



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

3 May 2023

WELCOME INVESTMENT IN SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SKILLS

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes today's announcement of \$72.4 million (over five years) to be included in the Federal Budget to support regional and remote service delivery and to strengthen access to professional development in the early childhood education and care sector.

Services provided in regional and remote communities, including those operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations, play a critical role in the lives of both children and their parents and carers.

Children's access to high quality, play based early learning delivered by qualified educators and teachers provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. We know that children who attend a quality preschool program are less likely (by 33%) to be developmentally vulnerable when they start school than those who do not attend; they are more likely to thrive in school and more likely to go on to engage in higher education or vocation training¹.

Samantha Page, CEO said, 'Young children learn in the context of relationships with educators and other children, stability and competence in the workforce is essential if we want to support them to become confident, curious, lifelong learners. Professional development plays a critical role, ensuring that educators have the skills they need individually and as a team to provide rich learning experiences, responsive to each individual child.'

Access to early childhood education and care also supports parents to participate in the paid workforce, particularly women. Research by the Mitchell Institute in 2022² found that nine million Australians or 35% of the population live in communities that can be characterised as childcare deserts – communities where there are more than three children per childcare place, or less than 0.333 places per child aged four or under. The addition of \$18 million in Community Child Care Fund grants of up to \$900,000 to establish a new centre based day care or family day care service in an area experiencing limited supply will help improve access to services where they are most needed.

'At a time when we have seen record staff turnover and the early childhood profession has been under extraordinary pressure on the front line of responding to the needs of children and families following the COVID-19 pandemic; investing in professional development and supporting student teachers to complete their qualifications has never been more important' said Samantha Page, CEO.

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ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media on 0475 554 999. For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, click here: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media/

¹ See for example AIHW (2022) <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/education/early-childhood-education-and-care>

² Mitchell Institute (2022) <https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/early-learning/childcare-deserts-oases-how-accessible-is-childcare-in-australia>

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