



Media release

5 June 2023

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New pay deal process can deliver a better future for children and the early learning workforce

A better paid early education and care workforce could be just around the corner, under a historic pay negotiation plan of unity and cooperation launched today.

Early education and care peak bodies will embark on a collaborative process with unions to demonstrate how increased workforce professionalism can deliver the best opportunities for Australia's children and their parents.

Under new federal industrial relation laws taking effect today, peak bodies Community Child Care Association (CCC) and Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) will represent community-run and small providers in the first national application for multi-employer bargaining in the early education and care sector.

"There's nothing more important to people than the care, education and future of their children," CCC Executive Director Julie Price said.

"The application to the Fair Work Commission today will kick start the process towards a professional and better remunerated workforce that can deliver even better results for our youngest Australians and their families."

"Paying minimum wage does not reflect the importance of early learning and care workers," CELA CEO Michele Carnegie said.

"The quality of care and education for our children should not be determined by where a family lives or how much they can afford to pay." Ms Carnegie said.

"We need to attract and keep the best staff for early education and care. Children and their parents deserve highly trained educators and teachers to ensure the best start in life," Ms Price said.

"Many community services and small providers have been locked out of enterprise bargaining because of the cost and complexity of doing it independently.

"In Victoria, we've seen small early education and care services can improve wages and conditions through multi- employer bargaining. With 80 per cent of providers operating just one service, these laws will open up that benefit many more services across the country," Ms Price said.

Ms Carnegie said the potential of the multi-employer bargaining process is reflected by the collaboration across unions, employer groups and the Federal Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations, the Hon Tony Burke MP.

"We all understand these new laws are a unique opportunity for the education and care sector to work together to tackle low wages and conditions," Ms Carnegie said.

"This process is a real opportunity to improve wages and solve staffing shortages without increasing costs to parents," Ms Carnegie said. "Better wages and conditions are the key to ensuring early education and care is a rewarding and valued profession."

ENDS

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Julie Price – Executive Director, Community Child Care Association

Julie Price is the Executive Director (ED) of Community Child Care Association (CCC) and has spent her entire 40 year career connected to the Education and Care Sector. Her experience includes public and not for profit sector leadership with an inspiring reputation as a collaborative innovator. Over the last 20 years, she has been leading and managing professional learning and development projects and programs, including managing the PSC in QLD for over 10 years and the Inclusion Agency in Victoria for seven years. In Julie's role as ED of CCC she has proved herself an exemplary leader and advocate building trust with all stakeholders from government ministers to service leaders to peak body colleagues with her dependability, creativity and authenticity. Julie is purpose driven and displays courage in problematic situations to achieve outcomes for the sector and CCC. This results in productive partnerships that assist CCC in meeting their strategic objectives and amplifying our advocacy voice.



Michele Carnegie – CEO, Community Early Learning Australia

As Chief Executive Officer, Michele drives CELA's strategy to amplify the value of early education, and to raise ECEC quality standards across Australia. Michele is recognised as an influential leader in our sector and is a catalyst for policy reform and effective sector initiatives. Grounded in community values, Michele is recognised as an expert sector advocate with in-depth insight into key issues and opportunities for Australia's vital Early Education and Care sector. She is a current member of state and federal Government advisory panels including: NSW Early Childhood Education Advisory Group; NSW Education Standards Authority's (NESA) Early Childhood Reference Group; Australian Government Department of Education Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group; ACECQA National Workforce Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group, and contributes to the National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy Strategy.



Michele is an Apiary Fellow, where she unites with other fellows around the common purpose of improving outcomes for all children and collaborates to generate the momentum needed to unlock the conditions for critical shifts to the early learning system.

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