will assist the Royal Commission to identify issues, trends and opportunities. You are also able to make a submission relevant to the Terms of Reference without reference to these questions.

How will your submission by used by the Royal Commission?
The information you provide will help the Royal Commission and will be considered by Royal Commission policy and legal staff. The Royal Commission may contact some individuals or organisations who make submissions.

Will your submission be published?
Formal submissions to Royal Commissions are usually published. For example, the Commission may publish submissions, or excerpts of submissions, in the interim or final reports, as well as on the website. Should you wish for all or part of your written submission

to be treated as confidential please indicate this clearly on the submission form and the Commission will consider your request.

Notwithstanding any request for confidentiality, the Commission reserves the right to subsequently release and otherwise make use of any written submissions submitted during the course of the Commission, where it deems this to be appropriate. Affected persons or organisations will be contacted prior to any such use or publication.

Other ways to make a submission

If you are unable to make a submission online, you can post or email your submission to the Royal Commission.

If you would like assistance, contact the Royal Commission on phone 7322 7034 or email.

Submissions can be posted to GPO Box 11025, Adelaide SA 5001 or emailed to RoyalCommissionECEC@sa.gov.au

Guiding questions

The Royal Commission is asking for submissions specifically about 3-year-old preschool at this time.

Please consider the Terms of Reference and the guiding questions when preparing your submission.

Your submission may include case studies of innovation, best practice, and high quality of which the Commission should be aware.

You may wish to use the following questions as you write your submission.

Purpose and aims

- What should every 3-year-old child in South Australia be entitled to in terms of early learning?

- What should be the central aim of 3-year-old preschool? What are important but secondary aims?

Defining key terms

- What does universal preschool look like to you / your organisation? Does a universal program mean the same program design and service is offered to everyone? How would you define universal?
- (How) should 3-year-old preschool differ to 4-year-old preschool?
- (How) should 3-year-old preschool differ to ECEC currently provided to 3-year-olds (e.g. in centre-based day care and family day care?)

Quality and innovation

- What does high-quality 3-year-old early learning look like? What are the markers of optimal program delivery?
- What does high-quality look like in terms of the amount of time spent in preschool?
- (How) does quality differ for different cohorts of children?
- Where is innovation happening in programming and service delivery? What does that look like?

Workforce

In the context of the Shaping Our Future national ECEC workforce strategy and other recent announcements by Commonwealth and state governments:

- What are the most important competencies for the people delivering 3-year-old preschool?
- What are the highest value interventions to improve workforce supply in South Australia?
- What else should South Australia do in addition to workforce supply initiatives already underway?

- Are there innovative approaches to building workforce supply that the Commission should consider?

Delivery and administration

- What is needed to support 3-year-old preschool? (What would you/your organisation need to do to be able to deliver 3-year-old preschool?)
- What are the strengths of the current SA government administrative arrangements for delivering 4-year-old preschool programs (e.g. funding arrangements, parent fees, choice of providers)? What are areas for improvement?
- Who should be primarily responsible for paying for 3-year-old preschool? Who should share that responsibility?

Supplementary questions (optional)

Methodology for data collection and scenario modelling

As part of its work, the Royal Commission has engaged a consultant to build a detailed model of the ECEC sector in South Australia.

This model will allow specification of the implications (cost, workforce, infrastructure requirements and so on) of different policy settings related to the provision of three-year-old preschool.

The Royal Commission is committed to transparency about what data sources are being inputted into the model, the assumptions that are being made, and the way that the model generates outcomes.

The outcomes of scenario modelling will be published as part of the Interim Report released in April 2023.

Process for building the model

To inform this model, the Royal Commission intends to access data held centrally by Commonwealth and State agencies.

This will be supplemented by data requested from individual service providers where appropriate. Service providers will be contacted and invited to provide input to this process in early 2023, with every effort made to minimise the time required for individual responses.

Guiding questions

In addition to the general call for submissions outlined above, if you or your organisation have insight into questions of data collection and scenario modelling, you may wish to make a response to these optional questions.

The following questions are provided as a prompt for consideration:

- How should demand for 3-year-old preschool be modelled? What assumptions should be made? What evidence could support these assumptions?
- How should the conversion of existing vacancies (in government preschools and long-day care) into 3-year-old preschool places be modelled? What assumptions should be made (for example, about the willingness of services to operate at 100% capacity)?
- What assumptions should be made about how many hours of service can be delivered in a single day (in government preschool and long day care)?
- What inputs should be considered in the development of a costing model (in government preschool and long day care)?
- Does the nature of the preschool program impact on facility costs?
- How should key 'tipping points' for profitability for long day care providers be represented in the model (e.g. the proportion of under 2 enrolments to over 2 enrolments)?