



MEDIA RELEASE

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ECA SUPPORTS THE EDUCATION AND CARE WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN

Early Childhood Australia (ECA), the nation's peak advocacy organisation for young children and early childhood services, joined Thrive By Five and a broad coalition of unions, educator groups, experts, and advocates for children and parents, to launch the *Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan* today in the Australian Capital Territory. The action plan, a Thrive By Five initiative, outlines key priorities to address the workforce shortages affecting the early childhood education and care sector (ECEC).

Talking about the workforce issues, ECA CEO Ms Samantha Page said, 'A high-quality early learning experience for children depends on a professionally qualified and stable workforce that feels valued. The *Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan* is targeted at addressing the sector's workforce crisis.

'The action plan rightly points out the opportunity and need to engage in an exclusive and independent dialogue on the early learning workforce issues at the upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit, and we look forward to collaborating with and supporting the sector-government dialogue.'

Ms Page added: 'The workforce crisis is real, with many services closing rooms, capping numbers, or not being able to give families extra days as they don't have the workforce to deliver the amount of services that they're already licensed for.

'We continue to advocate for pay parity for degree-qualified teachers and a wage increase for educators who hold a certificate or diploma. However, we must ensure that the wage increases are secured and paid for by increasing the childcare subsidy or preschool or kindergarten funding, rather than letting it flow into the out-of-pocket costs for families.'

The *Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan* calls for the government to address the workforce issues as a priority by:

- funding an immediate pay rise for early childhood educators and teachers
- amending the Fair Work Act to allow for a pay review in line with the professional value of the workforce
- progressing implementation of the National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Strategy as part of the Jobs and Skills Summit agenda
- establishing a collaborative process for a longer-term ECEC workforce reform.

Early Childhood Australia advocates for a strong universal platform of early childhood education and care to support all children now and into the future.

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ECA CEO Samantha Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999 or media@earlychildhood.org.au.

Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.