

The Hon Prue Car MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Early Learning
Minister for Western Sydney



The Hon Courtney Houssos MLC

Minister for Finance
Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement
Minister for Natural Resources

Daryl Currie, Acting Commissioner
NSW Early Learning Commission
105 Phillip Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Dear Acting Commissioner

The creation of the NSW Early Learning Commission marks a new beginning for early learning in New South Wales. We've learned important lessons from the Wheeler Review, and we've passed significant legislative reforms this year because we know systems have failed children in the past. The Minns Labor Government is committed to ensuring that doesn't continue. This means you'll be charting a new course, continuing under modified National Law that will, at least for a time, differentiate NSW from other jurisdictions. We've chosen to lead, to set a higher standard for how we protect children and support the dedicated educators who care for them.

This Charter letter outlines our expectations for the Commission as it takes shape. At its heart, this is simple: children must come first, always.

Children first, always

Parents deserve to know that when they drop off their children each day, their child will be safe, cared for, respected and nurtured. That's what the Commission is here to ensure. Every decision must have the rights and best interests of children as the paramount consideration.

We expect the Commission to act decisively when a child may be at risk, to use its strengthened powers without hesitation when harm is possible, and to focus relentlessly on prevention — creating the conditions in which safety, quality and culture protect children every day.

We know systems have failed children in the past. We know also that systems in our school settings appear to be more effective and robust. Systems you know only too well. This Commission has been created to ensure child safety is at the core of early learning, as it is in school settings.

Lift quality and performance across the sector

The Commission's legislative functions must be delivered with clarity, fairness and integrity — but also with the urgency that reflects what is at stake.

We understand that the vast majority of early childhood educators do the right thing every day. They work with dedication and care. But when operators or their staff break the rules and violate that trust, the Commission must act decisively.

The NSW Government has made it clear that wrongdoing will not be tolerated. We expect the Commission to prioritise high-risk services and individuals; take early, visible, protective action; and apply strengthened enforcement tools decisively and consistently.

Proactive, collaborative regulation centring the rights and best interests of children

Child safety and protection is not achieved in isolation. It requires partnerships that are strong and purposeful.

We expect the Commission to work collaboratively and continuously with key partners, including the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Department of Education, the Department of Communities and Justice, relevant Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as law enforcement and intelligence agencies. These relationships must be active and strategic, not bound by routine practice.

The Commission must be a regulator that shares intelligence early and often to the fullest extent the law allows; that coordinates protective action across agencies; and seeks out emerging risks, rather than waiting for harm to surface.

Lead the nation - and never step backward

NSW has taken a leadership position in early learning reform, and we expect the Commission to demonstrate — through its decisions, communications, data and regulatory practice — the benefits and effectiveness of NSW's forward-leading reforms.

The Commission should mirror this reformist stance in every forum, speak with clarity and conviction, and represent NSW as a jurisdiction that moves first, not one that waits for consensus.

Build a confident, capable and courageous organisation

The Commission must quickly establish itself as a centre of regulatory excellence. This requires a workforce with the expertise, judgement and integrity to carry out the Commission's mandate; a culture that empowers escalation; and decision-making systems that promote consistency, coherence and accountability.

We expect the organisation's culture to reflect the gravity of its work: rigorous, principled, compassionate and unafraid to act.

Increase transparency and earn public confidence

We understand parents want stronger protections and more transparency in early learning, these are exactly what the Commission must deliver. Families must be able to see plainly how decisions are made and what is being done to keep their children safe.

We expect the Commission to publish meaningful information about its actions; improve complaints handling so families experience clarity, speed and respect; and report regularly on sector performance and the state of safety in early learning. Transparency is not optional. It is a core feature of a modern, accountable regulator.

Review

The passage of the changes to the National Law in the NSW Parliament required that a review of the changes commence within 12 months of assent of the amendment Act. The government supported this measure as we are conscious that these significant changes should be examined for effectiveness and completeness. However, emerging issues do not need to wait for that review — we are keen to continue to engage with emerging issues as they arise.

Conclusion

The NSW Government and people of NSW entrust the Commission with a responsibility of the highest order: protecting our youngest children. We've been very clear about what this requires — urgency, courage, professional excellence and unrelenting commitment. Every child should have access to high quality, safe early learning. That's what the Commission is here to deliver.

We look forward to working with you as the Commission is established, and as NSW leads the nation in delivering safer, fairer, higher-quality early learning for every child.

Children first, always.

Sincerely



Prue Car MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Early Learning
Minister for Western Sydney



Courtney Houssos MLC
Acting for and on behalf of
Minister for Education and Early Learning
Minister for Western Sydney

1 December 2025