



**Sarah Mitchell**  
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning

**Don Harwin**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **LANGUAGES UNLOCKING EDUCATION FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN**

Aboriginal families and their children are at the centre of a new \$23 million strategy from the NSW Government to see more Aboriginal children benefitting from an early childhood education.

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell launched the 'First Steps' strategy today in Brewarrina.

Ms Mitchell said education improves outcomes for Aboriginal children and changes communities for the better.

"In NSW, we have seen growth in Aboriginal enrolments in early childhood education from just under 60 per cent in 2016 to 83 per cent in 2019. Our goal is to see more than 95 per cent of Aboriginal children enrolled by 2025.

"The First Steps strategy supports the federal and state government's Closing the Gap targets to have 55 per cent of Aboriginal children developmentally on track by 2031.

"At its heart, it aims to ensure that every Aboriginal child and their family are welcomed and their culture valued and nurtured in all early childhood education services in NSW."

In 2018, the Australian Early Development Census indicated that 42 per cent of Aboriginal children are on track in NSW.

The government will break down barriers to entry for Aboriginal families through an expanded Ninganah No More Aboriginal languages program, which will increase opportunities for Aboriginal children to learn Aboriginal languages in Early Childhood Education services.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Don Harwin said better access to languages helps strengthen communities by engaging elders and children with their cultural heritage.

"Our target is that 50 per cent of Aboriginal children enrolled in NSW early education services have access to an Aboriginal languages program by 2025," Mr Harwin said

"This is an incredible initiative to support the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in NSW and would be a significant contribution to help Close The Gap."

This strategy is a partnership project of the Aboriginal Early Childhood Advisory Group, co-designed with the NSW Department of Education: <https://bit.ly/34xO1BB>

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