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Make Our Play Count: An Open Letter on the Future of Playgroups in Australia

As the 2025 Federal Election approaches, Playgroup Australia is calling on all parties and candidates to commit to securing the future of playgroups—one of the most accessible and impactful early childhood programs in the country.

Every week, more than 35,000 parents and children gather at thousands of playgroup sessions across the nation. These sessions are more than just play—they are proven pathways for child development, family connection, and community building.

Research shows that children who attend playgroups are 1.4 times more likely to be developmentally on track when they start school. The benefits of playgroups are comparable to preschool education, with the added advantage of empowering parents in their vital role as their child's first teacher. For every dollar invested in playgroups, the return is estimated at $3.60—a compelling case for smart, place-based investment in our youngest Australians.

Unlike formal care settings, community playgroups offer a unique "triple dividend": they engage children, support parents and carers, and strengthen local communities. They are low-cost, inclusive, and often the only early childhood program available in rural and remote areas.

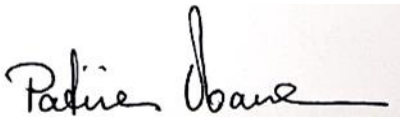
Despite their proven impact, current federal funding for playgroups under the Community and Playgroup Support (CaPS) program is due to end in 2026. Without renewed and expanded investment, thousands of families risk losing access to these vital services.

That's why Playgroup Australia is urging the next federal government to *Make Our Play Count*—by embedding playgroups in the National Early Years Strategy and committing ongoing funding that allows playgroups to grow, innovate, and reach more families.

We call on our political leaders to recognise playgroups as a cornerstone of Australia's early years system. A commitment to playgroups is a commitment to the wellbeing and future of every child, parent, and community they touch.

Playgroup Australia stands ready to collaborate with all levels of government to secure a national framework that ensures playgroups continue to thrive.

Let's make our play count—now and into the future.



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Endorsed by…

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