



Media Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Playgroup NSW Launches the Playgroup Collective at NSW Parliament House

Sector leaders, advocates, and community representatives came together at NSW Parliament House on Thursday 16 October to celebrate the official launch of *The Playgroup Collective* — a powerful new alliance aimed at strengthening outcomes for children, families, and communities across New South Wales.

The event brought together passionate voices from across the early childhood and community sectors, united by a shared commitment to ensuring playgroups remain accessible, supported, and recognised as vital foundations in the early years.

Playgroup NSW was honoured to welcome The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC, Shadow Minister for Families and Communities, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Disability Inclusion, Homelessness, and Youth, and The Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC, Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning. Both Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for playgroups and the crucial role they play in building connected, resilient communities.

“Playgroups are more than just a place to play — they are safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces where children build early connections and families find community, support, and belonging,” said Playgroup NSW CEO Emily Caska. “The Playgroup Collective represents a significant step forward in amplifying the impact and advocacy of the playgroup sector.”

Throughout the launch, attendees discussed the unique value of playgroups as community-embedded, evidence-based programs that contribute to a stronger, more connected future — particularly within the context of the Early Years Strategy and Thriving Kids Initiative.

Key themes emerging from the discussion included:

- The importance of a unified playgroup sector to strengthen advocacy, access, and quality.
- The need for greater recognition and support for volunteers and the workforce through training, mentoring, and shared learning.
- The role of advocacy in raising awareness, showcasing best practice, and supporting conversations with government on long-term sustainable funding.
- The value of collaboration and partnerships in responding to community needs, sharing data, and building on collective strengths.

Playgroup NSW will consolidate insights from the day to inform action items for The Playgroup Collective and share outcomes publicly in coming weeks, with meetings to follow with government.

“This launch marks an important milestone in shaping the future of playgroups in NSW,” Ms Caska said. “We’re deeply grateful for the support shown today and infectious energy and passion to ensure

that every child thrives in the first 2,000 days and look forward to working together to strengthen playgroup access and impact across NSW.”

The Playgroup Collective codesign phase comprises the following expert and passionate organisations as well as volunteers from community playgroups across NSW, with membership and governance to follow our official launch:

SDN, EarlyEd, Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, FAMS, Karitane, Waverley Council, The Infants' Home, PNSW Department of Education, Early Links, Lifestart, Health – Cross Cultural Worker, Northcott, Orana ECI, 54 Reasons, STARTTS, Nature and Nurture, STAR, Prosper Project, Prelude Australia, Ethnic Community Services, Noah's Inclusion Services, North Ryde Preschool, Learn My Way, SSI, Department of Education, and Koorana.

To learn more about the Playgroup Collective visit www.playgroupcollective.org.au.

Emily Caska

Chief Executive Officer
Playgroup NSW



About Playgroup NSW:

Playgroup NSW is the peak not-for-profit organisation that helps connect families and children to people and services in the community to positively impact their quality of life in the first 2,000 days. For over 50 years, Playgroup NSW has delivered and linked over 72,000 families to vital services such as parent support groups and playgroups to foster early childhood development, navigate the challenges of parenting and build strong, resilient communities. With 550 playgroups and over 50 peer support groups and parent capacity building workshops operating each week and more than 26,000 sessions held annually, and support from over 500 dedicated volunteers, Playgroup NSW continues to make a significant difference in the lives of young children and their families across the state.

www.playgroupnsw.org.au

For media enquiries please contact:

Janina Amanaki, Marketing Lead

jamanaki@playgroupnsw.org.au

0411 328 012