

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Federal Government announces professional pay for early childhood educators & teachers**

7 August 2024

Early childhood providers welcome the Prime Minister's announcement that the Federal Government will fund an initial 15% pay increase for early childhood educators and teachers.

This is a win for a sector that has been struggling with workforce shortages. It means children and families will have greater access to the services they need.

The Community Child Care Association and Community Early Learning Australia, the peak bodies who are negotiating this historic deal on behalf of small and community early education providers, have welcomed this initial investment.

Multi-employer bargaining has been key to delivering this pay rise for early childhood educator and teachers. For the first time employers, unions and the Federal Government have been able to come to the table and solve decades of pay inequality.

The Federal Government's investment will help attract and retain the staff required to grow quality early education services. This is the first step for delivering quality early education system to all children, no matter where they live or how much their parents earn.

This announcement will now allow the final stages of negotiation between the Federal Government and the sector to be completed. Once finalised, this funding will help unlock access to early education for families by reducing critical staff shortages. Small and community services will open new places because they can attract and keep qualified staff by offering professional wages.

### **Quotes attributable to Community Child Care Association Executive Director Julie Price:**

"This is a life changing announcement for our dedicated early childhood educators and teachers. This will mean staff will no longer have to choose between staying in the job they love and being able to pay their bills.

Our sector simply cannot afford to lose any more qualified staff. We are pleased the Federal Government has recognised this urgency by making this commitment now, instead of waiting for further lengthy Award processes.

We are excited that educators and teachers will soon see the benefit, and more children will be able to access high-quality education and care."

### **Quotes attributable to Community Early Learning Australia CEO Michele Carnegie:**

"The Prime Minister's announcement shows the Federal Government recognises the value of early educators and teachers to Australia's families and communities.

We expect this announcement will entice many qualified staff back into the sector. Families will see more places available and children will benefit from greater consistency of care.

We look forward to finalising the new multi-employer agreement so small and community providers can attract the qualified staff they need."

### **ENDS**

**Media contact:** Laura Stevens – 0431 380 471; Louise Yabsley – 0419 249 236

## **Interview opportunities**

- CCC's Executive Director Julie Price
- CELA's CEO Michele Carnegie
- Interviews with early education providers and educators are available on request.

## **Background**

- This announcement will deliver a funded wage increase for educators and teachers in the early childhood sector.
  - Multi-employer bargaining has facilitated negotiations which have led to the Federal Government making a commitment to wage increases for the whole sector.
- The new long day care multi-employer agreement is one way services will be able to access government funding for wage increases to early educators and teachers.
  - Further options for accessing this funding will be available to services.
- CCC and CELA are representing small and community early education employers in multi-employer bargaining negotiations with the Federal Government, unions and for-profit employers.
- This announcement allows parties to finalise the multi-employer bargaining process and communicate to services about how they will access funding for increased wages.
  - All parties are committed to finalising the multi-employer agreement as soon as possible.

## *Federal Government Funding*

- Parties intend that funding for increased wages will go directly to educators and teachers.

## *Existing Agreements*

- Existing multi-employer agreements in the Victorian early education and care sector have improved wages without increasing costs to families.
  - For example: CCC Professional Community Standard and the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement.

## *Workforce Shortages*

- Low wages and conditions have created unprecedented workforce shortages, with one in three staff are leaving the sector each year.
- Workforce shortages are forcing caps on enrolments, preventing thousands of children from accessing early education.
  - Parents can't return to work or take on more hours without access to early education and care when they need it.

## *Access to Collective Bargaining for Small & Community Services*

- Making changes to awards or negotiating individual enterprise agreements was not feasible for small and community providers, who make up 80 per cent of the sector.
- The *Secure Jobs, Better Pay* laws have allowed many providers to access collective bargaining for the first time.