

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

Support for early childhood boost

Great Southern children will continue to benefit from the A Smart Start early childhood initiative through a transition arrangement which is being supported by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

A Smart Start is a Great Southern initiative delivering community-based early learning intervention for children aged from birth to four years old.

It helps parents to prepare their children for schooling by improving learning development and identifying hearing, speech and other health disabilities at an early stage.

GSDC Chair Peter Rundle said that over its 14 years, including six years delivered by the YMCA through Royalties for Regions funding, A Smart Start had faced challenges in securing long-term funding.

With the support of funding secured through the GSDC, A Smart Start will be delivered under the management of a regional committee until at least June 2017.

“A Smart Start has continued to deliver consistent outcomes to its target groups, helping Great Southern families to set their children on a firm foundation for schooling,” Mr Rundle said.

“Providing a grounding for the school years is a significant step in addressing disadvantage and helps to build strong, cohesive communities.

“The Commission acknowledges the dedicated work of the YMCA and is pleased to support the transition of A Smart Start to the new management model as a step towards building the initiative’s long-term sustainability.”

The A Smart Start Great Southern Regional Committee is chaired by Jo Webb and includes Jan Batchelor, Sue Thompson, Sue Sheridan and Tracey Wilson.

Funding for the transition period is being managed by the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup.



Building partnerships for regional prosperity

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Mr Rundle said bringing the management of the initiative back into the Great Southern would provide both a stronger regional involvement in program delivery and the opportunity to develop relationships with regional funding partners.

He said if funding is not secured from July 2017, the program could be contracted and delivered through volunteer efforts under the guidance of the regional advisory group until a funding partner could be secured.

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