

# Media Release



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For immediate release

## SAMARITANS CELEBRATES EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK IN KEMPSEY

Samaritans HIPPY program and Dalaigur Preschool in Kempsey will welcome Luke Hartsuyker MP on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August as part of Australia's first ever Early Learning Matters Week, a national initiative of the Early Learning Everyone Benefits campaign.

For the first time, early childhood services from every state and territory have coordinated to invite their local federal politicians to visit and experience quality early learning, hearing from educators and parents as to why Early Learning matters.

"Early learning matters because it's in these early years before children turn five that children's brains are growing the fastest and are wired to learn. It's when the foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life are established," said Michelle Stocks, Samaritans Community Services Manager.

Mr Hartsuyker will enjoy morning tea and participate in a concert, story time and a local native language experience with the children from the centre. Each child will be planting a seed in individual pots with a tag that says "watch me grow", an activity inspired by the HIPPY book "Changes" that will be read by Mr Hartsuyker.

Australian and international research shows that children who participate in one or more years of quality early learning have improved school education performance, are better able to manage their behaviour and have lower levels of hyperactivity. They are more likely to finish high school and go on to academic studies and more likely to find steady employment.

"Whilst Australia has improved in attendance of four year olds in preschool/kindergarten programs in recent years, we are still in the bottom third of developed countries for attendance in early learning for three year olds and younger," said Early Learning Everyone Benefits campaign spokesperson, Samantha Page, CEO of Early Childhood Australia.

"Families face too many barriers to accessing early learning and too many children are still missing out on the benefits of attending. Samaritans is a strong advocate for equal access to education for all children, with a particular focus on accessibility for those families who are vulnerable, because we know that Early Education delivers positive long-term outcomes for young people," said Ms Stocks.

Samaritans HIPPY program works with children and their families or carers in Kempsey to recognise and support the needs of their children to achieve better learning outcomes through a structured, education-focused program that lays the foundations for success at school.

**-ENDS-**

**Media Contact:** Media are invited to attend on the Day: Dalaigur Preschool with the event commencing at 10am. Address: 1-9 Nancy Ellis St, Kempsey West. Please contact Samaritans Communications team on 4960 7100 for more information.