



MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

NOT-FOR-PROFIT EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO FUND AN INCREASE IN PAY FOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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The ACT Children First Alliance (CFA) supports the national call for action by Australia's early childhood education workforce for Government to address the current pay inequity due to the gendered nature of the work by funding increased wages in a sector that is critical to both children's learning and wellbeing and the Australian economy.

The CFA is an alliance of not-for-profit providers of early education in the ACT.

Early childhood educators undertake vital work in our communities, supporting the daily learning and wellbeing of over a million young children providing a strong foundation for the next generation of leaders. The National Quality Framework requires educators to meet strict and professional standards, including qualification requirements, yet the work is not professionally valued and recognised.

The early education workforce is predominantly female and one of the lowest paid workforces in the country. The recent 2021 National Early Education Workforce Survey revealed, 96% of the early education sector are women. A critical point that must be considered in any outcomes from Prime Minister Albanese's Jobs and Skills Summit last week.

Co-Chair of the Alliance and CEO of Capital Region Community Services, Mandy Green said "Investing in increased wages for early childhood educators needs to be a priority as we strive to address gender inequality and systemic disadvantage of women in the workforce. A critical cornerstone of supporting women in the workforce, requires the professional recognition of early childhood educators."

The economic and social impact of educators has become more evident through the sector's tireless commitment and professionalism since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As essential workers, the ECEC sector have not seen any changes to their wages and conditions. Investment is needed from Government to continue enabling the broader Australian workforce and to ensure quality early education is accessible to families across our communities.

"We see first-hand the role early childhood educators have in children's lives and we know how much families recognise their importance. We now need all levels of government to do their part to ensure we see an increase in pay and recognition for our early childhood educators," said Simon Bennett, Co-Chair of the Alliance and Executive Manager, Community Services, Anglicare NSW South NSW West & ACT.

The Alliance calls on the Federal Government to urgently fund professional wages for all early childhood educators, through a Fair Work Submission with the Commonwealth providing funding support to increases to the award wage. We call on the ACT Government to advocate strongly for professional wages at National Cabinet towards a united investment across all state and territories.

Co-Chairs Simon Bennett, Executive Manager, Community Services, Anglicare NSW South NSW West & ACT and Mandy Green, CEO, Capital Region Community Services are available for interview.

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About the Children First Alliance: The ACT Children First Alliance (the Alliance) is a network of longstanding for purpose providers of children's service in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), including early learning centres (ELCs), family day care, preschool and outside school hours care. The Alliance was established to develop and communicate a shared vision for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the ACT and to ensure that all children have access to ECEC. The Alliance has ten members: Anglicare NSW South NSW West & ACT, Capital Region Community Services, Communities at Work, Community Services #1, Goodstart Early Learning ACT, Baringa Early Learning Centre, Northside Community Service, Woden Community Service, YMCA Canberra and YWCA Canberra.

For more information about the Alliance visit: www.childrenfirstalliance.org