



## ***Australian Education Union - Federal Office***

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21 October 2003

### **40,000 Children Miss Out on Preschool Education Union Launches Independent Inquiry into Access to Preschool Education**

The Australian Education Union is today launching an independent review into the provision of access to preschool education for all Australian children. The Union is launching the review in response to alarming statistics that show at least 40,000 children are missing out on a preschool education in this year alone.

Ms Rosalie Kinson, Convenor of the AEU's Early Childhood Committee says a national participation rate of only 84% of children in preschool education is unacceptable, when there is almost universal recognition of the importance of early childhood education.

"Preschool is a fundamental building block of a good education for our children. About 40,000 Australian children are missing out on this head start to life," said Ms Kinson.

The benefits of a quality preschool education are well documented. Research shows those with a preschool education perform significantly better at school, have better high school participation rates, earn more and are more likely to own a house.

The Independent Review will examine key issues such as the roles that the Commonwealth and state/territory governments should play in ensuring universal access to preschool education, the current barriers that exist and initiatives which would guarantee all children can receive a preschool education.

The Review will be conducted by Ms Kathy Walker, a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at RMIT University, and will be conducted federally through a submissions process. Consultations will be held in all Australian states and territories in the coming months, with a final report expected to be launched in late April 2004.

The AEU is committed to equity and the belief that all children in Australia should have access to high quality, free preschool education. This independent research, sponsored by the AEU, will focus on initiatives that can move the national agenda towards the achievement of that objective.

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