

**19 September 2022**

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## **UWU AND ECA ANNOUNCE JOINT CRISIS SUMMIT FOR EARLY EDUCATION**

**WHAT:** Early Education Workforce Crisis Summit

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 12

**WHERE:** Melbourne

United Workers Union and Early Childhood Australia have announced a joint summit to address the ongoing workforce crisis in early education.

The Summit will involve peak bodies, unions and employers. This is the first in a series of events to be organised by UWU and ECA that seeks to build constructive dialogue and agreed positions.

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, thousands of early educators walked off the job calling for their work to be valued. This was the largest action by early educators Australia has ever seen, and this Crisis Summit aims to build from that momentum for real change.

### **Quotes attributable to Helen Gibbons, Director Early Education, United Workers Union:**

"We hope this will be the start of a constructive dialogue between peak bodies, unions and employers about how we can address the workforce crisis in early childhood education.

"Educators are finally being recognised for the vital role they play, but nothing has changed yet. They are still being driven out of a sector they love by low wages, alongside unsustainable workloads and stress.

"This important summit will identify the historical barriers educators have faced to achieving professional pay and the support they deserve. We know early educators are disadvantaged by barriers in the current industrial system, and by Federal Government funding for the sector which is not tied to wages or quality.

"We will also discuss possible solutions. Thousands of passionate and qualified early educators have left the sector in the last few months alone. It's time to ask: what can we do to bring them back and attract new educators to the sector?

"We must first make the sector a place they will want to return to. That's what this Summit is all about – working to make early education a sector people will actually want to work in."

### **Quotes attributable to Sam Page, CEO of Early Childhood Australia:**

"ECA looks forward to co-hosting a series of the joint crisis summit to discuss ideas and solutions to address the workforce shortage issues. We need urgent action to improve the wages and value that we place on early childhood educators and teachers.



# MEDIA RELEASE



“The early childhood education and care sector continues to be under immense pressure and needs a critical response strategy that responds to the immediate workforce crisis and through this summit we hope to identify strategies to address the immediate crisis, supplementing the long-term measures outlined in the Federal Government’s workforce implementation plan.

“A stable workforce is key to achieving long-term education outcomes for children. Therefore, we must prioritise retaining and stabilising our workforce in order to build a better early childhood education system overall, where every child is thriving.”

## ENDS

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