Standardised school starting age across all states

RATIONALE

- The first year of formal school sets the tone for a child's perception and attitude towards learning in a school environment.

- Without a nationally consistent school starting age, it is extremely difficult (both in a practical and pedagogical sense) to:

  - implement funding and programs for the two years before school given the enormous variances in age and development milestones that the programs and funding would apply to.

  - Measure learning outcomes against global data on educational achievement.

CURRENT SITUATION

- In Australia the minimum school starting age is regulated at the state government level, and the minimum school starting age varies from state to state.

The table below shows the various minimum school starting ages across the country.

- ACA would like to see Australia's Federal and State Governments form a well-informed opinion on what would be the most appropriate standardised school starting age, encompassing the key learnings from other countries with successful Early Childhood Education and Care programs and using them as policy benchmarks.

Cut-off dates mean a child must turn 5 by that date to start school in that year			
State	**Cut-off date**	**Name of first year**	**Minimum age of child when starting 31 Jan**
TAS	1 January	Prep	5 years 1 month
VIC	30 April	Prep	4 years 9 months
ACT	30 April	Kindergarten	4 years 9 months
SA	1 May	Reception	4 years 9 months
WA	30 June	Pre-primary	4 years 7 months
QLD	30 June	Prep	4 years 7 months
NT	30 June	Transition	4 years 7 months
NSW	31 July	Kindergarten	4 years 6 months

RECOMMENDATION

We call on all parties to support:

- A requirement that children must be **at least 5 years of age by 1 January** in their first year of formal schooling.