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COMMITMENT TO GUARANTEE PRE-SCHOOL FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN WELCOMED

The Australian Education Union welcomes Kevin Rudd's commitment today to guarantee enrolment in early childhood education for every four year old Indigenous child in remote communities. The commitment was made as part of Mr. Rudd's apology speech to the Stolen Generations.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said:

"We wholeheartedly welcome the commitment to prioritise the provision of early childhood education for Indigenous children.

"The AEU restates its preparedness to work with the Government to achieve the successful implementation of this commitment.

"Ensuring Indigenous children have access to education of the highest quality in their own community is crucial to giving them the best start in life.

"Countless studies show that quality early childhood education is crucial to future learning and educational achievement.

"Analysis of census data by the AEU last year showed that as many as 7,500 Indigenous children are missing out on pre-school or school education in the Northern Territory alone.

"The AEU welcomes the apology to the Stolen Generations as a significant moment in history.

"It marks the beginning of a journey which sees a painful and tragic period of Australian history acknowledged. It gives rise to ongoing opportunities for the process of Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"The Australian Education Union stands in solidarity with the Stolen Generations, their families and communities as they experience, for the first time, a formal acknowledgement of their pain and suffering.

"Beyond today's apology, all levels of Australian governments must further acknowledge and urgently act to redress the significant and unacceptable gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students," said Mr. Gavrielatos.

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