



**Early Childhood Australia**  
A voice for young children

**OUR  
VISION:  
EVERY  
YOUNG  
CHILD IS  
THRIVING  
AND  
LEARNING**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday 31 August 2022

### **WORKFORCE UNDER SIGNIFICANT PRESSURE, BUT COMMITTED TO DELIVERING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN: ECA RELEASES KEY POSITIONS FOR THE JOBS AND SKILLS SUMMIT**

Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) CEO, Samantha Page, will be attending the Jobs and Skills Summit as a spokesperson for the early childhood sector. To inform the positions ECA takes to the Summit, we conducted a short survey of members and followers to consult on key messages and measures and to hear from the sector what it is like to work in the early childhood sector.

Despite the limited lead-time, we received over 700 responses from across Australia, including input from both educators and employers. In response to the question of how they feel about working in the early childhood sector right now, over 70% of the respondents said, 'exhausted' and 'stressed', with nearly 70% of respondents reporting that they feel exhausted on a daily basis.

However, despite the difficulties they are experiencing, educators and teachers also reported positive feelings towards their work: 83% regularly feel 'happy' and many are regularly 'joyful' or 'hopeful', indicating that they find working with young children to be satisfying and rewarding.

'Responses to the survey confirm that the early childhood workforce is under significant pressure, but remains committed to delivering positive outcomes for children,' said Samantha Page, CEO.

'This level of workload stress is untenable and arises from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years, the unprecedented rate of staff turnover, which ranges from 20% to 60%, as well as the number of positions vacant, which are currently at an all-time high of over 6,000 nationally,' added Ms Page.

Our survey respondents also ranked a range of measures to address workforce issues. The highest priority was given to improving **pay and conditions** through an immediate wage increase and longer-term reforms to address gender wage equity and better recognise the value of the work they do. There is strong consensus that early childhood teachers deserve pay parity with teachers in the school system, while Diploma- and Certificate-qualified educators deserve professional wages comparable to employees in other professional sectors.

Some **key positions** that ECA will take to the Jobs and Skills Summit this week include the following:

1. The development of a 'critical response strategy' that responds to the immediate workforce crisis, which could include bringing forward elements of the 'Shaping Our Future' national workforce strategy and implementing time-limited strategies that address the workforce and qualification supply issues.
2. An immediate pay increase—funded by government via payments to employers—to 'hold' the workforce, improve retention and reduce the number of people leaving the sector completely, and to increase wages without a negative impact on affordability for families.
3. Longer-term structural reform through the Fair Work Commission (wage equity review after the legislation has been changed) to address pay equity for teachers as well as for

Certificate- and Diploma-qualified staff against comparable positions in schools and other education settings.

4. A quality jobs initiative: to work with employers to identify and share good practice to improve job security, working conditions, rostering practices, manageable workloads, professional development, etc.
5. Continued government support for entry-level VET qualifications and upskilling programs: to upgrade Certificate to Diploma status and Diploma to Degree status, including streamlined access and intensive training options, where appropriate.
6. Improving VET completion rates and support for students in workplaces, including targeted strategies for specific population groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, people with a disability and those living and working in rural and remote locations.
7. An 'attract back' campaign to re-engage people with early childhood education and care qualifications who are choosing not to work in the sector.
8. Paid internships for students in their fourth year of their Early Childhood Teacher qualification.
9. A community education campaign to drive understanding of the value of the work in early childhood education and care, correct language use and greater respect for the profession.
10. Streamlining access to additional support for children with complex or additional needs to ensure that all early childhood services are inclusive and deliver equitable education outcomes for every child, recognising the profession is calling for more support in this area.

As Australia's largest early childhood peak body, ECA's members include a diverse cross section of employers, employees, academics and allied professionals. We put the rights and interests of young children at the forefront of our work and feel well placed to contribute to the broader conversation and ensure that early childhood education and care is at the centre of any strategies to support broader workforce participation and productivity.

## ENDS

ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999.

For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, click here:

[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media/](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media/)

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