

## Brief comments received

No.	Comment
1	<p>The National body ACECQA is a total waste of taxpayers' money. How can you have a national body then have individual state and territory legislation. This organisation does not advise and is only good for the portal for notification (that never seems to be working and is very problematic and not user friendly) to be then just passed on to a specific jurisdiction. Every time I have contacted them, they refer me to NSW ECD for advice. The money spent on this organisation could be put to better use to support the sector. Qualification ratios- these cannot be meet and families are being turned away from enrolling their chn into early childhood education and care. Diploma qualified educators with over 10 years' experience should be counted as an ECT and also be remunerated as one Groupings of chn- having 25 chn aged from 2 years to 3 years of age in the one room or setting IS NOT QUALITY early childhood education and care !!!! Stop over thinking it !! Relating Early childhood theorists to every anecdotal observation does not promote a better understanding of child development all this does is increase the amount of paperwork, as well as time away from the chn added costs to the service to cover the teacher away writing up this is to and appear to look good for A&amp;R Assessors . A curriculum not a framework (still play based) will ensure chn are assessed and early intervention can be sort.</p>
2	<p>Family day care is an area that I believe could make a difference to child care if it is well supported with developed programs and support. As a grandmother looking after two of my grandsons aged 1 and 2 I would appreciate an educational program that I could follow to help them learn and develop . Family day care is more flexible , cheaper, can be set up in most homes and areas and with the right support would fill the gap for people who would prefer their children were close by in a small unit .</p>
3	<p>As a long term advocate of Quality and accessibility to preschool, I have spent many of my teaching years in rural, remote and indigenous communities. I am interested in how the early years have an impact on the wellbeing and education of our youngest members of our society. Children's first teachers are their parents and I feel there is a concern that many children are missing out on initial learning, and come to preschool already disadvantaged. Music, songs and language develop hand in hand and form a strong foundation for literacy and numeracy skills. How many remember, twinkle twinkle little star, round and round the garden, to name but 2. Each culture has their own chants and songs which promote awareness of number, position, sound and word formation. I believe that we need to provide future parents with the skills to parent. By providing a comprehensive and compulsory subject line in high school, where students are taught basic home management, child education and social wellbeing, we reinforce and remind them of their obligations and</p>

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	<p>their own place in the future of our children of Australia. In much the same way as they gain skills to obtain a driver's licence, skills for being a parent are the foundation for each following generation. It is my belief that we need to foster and develop a healthy relationship between parents and their children early in their lives. Then by providing quality care and education in the early years, we can look forward to a positive future. My best wishes for a successful project.</p>
4	<p>Early Childhood Education should be free as will formal education. The move to 5 free days of universal pre kinder in NSW has not been thought out. Currently we cannot get casuals to staff our services let alone increase places to cope with all children having access to 5 days of early education. For too long we have added on short sighted quick fixes to make the sector far too complex to navigate for families &amp; to manage. We need to scrap everything and start all over. Directors, Teachers and educators are leaving the sector due to red tape, overwork, stress, pay &amp; conditions. TAFE cannot fill free course places due to the stigma. This is a sector in crisis.</p>
5	<p>A number of OSHC services struggle with internal spaces that are allocated by the schools (Education QLD). The spaces may be amended as needed by the school. For example, School Halls are normally allocated as licensed space and that can be taken away if there is an event. There are alternate spaces such as library allocated, however, that is not a suitable alternative as there are numerous restrictions to utilize school library. Sometime it could be tough to negotiate with school principals or BSM as they may have upper hand on the decisions. OSHC providers may not have access to record any grievance or a negotiator to mediate between school and OSHC representative. Not to mention, school principals may have limited knowledge around childcare legislation. In the event of rain and hot summers, children and staff struggle to accommodate children in the licensed spaces.</p>
6	<p>We need to completely change the CCS system, simplify it and ensure that it is equitable. At present it is highly discriminatory towards those vulnerable and at risk children and females. The whole childhood sector is in crisis with lack of quality educators, complex administration systems, the emphasis seems to be on systems not looking at outcomes for children. For years the sector has relayed what is happening but no one is listening to us on the ground. The complexity of all systems has become unmanageable and the exit from the sector is profound. The new documents that are constantly updated and increased are stifling children's participation, educators time for being with the children, management from interacting with educators and children to support their learning. I don't have the confidence that government has the will to make the major social reforms needed to save the sector, unless the voices on the ground are heard, systems are simplified and the focus is on the children and educators, the sector will continue to decline. The costs for the sector are increasing exponentially due to the ongoing increase in compliance, wages, cost of running a business etc. We have lost sight of what is important, increasing the size of documents and increasing compliance is causing mass exit of educators, lack of time for children and their outcomes, poor mental health, our modern world is not meeting the needs of our communities. It is frustrating seeing the decline in the sector as have been working in this area for 30 year, our previous systems worked better. The lack of access for children now is a concern as we have 2 cohorts of children that cannot access early learning now until they are 4 which is too late for some children as they need early intervention and/or a safe environment to reach their milestones. The CCS has had a profound backward effect on children and women, it took women's rights back 20 years. Unless we see major changes to children's early</p>

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	learning and ensure that a child's learning is not attached to their parents/guardians incomes, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have full access not limited to 36 hours, the activity test needs to go, staff wages are increased and funded, red tape and paperwork is lessened, the sector will collapse. As an experienced long term Centre Manager we could have a world class early learning system if you listened to those on the ground, unfortunately this never happens. I would love to think that those voices would be heard and children could again thrive in an environment that supports their learning.
7	While both the Federal and state governments have recently implemented reforms in EC, many of these have been of the form of decreasing costs for families, without any scope for services to increase wages, at a time when workforce shortages are already a large issue. Unless this is addressed, long-term access to quality ECEC will not be possible.
8	<p>There appear to be several factors converging to cause a significant impact to the ECEC sectors ability to meet the current demand for quality early education in Australia. Poor wage conditions, combined with significant levels of personal responsibility/liability, are pushing qualified educators into industries that pay better and offer less personal risk. Mandatory vaccines also contributed to the loss of qualified educators at the height of the pandemic. In South East Queensland we are seeing many centre based services operating under ratio exemptions, while others are forced to operate under capacity due to the lack of qualified educators. I can only assume this is being experienced throughout the country to some degree. The requirement for 50% of educators to be Diploma qualified is also a contributing factor to the need for ratio exemptions, not just a lack of staff overall. When we look at the minimum wage standards for the industry, there is little incentive to upskill yourself and gain the Diploma qualification, as there is not a significant increase in wages, especially when compared to the additional workload that the educator must take on. As an individual I have sent my children to centre based services, worked in centre based services and now operate my own family day care business. A common theme that I have noticed is a significant lack of continuity of care experienced in centre based services. The workforce can be very transient in nature, with high levels of educator absenteeism frequently experienced. Increasing minimum wage standards by at least 25%, to be inline with other male dominated fields requiring the same level of qualification, would go a long way towards the attraction and retention of quality educators. This would greatly increase the ability for children to experience genuine continuity of care, generating stronger relationships with families and the wider community, which can only lead to greater educational outcomes for the children as a whole. I firmly believe that supporting educators to experience higher levels of financial security will have a significant flow on effect. The role of an educator is extremely demanding and holds the potential to significantly influence the educational outcomes for all children using any form of ECEC service. A review of family day care specific legislation could also potentially increase availability of care. Currently a registered household is limited to educating up to 4 children under school age, with the ability to educate an additional 3 school aged children. This is regardless of whether an assistant educator is onsite. Registered households could potentially be assessed under internal/external space requirements, in order to establish whether an assistant educator could be engaged to allow for an increased number of children to be educated onsite.</p>

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9	<p>Accessibility to quality early learning is a matter that will not be resolved with money. Yes, the cost of fees needs to be looked at, however, for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, it is not always money that is a barrier. Language, culture, family values and priorities, domestic violence or abuse, enrolment processes, transportation and the list goes on. There needs to be more education for families around the importance of early learning to view it as the step before formal schooling and support to locate and enrol in a quality service. We need to shift the language and begin to represent early learning as more than "care" or "babysitting" and instead a learning environment full of professional and highly skilled and qualified people.</p>
10	<p>The PC should look at: 1. Why in NSW have a higher requirement for ECT and staff ratios than other states, contributing to higher costs. A number of studies have found that the added staffing cost provides no discernible benefit. 2. There appears to be a substantial economic advantage with groups of multiple services, that reduce or eliminate the need for a Centre Director per service. that may be simply a scale / accountability issue. 3. The industry is awash with employees with visas / English as a second language employees. There is no doubting their work ethic, but quality of imparting knowledge must surely be diminished. 4. As the developer/operator of my own service, council rates (including waste removal) increased for about \$2600 PA to over \$13,000 PA, upon opening my doors, for no discernible benefit or increase in services. Why should council benefit so much from my risk / investment when they contributed nothing but heartache and BS. 5. I have been fairly successful in keeping fee increases close to CPI in order to be an available service to the community, but I cannot reconcile how some services close to me charge over \$20/day, as most achieve a "meeting outcomes" standard.</p>
11	<p>All children have the same rights regardless of the ECEC setting or location they attend. this means that the ECEC system should be federally funded to provide child care and preschool where children live such that the AG steps into markets with smaller numbers of children and funds S&amp;Ts / LGA/ other entities to deliver models like the SA Rural Care program; that inclusion funding is accessible for all children who need it regardless of setting or location, that CCS and ACCS is available to families at state government and non-government operated ECEC services, that federally administered incentives established to entice people into Preferred Professions to build the workforce-upskill existing educators eg Health, Allied health, ECEC educators, administrative/leadership qualifications ie no HECS, regional/remote retention incentives such as TAX rebate, home building /purchase incentives [similar to first home buyers] in regional/rural/remote that incorporate a 5+yrs live in place stipulation; these preferred health/allied health professions are incentivised to deliver bulkbilled services at ECECs including child development checks; that Local Governments are funded a Community Development FTE; a national advice centre regarding establishing /operating childcare facilities is established; that family interaction with the CCS system is streamlined eg only required to input their details once regardless of additional subsidies applied for and these are pre-populated through linkages with ATO/MEDICARE/CENTRELINK etc to minimise the documentation/fields families are required to provide; a national campaign is sustained to raise understanding of the importance of parents role as child's first teacher, the benefits of connecting with playgroups, FDC, LDC, preschool and child development checks, supports and early interventions families can access [lack of knowledge is a barrier] (available in multiple languages) ; a funded [including TRT] on entry to 3yo preschool check is established; the Australian National Child Data Atlas includes an AI driven realtime index of relevant interventions /programs [refer VIC Seed-pod in development] to increase efficiencies &amp; quality at all ECECs</p>

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12	<p>I am the Director of a 40 place preschool in Sydney. Maintaining affordable preschool for families, while also recognising the professionalism of our team is very difficult to achieve based on the current funding arrangements. We have an Enterprise Agreement which pays our educators 6% above award. Our ECT's are being paid slightly above award with the introduction of the new Modern Award rates, but these are in negotiation to improve our conditions. Wages account for 87% of our total expenditure. Above award wages are the biggest motivator to us securing a quality and competent team, but also costs money. Funding ECT wages in particular to ensure they receive pay parity to their school counterparts, would go a long way to sorting our affordability and workforce crises.</p>
13	<p>Young children's mental wellbeing is being compromised with the 2 day NSW govt subsidised preschool model . Parents with 4 year old's often seek at least 3 days the year before going to school- this 2 day model means many young children are attending 2 different services- therefore often having to have 4 days across different programs with different teachers and peer groups. This does not assist in building trustful relationships within the child's 1st year of education away from the family, and does not strengthen community cohesion as children move between multiple services. As both an educator since the 1970s and as a grandmother I see these impacts as having lasting negative consequences that become visible in behaviour issues in the next stages of education.</p>
14	<p>Kindergarten Programs are run by ECTs in Queensland. If you are an ECT you will barely have an opportunity or choice to work outside the Kindergarten space because an ECT is needed to claim Kindergarten funding. All age groups should have the right to an ECT. ECTs are leaving to Primary school work because we are better valued and our professional knowledge is shared amongst all grades. Decreasing interest in staff wanting to be an ECT, not being seen as 'teacher' and organisations using ECTs purely to claim funding, is not only detrimental to our mental health but is having an affect in the little people we teach and care for each day.</p>
15	<p>I have a major concern about unregulated school readiness programs being offered by profit driven people either in their homes or venues for children aged 3 years + Evidence shows this is not beneficial to young children's learning and development. And is confusing families around what research based, developmentally appropriate learning through play is. They have no inspections which also puts children at risk. It impacts on early childhood centres enrolments too.</p>
16	<p>Locally based not for profit Family Day Care services operated through Local Government offer an important service to the local community. Family Day Care supports families through an accessible, flexible model of inclusive care, however due to no funding being offered to Family Day Care viability of this service model is becoming non sustainable. To maintain integrity and resilience in Early Education and Care a range of service models need to be equitably supported to provide families with a range of options to meet their needs.</p>

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17	<p>Early childhood educators need to be paid more - they are required to be our children's primary influence outside of their parent(s), and be responsible for SO MUCH regulatory reporting and the safety of children. It's insane that they are paid so little per hour that they can't afford to pay for childcare for their own children, and end up leaving the sector.</p>
18	<p>My experience as a teacher of 40 years experience from years 2 to 12 indicate that the single greatest challenge for Australian education is teaching students to read. Reading is the single most important skill for any student. Without confident reading the educational world is both a mystery and a trial for almost 30% of our students. The issues begin in Early Childhood Education, and we are "doubling down" on the problem by starting students reading far too early. We are setting them up for failure because they are not ready to learn. Play based learning is fine, but the reality is that we are seeing formal reading lessons in Prep classes when students are not ready. Early failure quickly becomes a consistent reality that leads to school refusal, disengagement, poor behaviour and other related issues. Overseas educational authorities have approached ECE quite differently and with much greater success, utilising more play-based learning for longer (not starting formal reading until ages 7 or 8) and using a simpler orthography. For more information, please see the research by Professor Bruce Knight and Doctor Sue Galletly of Central Queensland University. They have travelled extensively, looking at alternative Early Learning methods and have also written many papers focussing on the relationship between ECE and reading success, and ultimately school success. If the Productivity Commission is looking to provide "better outcomes for children and families" an examination of the way reading is approached in Kindy and Prep classes is entirely appropriate and necessary. Of course there are then implications for year 1 and 2 education as well.</p>
19	<p>In relation to Family Day Care: • The Child Care Subsidy hourly cap rate is significantly lower than that of other Early Childhood Education and Care services. This needs to change. Family Day Care is a valuable and highly sought after service for many families and their children, and offers a very unique experience for its clients. The Child Care Subsidy hourly cap rate for Family Day Care should reflect the quality of the service, and its unique business model. Family Day Care is a single-staff service, with educators acting as sole-traders, operating their businesses from their own homes. This comes with its own set of unique regulatory requirements, often more rigid than those of centre-based services, which accounts for high operation costs, burdened by a single owner/operator. Family Day Care educators need to be recognised for the work that they do as valued Early Childhood Education and Care services, and the Child Care Subsidy hourly cap rate must be raised to reflect this. This will enable more families the opportunity to access this service, providing their children with low educator:child ratios, and the best possible outcomes for children's Early Childhood Education and Care. • As a Family Day Care Educator, my own children are considered as part of my educator:child ratio, however, Child Care Subsidy is not applied for them. This significantly limits earning capacity. Child Care Subsidy is also not applied for my own children accessing an external service, during the time I am working, and full fees apply. Family Day Care Educators work extremely hard to operate a professional and unique service. This needs to be recognised and discrepancies need to be addressed. If I were to work in a centre-based care service, Child Care Subsidy would still be applied to my fees, often on top of discounts provided to educators using the service in which they work to care for their children. Why are Family Day Care Educators not be recognised, and instead penalised, for the hard work that they do every day, just because they have children of their own?</p>

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20	<p>Have previously used long day care and vacation and after school care. Staff are paid minimum wages; ratios of children is poor. Nutritional value of meals in school halls for after school care is poor in morning and afternoons. Children are given high fat low cost meals with little or no nutritional value. This impacts on learning and behaviour in the classroom and outcomes in high school and future employment and training opportunities. Centres should more connected with the NSW State Health post-natal services/ clinics and paediatricians for monitoring parenting, maternal/ paternal wellbeing and child developmental milestones.</p>
21	<p>To improve the quality of early childhood education, there are a number of changes that could be made to the sector. Firstly, we need to consider the issue of pay and conditions for educators. There are two options available to us: either we raise pay and conditions to be competitive with the wider economy, or we lower our standards and accept educators who can't find work elsewhere. Another issue is that permanent resident requirements can hinder labour mobility for higher-quality educators. This means that good educators may be unable to move around the sector freely, diluting the incentive for early learning operators to offer competitive pay and conditions. As a result, quality educators may leave the sector as soon as their permanent residency requirements are met, in search of something more in line with their skills. To address these issues, we could allow mobility for skilled migrant workers within the early learning sector and ban non-compete clauses that limit workforce mobility and stifle wages and conditions. In addition, we could establish a centralised recruitment process, operated by ACECQA, to create a national Early Educator Merit Pool. Modelled on state-wide recruitment processes in the education sector, this would use nationally consistent criteria to create a trusted suitability rating, giving employers the confidence to offer competitive pay and conditions to the most competitive workers. States and territories should also work together to develop nationally consistent WWVP certifications, to encourage workforce mobility. Pay transparency is also essential for a competitive market, as it can be difficult for highly qualified educators to identify the most competitive options in the sector. Requiring employers to communicate precise pay ranges will reward employers who do the most to attract and retain staff. Finally, we could introduce portable unpaid parental leave for educators moving between roles in the ECEC sector, and portable national long-service leave for the community sector. This simple action would build on existing efforts to improve interstate workforce mobility through automatic mutual recognition arrangements. By implementing these changes, we can improve the quality of early childhood education and ensure that educators are valued and fairly compensated for their work.</p>
22	<p>Leave off with the "educators" nonsense. We're talking about C-grade students who couldn't get into any other course. They are childcare workers, not educators, and calling them educators is part of why costs have blown out. They wipe children's noses and sing 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands' for a living. That's not education, it's childcare. And frankly, the fact that so many of our children are being raised by those happy-clappy C-grade TAFE students, is part of why we're being dumbed down as a society. At least when children were raised by stay-at-home mothers, many of those mothers were intelligent. Now, all the intelligent women are out working in professional careers, while their children are being raised by airhead childcare workers. The more children raised at home by one of their parents, the better.</p>

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23	<p>Please reconsider the decision that Family Day Care Educators must be first qualified to run a Family Day Care business, when this is not the case for centre based services! This decision will greatly affect child care spaces in the NT as most Family Day Care educators gain their qualifications while working in this unique environment. The decision will make it extremely hard, if not impossible to recruit emerging Educators.. especially in Central Australia where we have a high number of vulnerable young people and families that need to access our education and care.</p>
24	<p>To better support the staffing crisis the sector is experiencing, careful consideration needs to be made in the support of attracting the right people to the sector. Upskilling ECT's is one option, but having Master qualified educators acting as ECT's is not supporting high quality practice when they are coming away with certificates not much higher than a Cert 3 and paid on ECT rates. Having over 20 years in the sector, my biggest fear is the increase in CCS, which whilst it supports families and vulnerable children, has thought been given into how we address the staffing situation to be able to support the growth and development of these children? Until action is taken to repair the staffing crisis, there will be little to no positive change to the quality of care and education to children which in turn affects future generations. Accessibility for families is one thing, but high quality needs to prevail and without high quality educators, you struggle to offer a high quality program.</p>



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25	<p>I am extremely disappointed that the budget handed down by the Labour government did not make provision for an increase in Early Childhood Educator Wages. One of the sectors biggest challenges is the fact that we do not have enough staff. Educators are leaving the sector to work in higher paid roles that do not have the responsibility, compliance or stress that working in Early Childhood Education and Care. Staff have left the industry and earn more in retail and hospitality, two industries that do not require years of study. I know staff who have left the industry to work in administration and are earning more money without needing their qualification. I would like to see the early childhood sector get a pay rise similar to the aged care workers to ensure the sustainability of our sector. Making childcare more affordable for families will be pointless if we do not have enough staff to run our services.</p>
26	<p>It's extremely difficult for shift workers to continue their career with the currently available childcare scheme. Most centres are only open from 6:30-7am to 6-6:30pm. This makes it near impossible to return to work with young children, as often shifts will start at 7am or earlier (be 12 or more hours in length, due to urgent patient care requirements) and may end at 8pm to 11:30pm or be overnight (don't forget one also needs time for commute from the childcare centre to and from work). With two working parents (even if one is not a shift worker, but say commuting several hours to a different city for work), childcare does not meet needs. Not to mention when one parent has to work nights and the other needs to be interstate for work. If you don't have family, the only option is to hire a nanny. However, this means one parent's income is fully eaten up by childcare or does not even cover it (as a nanny is not eligible for the childcare subsidy). This is a huge disadvantage, as returning to the workforce costs the family money or is not viable, because flexible care is not available. The system needs to change to recognise mother's are also doctors or nurses or other frontline works that need childcare, which is open extended hours, that reflect the hours they need to work on their roster. Shift works need access to 24 hour childcare, which is eligible for the childcare subsidy. Until this happens women and those with young families, will continue to be disadvantaged in the workplace.</p>
27	<p>Early years educators have complex roles and shoulder great responsibility. They look after the many needs of children and families and are expected to do it all with a smile. The peak body ACECQA sets the benchmark for education standards that must be complied with and it is the most highly regulated sector. All this and workforce shortages put even more pressure on teachers and educators who are paid little and feel undervalued. They deserve better for the important work they do for without them no one else can work and most importantly, the first five years are crucial to brain development.</p>
28	<p>If you want truly high quality ECEC services, you should be paying to have an early childhood teacher in every room for every age group, not just "preparing" the program for preschool children and the children having "access" a certain number of hours per week. Bottom line is that cert 3 and a lot of diploma trained staff don't have the knowledge or capacity to run a quality program. Having Early Childhood teachers trying to supervise (in director and EL capacity) and bring work up to quality standard is impossible. Stop lumping Early Childhood teachers in with "educators". Go back to having cert 3 and diplomas as assistants with teachers to lead and guide them and give all children a university qualified teacher to actually teach.</p>

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29	<p>As an Early Childhood practitioner with 15 years in the sector I've seen first hand the fantastic contribution Early Childhood services especially FDC make to a community and a family. Children thrive in an environment that ignites their curiosity and offers them similar aged children to grow with. Childhood is a precious time in our lives where we start to figure out who we are and where we fit into this world as well as the impact we have on this world and a couple of generations ago when extended family lived nearby or one parent stayed home, children could play with cousins and neighbours but society has changed. For most families now the adults need to work or have studied for many years and want to work. We've moved away from extended family and so our children now have that community in their ECEC service. A quality ECEC experience for every child, whether that's at home or with ECEC practitioners should be the benchmark, this will equip children for their life ahead and pay dividends in the future for the nation.</p>
30	<p>The cost - is unfairly managed to consider equity of families. Educators need to be acknowledged for the work they do, they're not paid enough for the work they do. They also cannot support themselves on their income. Qualified EC teacher - there is a shortage as no one wants to work because of the paperwork overload and low wages. Not all Services should require an ECT as many diplomas and cert 3 staff are just as capable of providing a quality educational program - maybe those services could be assessed and rated more than the standard 3 years. I live in a rural town and there is not enough child care or preschool places for the children in our town or the local farms. We have 20 children per day and 40 across the week. We prioritise Indigenous children for enrolment but we had to knock back many other children this year, many of those from farming families (who are not Indigenous) but also need a preschool placement start school socially and academically behind their Indigenous peers.. I understand that doesn't match Closing the Gap data but that's what is currently happening. We could have enrolled about 20 more children this year but we had not places to enrol them.</p>
31	<p>95 per cent of the brain is built in the first five years. We need to invest more not less, particularly after the long-ranging effects of covid. Too many trainees are entering the sector and then not being retained so the service can get a new trainee and another 5k from the government for training them. Working towards qualifications should not be counted as meeting the requirements of qualified. There are too many incentives to keep turning over educators; this is where quality can be reduced. Waivers should not be free because too many services advertise without intent to hire. We have many educators that are trained fast online with limited experience. Our ECT' S need to be university-trained and dodgy RTO"s shut down. The training needs to be consistent. We can attract more educators into universities if the pay was worth it. Quality teachers are leaving from poor pay, poor conditions .and even poorer public perception.</p>
32	<p>Early childhood education is crucial to support the critical developmental years of young children. Recognising the learning and responding in a way that ensures all children meet their outcomes can only happen with well educated experienced teachers and educators. From this perspective, we have no choice but to find ways to break down the barriers that limit the accessibility of early childhood education for all children. This is the government's responsibility for the future of the country!</p>

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33	<p>Early childhood education is a vital component of our education system. Research and common sense tell us that in the first years of a child's life, their brain development will create the foundations for all learning and development later in life. Early childhood education provides opportunities for children to be involved in learning experiences that will enable them to have the best start for the years ahead. Early learning centres provide care and education for children, supporting families to continue in the workforce with confidence that their children are receiving care from educators trained in early childhood development. Early childhood teachers, educators with diplomas and certificates all plan experiences that promote learning, encouraging capable, competent inquisitive children to explore and develop in safe stimulating heavily regulated learning environments. University trained early childhood teachers have extensive knowledge of child development they study literacy, numeracy, brain development, social and emotional development , creative arts all designed to support children in learning. Early childhood teachers plan and implement individual and group learning curriculum, mentor educators, research and teach all vital aspects of our education system.</p>
34	<p>Our sector needs quality educators not just quantity. Quality educators know how to build excellent relationships with children, families, peers and community. Our sector needs quality funding for families to access services. Our country needs to stop referring to our sector as child care. We care but there is so much more. The first years of any child's life really shapes the rest of their life. For our sector to support children's wellbeing and development, educators need respect and insensitive to stay in a poorly paid workplace where so many still see us as baby sitters. Families deserve the knowledge that when they drop their children off at a education and care service, their child is safe, secure and their well-being is being advocated for. Currently, so many forums pertaining to our sector have post after post of burnt out and desperate educators seeking advice on workplaces that are horrific. Workplace bullying, improper treatment towards children and peers, and such little understanding of regulations and best practices. It is concerning. We need ECTs and the best at that. So many have to abandon their studies or just can not upskill due to the unpaid practicals university demands. And the practicals are so important!! To produce quality ECTs , we need proper funding of students. I have meet so many amazing and passionate advocates for our sector that can't even imagine being able to continue their studies past a cert 3. The government needs to engage with a diverse range of services rather than dictate what they feel is needed. What works for a small rural service is not the same as large city services. The government needs to relax their vaccination mandates and actually allow services to provide authentic universal education and care. Too many children are missing vital support and assessment because they legally can not attend services. Our policies and procedures relating to immunisation are sound and keep the wellbeing of all in our learning community with great importance. Our sector needs funding for more collaboration and professional development. Even once I have completed my early childhood teacher degree, I will need ongoing professional development to ensure quality practices. This can be expensive and a barrier to quality educators. Our sector needs to work collaboratively with our local Indigenous Australian communities and our local health community We need in-service visits from occupational therapists, speech pathologists and psychologists. Especially after Covid restrictions, the rise of additional needs in children's development and their families is growing and it is concerning. Families are struggling with funding time and are unable to access health professionals, the waitlists for these services in regional and rural communities are appalling. For our children to be able to succeed in all aspects of their lives, they need quality educators, a supportive and collaborative community partnerships.</p>

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35	<p>ECEC is an ESSENTIAL service and every child has a right to access high quality education and care programs. Australia goes to work off the back of the ECEC sector and we MUST invest in our workforce. An investment in this workforce is an investment in all children's futures. Currently the complete lack of trained Educators and Early Childhood Teachers is putting untenable strain on the workforce. Wages are the biggest expense providers face, and there should not be any compromise on staffing due to financial constraints. Similarly, children are not a resource to be profited off. Family Day Care should be highlighted here as a service that is desperate for assistance and viability funding after being left out by successive governments. Flexible education and care programs delivered in homes with small group ratios is an exemplar of high quality and this needs to be given equal opportunity for growth and eligibility for the same fee free preschool offering that other services receive.</p>
36	<p>Early Childhood Teachers are showing to increase the level of professionalism and standards of curriculum implementation alongside pedagogical practice within Early Childhood Education. As of recent, there have been more statistics emerging to the benefit of Early Childhood Teachers (ECT's), however the statistics are often difficult to find, as ECT's are so often leaving their jobs or the profession altogether. The educational community need to be recognising early childhood educators (non ECT's) as having innate understandings when it comes to educating and caring for children. This should be valued and recognised, through better wages and support. However, it must also be recognised that degree qualified teachers have studied rigorously for their degrees and carry with them knowledge and pedagogical ideas that should be respected and not easily tramped over. There needs to be support mechanisms to ensure the safety of ECT knowledge and ensure that where they wish, they are given opportunities to make decisions about the education and care of the children they interact with. Ultimately, this is why they are paid more and face more professional accreditation requirements. At our school being aware of the local early learning services is critical. There is a clear difference between children who attended early learning lead by an early childhood teacher, who tend to show much better dispositions for learning and overall results in key learning areas such as literacy and communication as well as mathematics and gross/fine motor learning. This is shown even more so from children who attended a pre-school (aged 3-5) where all final decisions are made by the predominantly staffed early childhood teachers. These children tend to show exceeding results. How this is not recognised, is beyond our understandings, as the evidence is fairly concrete within schools. This is not to discredit early learning centres, where we have noticed an absenteeism of an ECT, it just means that educators are obviously being overworked and over burdened in responsibility, when such pedagogical decisions should be made by a specialised profession of Early Childhood teacher. Every other form of education in Australia requires a teacher. In many other countries Early Childhood Education is only staffed by Teachers, and yet they're results are exceeding. In Australia we are fortunate to have trained educators to support the delivery of education and care, however, the specialisation of Early Childhood Teachers need not be forgotten and needs to be valued and protected.</p>
37	<p>There is not enough acknowledgment for early childhood and especially the EDUCATORS who support, care for, and educate children every day. If we do not begin to recognise and pay these professional people accordingly unfortunately we will not have anyone to look after our future generations. Without going into detail, research and observation shows us that the first 5 years are the most crucial in our development, however it seems society and our government has not yet caught up with this understanding. Every industry, sector etc has moved forward but not the understanding of early childhood.</p>

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	Please go and speak to those working in the sector and look what is happening. Without early childhood educators, from cert 3 to degree trained teachers Australia would not have survived COVID. That is just one example of the importance of professional early childhood educators!!!!!!!!!!
38	Early childhood education is a specialist skill. I want my children to have access to professionals who are armed with up to date knowledge about child development and appropriate pedagogy for infancy and early childhood. Having Bachelor trained teachers in a childcare service, who are able to lead programming and philosophy, lifts the quality of care and education throughout the service. As a parent I can see the difference in programming and reporting. I know my child benefits when in a room with an Early Childhood Teacher in the mix. Frankly the persistent notion that this vital and complex work could be replaced by 'unskilled' labour relies on sexist notions of the 'naturalness' of care and continues to rob these female led industry of respect and fair compensation.
39	All children and families have the right to access high quality education and care. Children do best when they are provided with excellent programs, inspiring learning environments and where learning is facilitated by highly qualified teachers. As we do for children, we should have high expectations for our educators and provide them with nurturing workplaces where they can learn and grow. The profession needs investment in early childhood leadership - the research reveals direct correlation between strong educational leadership and the delivery of quality programs to support learning. Investment is needed in the initial training of our educators as well, ensuring they are learning content with great depth and understanding of child development, theorists, learning styles and educational approaches. More investment is also required to support the inclusion of all children so that each child can grow and thrive in an environment of respect and understanding where they are seen as individuals with their own unique strengths and interests. Early childhood investment must be positioned as a priority for our governments. We are a resilient and dedicated sector who were pivotal in keeping the economy going during COVID as well as providing safe and secure learning spaces for children when they were isolated from other facets of their social lives. Without significant reform, the early childhood education and care sector will collapse and the economic and social repercussions of that will cripple our country. We can and must do better for our children and position their education as our highest priority.
40	Cost - high quality education and care requires money in budgets to attract and retain high calibre if educators who can be adequately paid for the responsibility they have for educating and caring for our youngest citizens Availability barriers are evident due to lack of funding and budgets to be able to employ highly qualified educators, have full teams, be able to work with the range of needs of families - being able to employ educators with skills to work with a culturally safe way, with and trauma informed lens as well as being able to be responsive to truly support vulnerable children and families (disability, cald, queer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families)
41	The early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector is SO underfunded, and yet so vital! The importance of quality education and care CANNOT be underestimated by government. When both parents have to work, they need to be sure that there is still a village raising their young child, providing that young child with love, care and high quality education. Early childhood educators undergo training to learn about the developmental milestones of children,

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	language and speech development, social and emotional well-being. Early childhood educators are taught to work alongside the child's parents, bringing back the extended village of acting adults that existed in the past. Our society NEEDS well-trained educators and we have those! Now we need to keep them in the profession! Our children need us to keep them in the profession. Please prioritise early childhood educators as they hold an education role in what is arguably the most important sector of education.
42	In regards to outcomes for children and families, we know from research that the first 5 years of a child's life is one of the most crucial times for brain development. While the step towards having qualified early childhood teachers in every centre is a step in the right direction, with such low wages (especially compared to primary and secondary teachers), poor conditions and lack of recognition many ECTs do not stay in the sector. We currently have a crisis in regards to attracting and retaining both early childhood educators and teachers and yet nothing is being done to fix this issue. Without qualified educators, wait lists for ECEC services are long, early education is not available for many families and children. The government needs to do more to fix the terrible educator crisis. Quality teachers & educators = quality education + support for families = better future outcomes for individuals = a better society.
43	There is ample evidence to show that quality early childhood care and education has long reaching positive impact. Brain development research has shown the first 5 years are crucial. We need expertise not shortcuts to qualification's. I suggest we need early childhood teachers working with all age groups from babies through to school age in order to support better outcomes for children and families. Unfortunately early learning is viewed as less important by some who really don't understand the importance of this foundation. Early childhood education needs to be valued for children rather than viewed as childcare for working parents. The EYLF and NQF are evidence of the Government's commitment to quality so let's staff the sector with highly skilled professionals and pay them accordingly.
44	With a new centre opening every other month in saturated areas, educators are jumping from one centre to another giving no stability to the children and their families. Educators are seeking new employment frequently due to poor pay and poor working conditions which then unbalances top notch education time and time again. Until we begin to look at the educators benefits and working conditions first, including the immense amount of paperwork which is commonly having to be completed in personal time we will not see fundamental teaching happening within these services. Educators are exhausted, overworked and with some many casual agencies operating this isn't supplying centres with the care and quality full time employees needed to successfully have a high quality program met for the children meaning our families are not having their expectations met.
45	The industry desperately needs to encourage and attract quality staff to increase availability not just look at decreasing cost. Where I live (south coast nsw) I work at a ECEC setting and still can't get all the days I need for my daughter. Waitlisted friends have waited on several lists for 12-18 months. One friend had to cut hours nursing due to lack of available care. Cutting qualification and pay and quality of education as a result, or making care ratios bigger will just

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	increase staff burn out and walk out and make it in turn even harder to safely and adequately staff centres and give children a quality early childhood education
46	The best way to support better outcomes for children and families is to ensure highly qualified degree qualified teachers and vocationally trained educators deliver the education and care. Research evidence regarding the long term impacts of programs delivered by qualified staff is well established. Maintain and improve ratios to ensure the work of quality teaching is facilitated. To recruit and retain staff in the sector, pay early childhood professionals the wages that will enable them to stay in the profession. Incentivize enrolment in 0-5 degrees by waiving fees, providing scholarships and giving return of service bonuses for graduates from 0-5 degrees as this will stop the loss of ECTs to primary schools and ensure the workforce is trained for the specialist teaching and family support required in early childhood contexts.
47	ECEC needs to be recognised for its value, to children, to families and to society. It's great that the govt makes steps to make it more affordable for families, more needs to be done to make it affordable for educators and teachers to remain in the sector and more could be done to make quality ECEC available for ALL Australian children. ECEC is valuable, but let's focus on more than just making it a workforce participation issue. Children deserve ECEC because THEY are valuable.
48	Many of us have looked at a child (0-5yrs) in the recent years and thought "Geez these kids are smarter these days, not like us back in the day". This just proves how powerful education in the early years is. Children have a right by the UN to learn, and that includes below 5yrs. The research and development that has gone into developing the EYLF has tremendously impacted the ability to provide opportunities for children to become successful learners. There are barriers to this though. Expensive childcare, means some children miss out. Approved providers tight ass mode to hire less than qualified educators without the ability to execute the EYLF. Too many children per ratio to educator, creates a difficulty to teach. So many teachers extremely skilled are unable to deliver their program effectively due to not enough qualified staff to support them, too many children in the room (children also need care other than education), not enough programming time to do the preparation. If your into creating regulations, spend a day or 2 in the life of an educator, dont just assume what the legal requirements should be, their opinions are the ones that count, don't rely on approved providers suggestions, they are just wealthy trying ti become more wealthy, complaining about cost of staff because their high incomes are just not enough, they DO NOT CARE, and only us educators know that because we experience it day in day out with our management forcing us into inadequate teaching due to very little support. So many services have turned into child minding rather than education and its keeping our reputation in the gutter, we deliver as teachers/educators so much more, and can deliver so much more with the right support. The regulations give approved providers the ability to turn us into child minders. Please step up our early education system by giving a limit on how much services can charge families, and WHO educates our children, diplomas should be a minimum requirement, and how many children we can educate within a setting ( ratios). If one mum at home struggles and gets exhausted caring for her twin babies, how on earth do you justify leaving 1 educator with 4 babies under 1. It's happening everywhere because the regulations allow it. There is no education in that setting, only care, and even that is limited! PLEASE HELP OUR EDUCATION IN THE EARLY YEARS IMPROVE. Maybe have different requirements for "childcare"



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	vs “early education service”. Parents can decide if they want their kids in childcare with the rules that are of now, or in an early education service, with new rules, 1:3 babies, not allowed to leave 1 educator on their own, 1:4 toddlers, how do you justify a large room with 25 toddlers, even with 5 educators its near impossible to have a harmonious environment. Baby rooms should not exceed 9 babies with 1:3. Toddlers should not exceed 1:5 ( is ok in smaller rooms of 10 toddlers and 2 educators - but absolutely not 15/20/25 toddlers!!
49	It is critical that children receive responsive, play based education by highly qualified educators. So much development happens in the first five years of a child's life. ECEC educators are underpaid, overworked and exhausted. The sector is losing so many excellent educators because it is less stress and better pay to go pack shelves. Something needs to change.
50	Would you allow primary and secondary teachers to NOT be qualified to teach?? Just to reduce the cost for schools. You wouldn't hire an unqualified teacher to reduce costs in a primary or secondary school, so please don't reduce the need for qualified ECTs and diploma qualified educators in ECEC just to make approved providers happy. If they just want to provide childcare, then they should say that and hire babysitters and reduce cost, at least parents know what they are paying for. But to reduce quality care and education by reducing the need of qualified staff for an early learning service just doesn't make sense. Its already hard enough delivering a quality program to babies where the ratios are high, and the supporting educator is a trainee. It baffles me how anyone even the regulation makers think you can educate 20 toddlers or 20 babies in ONE room. It just doesn't happen, the only thing they are receiving is babysitting, because thats all the environment allows for. Please let us advocate for children by allowing more qualified staff, hopefully less children, or at least a maximum per room.
51	As a teacher who delivers Certificate and Diploma courses at TAFE NSW, I visit several services weekly. Most of these services are understaffed due to staff burnout or the lack of interest for people to study and work in the sector. The compliance issues are huge and the sector on a whole is undervalued. Community based services/not for profit is the ideal model as it is not profit driven, but child and family focused. When the child and family is at the centre of the service (not profit) then perhaps the outcomes for children can improve. The more funding, the more the fees rise, the more families have to pay, the more the owners/stock holders profit. It's an on-going cycle.
52	The notion to reduce the amount of study time required to achieve qualifications in early childhood education is concerning as we want our profession to recognised for teaching young children in their most critical period of development. Our teachers and educators are constantly striving to improve with critical reflection, professional development and hands on experience to ensure children are receiving high quality education and care. To lessen the minimum qualification requirements would be detrimental to the children, families and communities we work alongside.
53	The issue is for profit services driving costs and prices up. Education is a service not a business, it shouldn't be run to make money. Come spend 6 months in a service and see if we need more or less staff, funding and support. Talk to any educator and understand how they are professional and qualified and



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	wanting to learn more. Educators are leaving in droves, not due to lack of passion but due to terrible circumstances and the need to make more money to live. Don't make more leave.
54	It's very hard for families to access services with the hour cap and meeting work hours. Whilst having qualified educators is beneficial it is very hard to find qualified staff where we are located. There are not enough people training or course completing. People sign up to train to meet Centrelink requirements not because they want to work. Early education can increased the knowledge. Skills and development for children whilst also supporting families. The paper work side and assessment and rating process needs to change though. Focus needs to be on the children not what paper work needs to be completed.
55	Early Childhood Education and Care is an essential service that strongly contributed to holding our economy together especially during the Covid. Our sector is undervalued and our educators are burning out at high levels, placing our important Sector in crisis. There is so much pressure on our qualified staff with the departments high demand of documentation, we have moved away from our main focus being the Education and care of children to ticking off boxes ordained by the department. Our educators are underpaid and over worked. Many of our most passionate and knowledgeable educators are leaving the sector as their mental health deteriorates due to all the pressures and not receiving a wage reflective of our qualifications or responsibilities. Our department really needs to review the 0-2 year old ratio as 1 educator to 4 babies isn't working! With each baby having their own routines, 90% in nappies, many educators are left with 1:7 ratio will their colleague tends to the many essential tasks and routines. Making Early Childhood Education more affordable for families is a great first step but without educators (and a decent wage), there won't be enough educators to meet the demands. RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE! It will be the first step in sustaining the educators we have now and enticing more to join our profession.
56	I have noticed a large difference between centre based care providers. Some centres are money spinners and it shows in staff turnover, community engagement and programming. I have found centres that have a large focus on individuals, their families and work to provide personalised care are the biggest success. Creating 'safe people' for young children and having a staff group that are familiar with the children helps settling in. Ratios are outdated. I could never personally care for 11 3-4yos by myself. The care would be absolutely subpar yet this is what the government allows ratios to be. The childcare sector needs an overhaul with more care and understanding placed on the children. Better ratios and training, mandatory outdoors time and community engagement is needed.
57	Forcing established and effectively managed not-for-profit community providers of OSHC out to tender and replacing them with commercial for profit providers, does not support positive outcomes for families, children and communities. Forcing stand-alone, for-purpose parent managed OSHC service providers to change over to a P&C model of operation, where the majority of P&C parents are not OSHC users and have no understanding of the sector, is also detrimental to positive outcomes for children, families and the communities these centres service. Often the educators at these parent run services are long term OSHC professionals, usually women, with decades of expertise and knowledge. This expertise disappears when large commercial operators take over and replace these educators with very young and very inexperienced people with no formal training or qualifications, or desire to stay long term in the

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	sector, simply to create better profit margins for their company shareholders. Work hours are reduced resulting in minimal time spent on consideration and planning of the developmental program occurring at the centre. This certainly does not lead to better outcomes for children.
58	Early childhood education is still a undervalued and unspoken of unless it is in regard to pricing or increases in fees. Educators are highly trained and skilled in what they do, they pride themselves in their environments they create, the documentation they create and scaffold to ensure each child's individual learning is being actively worked towards and they also pride themselves on the relationships they build with the children and their families. To help ensure ALL children have access to this pivotal service, it should be noted on how families are supported to get them to the service, to offer further funding for centres to open and keep running and to ensure further study opportunities for ECT trained.
59	The sector is in disarray! Invest in early childhood teachers first so that there are leaders in the field who can mentor other educators. Make a clearer distinction between early childhood teachers and educators so that families understand and appreciate the education and skill level of all of those who care for and educate young children.
60	I think early childhood educators are wonderful, devoting their lives, living below the poverty line to do what they love. There are great services who put so much time and effort into their children's lives. There are many educators who put their own money into their services/set ups. I just wish under the roof wasn't a thing, it's terrible. Not great for the staff, or the children. It only benefits the company. For profit centres shouldn't be a thing.
61	As an Early Childhood and Primary Teacher, I can confidently say that children who have experienced quality early childhood education and care are given and incredible start to their education journey. Access to quality early childhood education gives young children access to develop critical social, emotional, and cognitive skills that they would not be able to develop without the support and guidance of early childhood teachers and educators
62	One of the major barriers for families is availability of affordable care. I work as a preschool teacher where families can get 600 hours a year of affordable care but it only operates 9am-3pm. Many families are therefore enrolling their child in 3 services: my preschool, before and after school care on the days of preschool and another ECEC service for the other 2 or 3 days per week. I know this is common across Australia, in Sydney, in Perth and elsewhere. Continuity of care is hard to achieve for these children. Another issue is the absolutely shocking working conditions for some educators in some centres. The assessment and rating process doesn't do enough to ensure educators and directors aren't getting burnt out, bullied and treated unlawfully by their employer. This is particularly a problem because there are so many visa holders working in ECEC whose ability to stay in Australia is contingent on them keeping employment. If employers and wider society don't view ECEC as valuable, we will continue to have a shortage of educators. This can only be negative for access to quality care for families and children.

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63	<p>It is no longer realistic to consider ECEC as simply a form of education for our youngest children and a place for children to be cared for so their family can work or study. For the ever-expanding for profit segment of the sector, ECEC presents a business and investment opportunity with the potential for generating significant profit. There is plenty of talk about qualifications being essential to quality service provision so why is it not necessary for people who have management and control of services to have ECEC qualifications? Is that in itself an inherent acknowledgement that ECEC are primarily businesses (as opposed to educational facilities) and should be operated as such? Given the ongoing staff shortages in the sector are often attributed to poor pay, it becomes necessary to question where the money from government funding and family fees is actually going. Is the money going to owners or management? Is it to shareholders? Is it to investors? Is it to private equity funds? Is it to superannuation funds? Is it being used to accumulate real estate? Is the money staying in Australia or going overseas? Who is benefiting from the current funding arrangements? Further, is it appropriate for internationally based organisations to own, have an interest in and therefore have influence in Australia's early childhood education system? I would argue that it is not.</p>
64	<p>The cost of early childhood education and care is becoming more affordable with CCS entitlements available to families, it is the access to such care that is cause for concern and not only for families but for services. During COVID, the announcement of 'free' childcare saw Educators leave the sector in droves. Great news for families at the time but now that we have come full circle, families are realising the real price that was paid for 'free' childcare. A critical shortage of Educators means that services cannot operate at full capacity and/or even face the very real possibility of closure. To add to the already struggling sector and with a particular focus on Family Day Care, Educators will be required to have attained a minimum certificate III (as of 07/23) - adding yet another obstacle to employing Educators and having more availabilities for families looking for care. With an abundance of initiatives and funding available, unfortunately most is to establish new services. Where will the staff come from? A rethink of initiatives and funding should aim to entice qualified staff back into the sector.</p>
65	<p>There is no doubt that the ECEC is in crisis. Staff are leaving in droves, but this is more than just about wages. ECT's are paid almost 30% less than their primary school colleagues, are face to face teaching for 8 hours a day, 48 weeks of the year. They are often also supervising staff, managing their paperwork in their own time and then communicating with parents each day, and then often referred to as a "childcare worker" or "babysitter". Our Cert III Educators can earn more working in unskilled roles. Fees for parents are extraordinary. Why is the expense of placing children into an early childhood education and care service to be able to attend work, not considered a claimable work expense? Historically, early childhood services were set up for that sole purpose - to care for children who's parents needed to go to work. There is a lack of education for parents about what high quality early childhood services are - caring, approachable, attentive staff providing supportive, enriching environments and interactions. Yes, the environment needs to be safe, welcoming and appropriate, but it's the people who make the difference and the lack of support and recognition (financial and otherwise) they receive is why it is so difficult to attract and retain good people. The EYLF and the NQS are supportive documents to those that really know how to use them (most don't). What they lack is practicality. If someone is forced to document a child's learning using the EYLF because they "have to" without really understanding what they are documenting or using the information to the benefit of the child, then it's just ticking the compliance box. The same applies to the NQF. We need to</p>

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	look at Early childhood with a fresh set of eyes - from the bottom up. What is our purpose, how committed to making it work are we, what is it's value to families, government and society, how much do we want to fund it and who is best to receive that cut? I am a parent who used two types of care for my own children, am an ECT and have worked in LDC, preschools, Occasional Care, FDC, OSHC, MACS, the VET sector and compliance for over 30 years. This industry needs a whole restructure to make it work for both the users and the providers.
66	One way to support families is to encourage consistency in the ECEC workforce. Low pay and difficult conditions have guided those with qualifications or interest in ECE opt for casual work, due to higher pay, less responsibility and more work/life flexibility. This has resulted in centres where the majority of Educators are short term or one of place holders, rather than consistent Educators families can communicate with and rely upon. This has also exacerbated long term Educators leaving as more responsibility is funnelled to long term positions who leave under increased workload pressure and stress. Encourage ECEC to be a long term career by supporting pay, and in the cases of world wide pandemic, prioritised access to vaccines because of face to face front line work.
67	I think, there are plenty of Day care facilities are around in Main Cities and there is availability or vacancy but due to unavailability of Daily Fees, families cannot access it.
68	I am greatly concerned by the continual approach by the federal government to increase the funds for long day care through CCS. This money, intended to support quality provision and availability of ECEC is instead contributing to a profit margin for many operators, whilst wages for the sector are low and incomparable to our work demands and the daily fee for childcare is shocking! I believe that an overhaul of the CCS system and funding generally is required so that wages become more proportionate to work demands and responsibility, whilst business can still make a healthy profit to keep ECEC running and appealing as an investment and viable business concern. Additionally the certificate III in early education and care has become very challenging, far more so than many other certificate III courses. This squeeze between work demands, low wages, and the low status of the ECEC professionals (that keep this country's workforce at work) is proving unsustainable by driving caring professionals out of the industry. Why would many professionals work in ECEC when they can be paid more in almost any other profession? The funding system needs a massive overhaul, rather than simply increasing the subsidy available. If there are no staff there will be no services. We're doing the best we can with increasing demands to be all things for the children and families that cross our path, to maintain unbelievable regulatory requirements and manage an ever changing and uncertain staffing landscape. HELP US!
69	The sector is run off the back of hard working women. Women who are culturally and linguistically diverse who are being financially exploited with poor wages, high levels of burnout and limited lateral movement opportunities. Private operators are bringing in the big bucks whilst the families and educators are missing out. Private providers are making bank and these women are barely surviving week to week. I teach the early childhood qualification and there's very few people coming through who are genuinely passionate about working with children. They are expected to do 160 hours of unpaid placement work

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	whilst providers can explain away not meeting ratios... our country should be ashamed of how we employ mostly minority women to do "women's work" and pay them pittance. What are we saying about how we value women's work!?! Care and education is still so deeply undervalued and transformation is impossible without rebranding. Demand for care is high. Quality ecec is poor. The departments every changing processes are also not securing quality by any means. And families and children are missing out. When will the work of early childhood educators be valued...
70	Early childhood teachers are four year university trained however so over regulated, under valued and not recognised. This was never more so bluntly obvious than during the COVID pandemic. It is quite unbelievable that society, starting from the government down, does not recognise the first five years of age to be so vitally important to the future growth of the child. In so many other countries ECT's and educators are so highly respected and valued for their contributions to the health, wellbeing and education of children - it is really only in Australia the term babysitters, noise wipers and care workers are used to identify a sector charged with providing the nations futures leaders.
71	Early childhood educators need better recognition through their pay, entitlements and working conditions. We already have a shortage of quality educators, and it won't get better any time soon without improvements to our working conditions.
72	Similar to schools, ECEC should have to operate as a NFP with no distribution of private wealth. To prevent sector collapse, stagger this to prevent future entry to the market whilst preventing existing operators acquiring more centres on a profit distribution basis. This will impact both cost and quality positively. Rents and capital raising costs must be looked at, especially if first point taken. They are price gouging. CCS needs to abolish activity test. Families cannot get sufficient days without work and cannot work without sufficient days of care. Definitely no watering down of qualifications or ratios, these impact quality. Consider regulatory burden costs as A&R way is being more onerous and driving educators out. I fear that the reduced notice period for A&R will make this worse. Sector / legal reform to have one layer of government only responsible for ECEC. Too much crossing over. Consider impact of what is happening in the sector before lumping another review on it - how many are currently happening at a time of major staffing crisis? If people don't make a submission, it is not lack of interest, it is time.
73	I contribute to this submission as an Early Childhood Teacher with a Bachelor's degree. For 20 years I have watched the status of Early Childhood Education and care diminish. This is a sector in crisis. Never has demand for high quality services been so high and yet the status of Teachers and Educators been so low. This is a highly fragmented sector with an extremely over complicated funding system which is applied unequally between state and federal governments. Community preschools are pitted against long day care centres against family day care centres. Families are forced to chase funding and go where there is availability rather than the best service delivery for their children. Teachers and educators are paid a pittance and it is a highly stressful work environment, especially supporting families and children through Covid 19 and the after effects. Early Childhood Teachers and Educators deserve recognition for the education and care they give. Families deserve fully funded places at preschools, long day care and family day care services that meet their needs. The federal and state governments need to stop allowing for profit Early Childhood Education. The privatisation of Early Childhood

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	Education should not turn a profit for shareholders. The Early Childhood workforce will continue to collapse if pay and conditions for Teachers and Educators does not significantly increase. Why am I paid significantly less than a teacher who works in a primary school because I chose to work with the 3-5 year old age group?. We know, through academic research that children who access High quality Early Childhood Education have much better outcomes later in life- and yet our community values services little more than babysitting. The key to access for all children is through highly skilled, well paid workforces who have high job satisfaction and are employed in services whose whole focus is on children and families not on turning a profit.
74	I have minimal time to make extensive comments but the crux of the issues are around funding. Funding for services to pay staff highly so they can effectively deliver high quality programs that will support children and their families. Staff are grossly underpaid currently. This has to change. This is the most pressing issue. I run a Community based Preschool and have 30 years experience in the industry. Services are underfunded and should be funded adequately so that it is free for families like the rest of children's education. We also need adequate funding so staff can attend high quality training and services can adequately fund what they are trying to do. Early Childhood if adequately funded would change all the issues.
75	It is great that the Federal Government is looking into the affordability of childcare. The sector is broken as a result of COVID. The free childcare initiative during the first lockdowns impacted so many educators financially and they left the sector or were forced to leave the sector as they did not qualify for jobsaver. The sector is struggling for educators. 2 years on this still continues and it's at breaking point with many centres struggling to operate at capacity due to insufficient staffing. We are still being decimated by less and Covid but are told to soldier on. At what time do the State and Federal governments work together to pay educators so that they stay in the sector. The situation will only get worse before it's better if you don't put staffing at the top of the agenda.
76	Firstly As educators we study to get qualified. We have a very important role educating and caring for children under 5 years which according to studies this is the most important 5 years of early childhood. We have to document analyse and reflect we are confident counsellors and support people for not just our children but our families too we go over and beyond teaching and involving children and families in experiences. We make reports to professional services and provide families with concerns on their children's milestone, age appropriate learning and care. Often advising for speech pathologists psychologists, hearing tests, delays in children that clearly need professional assistance So why are we not recognised for what we do?? We teach every day in the most important years of a child's life. Why can i earn more money making coffee ? Why are we not supported for doing these important roles and documenting such important services.??
77	Kindy/Preschool for eligible aged children, rather than a confusing set of subsidies that many families are not eligible for. Kindy Uplift funding amounts are massive for some and couldn't possibly be spent during the timeframe. This money could be better used to provide free Kindy to enhance grants offered for upgrading facilities. Lower ratios are needed to more effectively support and enhance all Kindy/Preschool children's learning, development as well as health

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	and safety. More consistency around what A&R assessors are looking for. More trust and belief in educators as professions rather constant pressure to do more and prove more in every aspect their roles in writing.
78	As an educator who has been in the sector for nearly 17 years and has recently stepped in to a role as co-director, I am honestly terrified about the future of the sector. The ongoing, constant pressures placed on us to meet outrageous standards whilst trying to focus on the well-being of MANY families who are in crisis is just too much to cope with! The country is suffering under increasing financial strain, mental health and well-being is at an all time low. We want our sector to remain one that provides a high level of education and care, but we really need the pressures of constant documentation and evidence to be significantly lessened so we can actually be attentive to families needs. Additional funding to draw educators to the sector is a must. Families can not have the weight of further fee increases thrust upon them. Reducing ratios (funded by the government) would seriously help educators to be able to spend more than a few moments with each child in a whole day whilst juggling the documentation, daily tasks and expectations. Reducing the outrageously unachievable standards is high on the list too. Wellness and well-being programs for educators would be a great support for all the trauma we've faced over the past few years. A focus on more mental health and well-being supports for children and their families is critical to the future of Australia.
79	The industry is heavily regulated which is good but I think requiring ECT in centres adds more pressure to AP. The playing field between private centres and not for profit is very unfair. NFP have yearly access to government grants and private centres have none. Private centres pay tax and nfp pay nothing but how come they have access to government help all year round. Remote centres should be offered more support like freight subsidy and training subsidy. Educators are required to do so much paperwork rather than spending quality time with children. Educators must be qualified but assessors assessing centres didn't even work in childcare previously so how would you assess a centre without having to experience what is quality education and care. Assessors or any directors of governing body must have a minimum of 4yrs experience working at an education and care. Government should work with other countries so we can solve the shortage in staff. Nobody wants to work now, so it will get worst. The government has put more pressure to AP by making them pay for training levy. This should be abolished so AP can hire staff from overseas as we cannot find staff locally. If we can solve the childcare worker shortage, more parents will go back to work and it will be good for the economy
80	We are undervalued, under paid and over worked. The expectations are not achievable. We have to many restrictions due to red tape. I wouldn't recommend the profession to anyone.
81	1: Accessibility to high quality services: The key challenge we experience in this area is not the availability of services but the limited supply of HIGH-quality services. There is poor governance on the oversupply of services in particular areas and in particular, ensuring the addition of high quality not just mediocre. With some services not being assessed in 5 years, the advertised ratings aren't necessarily indicative of current offerings. 2: Limitations on the number of days being offered: KU preschools have restricted children's attendance to two days. This has created a strain on families to seek other services and necessitated children attending multiple services which is not conducive to continuity in their early childhood education. The KU in our area is an exceptional



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	<p>service but only being able to attend 2 days in the year before school was inadequate and we had to seek long day care too. 3: Fee increases beyond standard rates of inflation. Since the commencement of CCB (now CCS) long day care fees have inflated significantly. In 2005 in this area, you could find care for \$70/day. If it had grown inline with inflation, this would equate to \$107 in 2022 (according to the RBA inflation calculator). From July '23 the long day care we attend will have increased their fees by \$30/day in 12 months, now costing \$190/day (more for 0-3yos). They used the upcoming changes to CCS eligibility has an opportunity to 'soften' the announcement that the fees would increase by another \$20/day in July. The changes to CCS were never designed to be a means to increase long day care costs however private providers are using this an opportunity to charge more. There needs to be some governance on child care costs. It could be argued that the 'market' will determine what a day care charge, however when families are desperate for quality or availability, they have limited alternatives.</p>
82	<p>For our small regional based service we are struggling with the shortage of educators, the lack of knowledge of new graduates and lack of experience while new employees are only looking to see who will pay them more. We have seen a seen a significant rise in the numbers of children with additional needs who are not diagnosed and/or don't meet the requirements to receive additional funding making burnout even worse in educators.</p>
83	<p>Shortfall in funding for Early childhood Sector to gain higher qualification whilst working. ECT degrees should be free provided you complete the qualification. Most services take whoever applies for positions and staff turnover is high due to high demand with less qualified staff.</p>
84	<p>Lack of quality educators and underskilled educators applying for positions. High Educator turnover due to burn out. Educators are demanding well above award wages and employers need to pay to maintain ratios</p>
85	<p>As an EC professional working in a community-based preschool for over 40 years it is encouraging to see the new funding and recognition of the importance early education plays in children's lives. However, working in Sydney's western suburbs I see the expansion of the corporate child-care chains and the impact of the for-profit sector, sucking valuable \$\$ from the sector- for business profit. Increased funding should impact accessibility and quality, but big business simply increases the fees enabling them to access more funding. Several local private child care services are using the excuse of staff shortages to run an entire level of staffing using private sector trainees (who have paid a fortune to private 'fast-track-diploma-colleges', completed paper work and now have to complete extended placements which means they are 'used' as staff for minimal or NO payment (as 'students'). Also access for high needs children is shocking and far too limited. These children need early access to paediatrician's and referral for assessment and support services. Often the community preschool is the first place they access (IF they are given a place) and waiting lists for OT &amp; speech can be lengthy. There are not enough allied health workers to support services (just as there are not enough highly qualified EC teachers coming into the sector. TAFE needs broader funding to recoup lost enrolments from 'dubious' private colleges. Their programs are far and above these businesses. The Assessment &amp; Rating process lends itself far too much to subjective opinions and the ECEC Directorate talks-the -talk but on the ground - they are not highly regarded. During COVID they were so late in supporting services initially, that many of us used Vic health as support. ECEC bandy around the words 'partnership' but gag any real feedback on their</p>



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	<p>policies by staging on line- 'roadshows' which offer little information and no discussion. The top down approach is very visible in this organisation- it seems that as their staffing has increased, the paper junkies have become more powerful. Services need support on the ground from ECEC. Some minor changes are being introduced but the A &amp; R system is still top heavy in poorly experienced officers who look for the 'gotcha- moments' rather than support and partnership with services. It would benefit from a change of mindset . We ( experienced Directors) have been asking for a system where local officers actually make regular visits to services in their area, establish a relationship and work WITH them to share information, improve practice etc. and clarify issues, so that when the service is assessed and rated, they are not being picked-up for basic procedural or regulatory issues that could be dealt with before A&amp;R and not interfere with an assessors focus on their time evaluating embedded practices in a service. Also, a one day assessment is an insult to any service- the cursory approach excludes any real liaison.</p>
86	<p>Staffing is a nightmare lack of staff to run my service having to stop enrolments because I don't have the staff to take more children. The staff I have hired are under skilled and give restrictions on days they can work, hours they can work.</p>
87	<p>The ECEC sector is in crisis due to a SEVERE lack of a trained, skilled work force. We are also dealing with a high number of children with additional and behavioural needs which takes a lot of time and energy to cope with each day. There is also a shortage of care places for children predominantly in rural areas, however due to the lack of a skilled workforce building new services does not provide an answer to this issue. Also the ECT requirement in NSW is ridiculous and should be brought into line with the rest of Australia. Long Day care cannot compete with Preschools in attracting ECTS dues to work conditions such as school holidays</p>
88	<p>Our service in Eight Mile Plains QLD is struggling with skilled staff. They are very low in supply. The need for these staff members is due to growing amount of children with additional support needs.</p>
89	<p>There is a need for more trained staff to deal with the increasing numbers of children with additional needs. The lack of training is affecting not only educators but more importantly the education and care of the children</p>
90	<p>I would like to see early childhood education and care be considered part of the learning continuum for all children across Australian from birth to end of schooling. There is extensive research that demonstrates the overwhelming benefits of early childhood learning on the foundation and lifelong outcomes for all children, but most importantly for those children who do not have the same advantages as others, ie: first nations children, children with disability, child with vulnerabilities and/or disadvantage and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Governments (and broader community) should not consider early childhood education and care as for the benefit of parents returning to the workforce (Cheaper Child Care), but as a fundamental right of the children to a quality start to life and learning. As such, I would strongly like to see that the funding sources for early childhood be removed as a tax subsidy</p>

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	for parents and be seen as a part of the education stream. This would therefore take concerns of access away from families and ensure that all children get equitable funding not matter what educational program families choose to send their children.
91	I am an owner of a couple of centres in Victoria , we are having trouble finding casual staff , We are having to advertise often and this has never been a problem before COVID's hit . We are noticing that staff are only wanting to work part time rather than full time , this is becoming hard for the children in care having different staff caring for them to build those close relationships . We are finding that there are more additional needs children in care that are needing extra support , it's hard to find staff to employ to cater for these children . Staff in general are getting burnt out we have lost a few staff lately who have gone off to work in a completely different career and their reason for leaving is that it's too hard dealing with children and parents and they are exhausted .The industry is getting harder and harder to operate and as an owner I am finding that my passion for this industry is slowly going . Cost to run a centre is extremely costly , food , electricity , water have all gone up , we are waiting for the wage and super increase which is going to put more pressure on the service operations ..Thanks
92	Cost of care is a massive issue in my family household. For us to send our 2 daughters 2 days a week we are out of pocket \$380 a fortnight. Considering the rising cost of living , and the mortgage rates, paying this for just 2 days a week doesn't incentivise me to go back to work full time as I can't afford childcare . Consequently I work 2 days a week which still isn't really worth our while .
93	Lack of funding for our preschool because we are in high SEIFA band. Increasingly high rent and to try to maintain quality educators and pay them accordingly.
94	As a not for profit community based service we can only pay \$1 or \$2 an hour over the award - we have had 5 resignations in 4 months - so hard to get qualified staff and especially Inclusion Support staff with experience! Director has been working on the floor for 3 months so no office work getting done!
95	As a service in regional NSW who opened just after Covid hit, the ECEC sector is extremely challenging and nothing like I envisaged prior to opening. The region has a lack of qualified staff for all the current centres, not to mention the many more that are opening up in the area. Most centres are running at below capacity, not because they do not have the children to enrol (I have 50+ children on my waitlist), but because they do not have enough educators to cover ratios for a full centre, plus have backup for when educators are sick or on leave. The turnover of staff is horrendous because they know it is an educator's market and they can go from centre to centre looking for the best deal. As a private service, it's hard to keep negotiating with staff to recruit/keep them. Educators are tired and burnt out, but so is management. Educators are under paid for what they do each and every day, but without further funding, services cannot keep increasing pay thresholds to sweeten the deal for educators. 80% of our current income goes towards staff wages and expenses. This is not sustainable with so many other rising costs. It's getting to the point of not being worth the stress to keep services open. We are seeing more and more children enrolling in care that have additional needs. Getting funding to help support these children is one thing, but even if funding is available, getting

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	<p>additional educators to support these children is not easy. The documentation imposed on services is time consuming and takes educators away from what they are there to do, and that is to care for and educate the children in our care. Parents have become more critical of every little thing that happens in a service. As an AP/NS, the stress is very real. In the 3 years since opening, my health, both physical and mental has deteriorated because I am too busy trying to do everything I can to support my staff at detriment to myself. Something needs to be done or owners such as myself will move on. After 3 years, I'm just about 'done' – the toll it has taken is just not worth it. The government just keep giving lip service about how they are helping the sector, but at the end of the day, it's all about helping families and not services. Without the services, families have nowhere to care for their children while they go back to work or study. The whole sector needs an overhaul... and it needs it fast.</p>
96	<p>Staff wages need to increase - educators could pack shelves at our local supermarket for more money, way less stress and no qualification requirements, but it's not as simple as offering above award wages as this also impact fees. Higher fees means I price families out of our service, which affects our utilisation and viability. Being regional means it's challenging to find staff at all, and even more so those with any actual skills, experience or work ethic. And those we do have are often wanting more flexibility in hours than I can offer due to needing to maintain ratios. While the staff love our service, they have little consideration for what it takes to staff adequately or run a service effectively. Many of the staff opt to stay casual, offering more flexibility but they also can't afford the reduction in wage when they usually need to travel to and from work, but equally they can say "I won't be in tomorrow' We had seen an increase in behavioural issues, which is also a reason why these children are booked into care as there families are not coping and we have limited services to address their needs. ECRU are not helping with their compliance visits, placing additional stress and work orders on services, but never respond to query emails, offer support or guidance. they seem to enjoy visiting services during lunch periods and removing key educators off the floor for over an hour, disrupting routines, and lunch breaks, on days we are already struggling to meet minimum ratios (which are a joke in most services with under the roof) Assessment and rating is a joke - if you have time to write, your sitting pretty. It's not a real reflection of many services or how they operate day to day. Regular visits, with consideration for routines and short staffing, needs to be considered with a super clear standard that removes the competition to be exceeding - because most families do not care.</p>
97	<p>ECEC is in a crisis with many educators leaving the profession. Some due to wages and some as the additional burdens placed on us are unreasonable. Many have completed qualifications but don't have the skill when newly graduated. They are not coping with the huge demands and expectations required to meet standards. Neither are experienced educators. There are far too many Centre's opening in saturated areas often in close proximity to other services. Educators are moving from one to the other chasing higher pay leaving children with no continuity of care. This impacts greatly on children and families. Often there are no applicants for positions and some services have to reduce numbers or not take on more children as they do not have the staff. An experienced diploma level employee can often exceed the level of skill of many kindergarten teachers yet many Centre's are forced to employ kindergarten teachers that are unable to do the job requirements. Kindergarten Teachers applying for jobs are holding services to ransom making huge salary demands often more than Directors yet not competent. Educators are burnt out due to additional pressure and expectations as well as the huge demands by parents. There needs to be less focus on documentation and more on engaging with children. In fact, the A &amp; R process needs a big overall to reduce the pressure</p>

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	and expectations which is unreasonable. Educators are under paid and over worked due to the increasing demands. They are exhausted. Many Centre's are reliant on increasing families' fees in order to afford pay increases to staff making the costs of childcare unaffordable to many. I have worked in this sector for over 30 years and have never been more disheartened as I am now. I am concerned about our profession and where we are headed.
98	It is agreed , and recognised ,by many sectors that that good quality early childhood education has a significant impact on a child's development. The aims are twofold: provide enough spaces for children and provide enough early childhood educators/ teachers . As we all know- there is a severe shortage in this area. Providing a sustainable number of educators who are trained as teachers and educators requires the following: a higher pay that reflects the importance of and recognition of their roles as they meet the legislative and ACEQUA requirements . Secondly, funding/ scholarships would encourage more people to train as early childhood teachers. A teacher trained educator has more depth of knowledge and expertise to meet the ACEQUA and department requirements.
99	Not all ECEC services are built equally, figuratively and literally. Services should be hubs for children, with children's best interests in mind. This is in relation to the provision of resources. Factors like ratio, management type and service type do impact the quality of a service, evident through the Quality Rating System. One of the key factors leading quality outcomes for children and their families is qualified, experienced and supported educators and teachers The sector is haemorrhaging staff. As some one who has worked in the sector for 9 years, I see first hand the lack of recognition that educators and teachers receive from society and their employers. A 80-place NFP long day care that I recently worked for required 22 full-time staff, to function. Only 14 members of permanent staff were present day-to-day, with the rest of the roles and support roles filled by agency casuals. By the time I left there were on 8 permanent members of staff available, with at least 2 more considering leaving. The sector is in crisis. Can we make ECEC services viable and sustainable places for children, families but also the largely women that make up this profession?
100	The childcare sector is currently facing unprecedented pressures that are significantly impacting its operations. One of the major challenges is the shortage of quality resources, which has led to wages skyrocketing well above the 3.8% increase experienced by the general workforce. This wage increase is a direct result of the scarcity of available qualified educators, making it unavoidable due to the sector's stringent educator-to-child ratios. Additionally, with the implementation of the 3-year-old kinder program, there is a heightened demand for qualified Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs). Compounding these challenges are the rising inflation rate of 7% and the unprecedented interest rate increases. As a result, childcare providers are being squeezed financially. To ensure their viability and continue delivering essential services, fee increases have become inevitable. The situation is further complicated by conflicting government promises. On the one hand, the government pledges to deliver cheaper childcare, while on the other hand, it commits to the supported enterprise bargaining process, which is likely to lead to a 15% fee increase above the annual award wage increase. These conflicting policies create uncertainty and financial strain for childcare operators. Moreover, there is a growing trend towards government-owned and run services, with 50 proposed facilities in Victoria alone. Additionally, some political groups, such as the Greens, are advocating for the removal of privately owned childcare services altogether. These developments contribute to operators' nervousness about the future and add to the challenges they face in navigating the current financial

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	and political landscape. In summary, the childcare sector is currently grappling with multiple unprecedented pressures, including a shortage of resources, rising wages, inflation, interest rate increases, conflicting government policies, and a potential shift towards government-run services. These challenges are placing a significant strain on childcare providers, who are struggling to maintain financial viability and adapt to the evolving landscape.
101	Low pay and poor conditions are at crisis levels in Early Childhood Education and Care Services. Despite qualifications and experience, Early Years Educators are struggling to make ends meet, with one of the lowest pays and poorest award conditions. Lack of acknowledgement for the important role Educators have in providing education for our youngest citizens in their most critical years, as well as facilitating the ability for parents (predominantly women) to be able to work, is affecting morale and job satisfaction. Struggles to recruit and retain staff continues to undermine quality of education and care for children and the sustainability of services. Research shows that the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care programs is associated with the wages of the workforce. If Early Childhood Educators are well-compensated the quality of an Early Childhood Education program will be higher. Wages vary depending on the type of setting, but the average is roughly \$28p/h which is not enough to recruit and retain staff. We know the value and importance of having Teachers and Educators that are qualified and how that impacts on quality of programs. We know how important it is to keep and maintain staff so the relationship with the children and families are maintained to improve outcomes for all stakeholders. Until low pay and poor conditions are addressed the staffing crisis will continue. We are asking you to give hope to Early Years Educators, by addressing the issue of low wages and increasing funding for wages by 15% for Early Childhood Teachers and Educators.
102	Brief comment from French-Australian Preschool Canberra A not-for-profit, full time, bilingual early learning program for children aged 3-5. Sustainability of our preschool/business model The future of our model (long day care) may be impacted by the preschool format that will be developed in the ACT in the future (government preschool being extended to 3 yr old). However, because of the lack of visibility of what the chosen model will look like, it is impossible to plan our own development strategy. It is a challenge to hire, expand, run a business in these conditions. We need a clear path forward. Flexibility around qualifications Our educational model relies on the hiring of French qualified teachers who in France are trained to teach preschool children aged 2 and ½ and primary school students up to the age of 11. The introduction of early childhood qualifications in Australia has challenged the recruitment process as our French teachers are required to study for Australian qualifications, at a minimum a certificate III or a diploma in early childhood education and care, including practises with babies and toddlers though we do not have babies nor toddlers in our care. Assessment and rating process, quality improvement plan, documentation, regulations, policies The level of paperwork required in early childhood education is voluminous and though we endeavour to minimise this, takes away qualified staff from the children. Long Day Care vs Government Preschool While this is generally not an issue for our preschool, we cannot help but noticing the competition between the government early childhood education system and long day care centres (well described in the Philip Island Early Learning Centre submission). The requirement for long day care centres to employ 1 sometimes 2 (depending on the size of the centre) early childhood teachers (ECTs) is a challenge. How can day care centres attract and retain ECTs if they cannot guarantee government salaries and conditions? Flexibility around employment The government's new laws about converting casual and fixed term contract staff to permanent staff will make it more difficult to run our

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	centre. It will be costly and it will involve our passing those costs on to families. It is still early to see how this will impact childcare centres but additional bureaucracy and rigidity is not what we need. Veronique Danjou Director
103	<p>Childcare affordability is a major barrier to women's economic participation. I am a mother of three young children. For four days a week two of my children attend long daycare and one attends before and after-school care. Due to the extreme financial pressure of childcare fees I only work 4 days a week as the costs of 5 days fees vastly outweigh my earnings. Financially it makes more sense to work 3 days yet I am concerned about the reductions in my superannuation and career progression so I work the 4th day 'for free'. This is not a unique situation to me. My partner and I spend over 30% of our combined net income on childcare fees. Most households expect to pay less than this on their mortgage! Yet we have no choice unless we both drop our workforce participation to care for our children. I would be interested in the Productivity Commission determining what proportion of net income families are expected to pay on childcare fees? Surely it's not meant to be more than 30%? I would like the Productivity Commission to consider exploring childcare fees as a tax deductible work expense. Businesses can receive many tax deductions for cars, laptops, travel, clothing, meals and so on. Childcare is a mandatory expense for me and many families. It would provide a great incentive, and make economic sense, for the government to allow me to purchase childcare from my pre-tax income or to receive a tax rebate from the ATO. Perhaps this could apply for all families paying childcare fees, or just for those not eligible for CCS? I'm sure that helping more families work full time and the boost in earnings would counter the small loss in tax revenue to make childcare more affordable. The current CCS income threshold is flawed as it does not adequately consider multiple children. 60% reduction for multiple children does not go far enough. The CCS threshold should increase for families with multiple children e.g. 1 child it's capped at \$356k, 2 children it could be capped at \$450k and so on, with the proportions of CCS moving too e.g. families with incomes of \$150k with multiple children will receive higher % subsidy per child than a single child family. The cap increase in July to \$530k still doesn't adequately consider the effect on families paying for multiple children in early education and care and OSHC services. The funding should follow the child, not the family. Instead of CCS, every child should have an entitlement to fully subsidised early childhood education and care services, potentially from 2years and upwards. See UK system. The award rates for educators and teachers working in early childhood services are too low. Some of the highly skilled educators caring for my children earn less than retail or hospitality staff. How can high quality staff be expected to work in a sector where they are extremely underpaid? Additional government funding for the sector could support a pay increase for staff.</p>
104	<p>Our provider has just advised us that due to the governments new auditing process, they will be requiring parents to pay a 2 week full fee bond (per child). This is going to equate to almost \$2,500 for a family with two children in full time care. Not to mention they want us to remain 2 weeks ahead with payments (this is at a post CCS figure, so a lot more reasonable) as well! All I keep hearing is how the government wants to make child care more accessible to working families, but actions like allowing/causing something like this to happen certainly contradict that sentiment. This is seriously causing us to reconsider whether daycare is a financially viable option for our family.</p>

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105	<p>As a small operator with EC qualifications and experience I opened our service due to a major need in our community. This put my family in enormous debt, most of which we are still paying back. While we employ more staff with higher qualifications than necessary and spend a considerable amount on staff training and extra curricular activities for our children, we need support to build the capacity of staff to effectively include children with additional needs. Services need funded support of specialists to work alongside EC staff, in order to improve their skills and improve outcomes for children. I used to contract specialists to work with our staff directly. This cost was enormous and I did that out of my own pocket as otherwise it would have resulted in a fee increases for parents. I can't access this now, even if I'm willing to pay. The capacity building projects offered only to preschools in NSW mean we are out of scope and our local specialists don't have the hours or manpower to be contracted by my service. Why are these capacity projects not being offered to ALL EC services? If the goal is to better support outcomes for ALL children and families, why are these projects only available to one section of the EC community? Lots of families need LDC services due to their work hours. Lots of businesses need staff who can work longer than school hours. Lots of early childhood staff are leaving because they cannot get the support they need to look after the increasing number of children with additional needs, despite providers like myself being willing to try and get them training. We are ending up with a major shortage of early childhood staff and a major number of children with additional needs who are not adequately receiving specialist services during their pivotal years of development. I also want to acknowledge the 15% government funded payrise for elderly care workers. While this profession certainly deserve more, what about EC staff? It's proven that for every \$1 spent in early childhood education, the government would save up to \$7 in later costs in relation to welfare, jail, rehabilitation, etc. To ensure positive outcomes for all children and their families regardless of the service type they attend: Stop creating divides between service types. PROMOTE EC AS A WHOLE. Start funding capacity building for ALL staff. Start funding specialist intervention for ALL children. Start recognising the work of EC staff and assist in funding wage increases. Cap the rent on child care services. Go back to normal commercial rent not ridiculous figures per licensed place which increases parents fees and sees landlords with no interest in children get rich! And from now only allow qualified EC people to build services to eliminate this any further! Value small providers who pour everything they have into their service, staff and families whilst navigating the enormous debt hanging over their head.</p>
106	<p>We need lower ratios if we want quality care. It's ridiculous to expect that young adults are able to look after 5 children who are 3-4 years of age alone, all day everyday without getting burnt out. We aren't paid enough and there's little to no funding for our centres. I would not be doing this job if I didn't love the children but it's absolutely exhausting my body. I'm only 19. Do better.</p>
107	<p>We would like to be recognised for the important work that we do, a pay rise is necessary. I'm 26 and unable to fathom buying a house and it's hard to have savings. If there was more funding available for early childhood we would be supported to get all of the things done that we need to do in a days work. Take the pressure off!</p>



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108	As the cost of living is frequently getting higher early childhood educators pay scale is way below average. I have been an educator for 15 years and have seen a huge decrease in staffing within the sector due to the appalling pay rates. Without qualified educators centres and preschools can not operate which then puts huge stress on families and centres as the quality of care for children is not being met. Children are our future. Our pay rate needs to increase to bring future educators to the industry for our Children and families not just the educators.
109	We are experiencing extreme difficulty in recruiting qualified educators at our services. After advertising recently for a Cert III educator we had zero responses to our ad. Educators are leaving the sector in droves due to low wages and excessive regulatory requirements. TAFE are not running ece courses because they are not getting enough people enrolling for them to fill a class. Providers need immediate support to increase educator wages and conditions to retain quality staff. Many services in the Illawarra have waivers and are having to reduce the number of places they have at their service because they can't maintain ratios. This is affecting families because they can't find care for their children due to the reduced capacity of services. Mothers can't return to work unless they have care for their children.
110	For true quality the sector must be funded more so the sector can have more university trained teachers. I believe that 50% of the educators in an early childhood setting should be degree trained teachers. Having 18 year old certificate 3 trainees does nothing for quality. All it does is provide a warm body for ratios. Many years ago all staff did not need to have a qualification. Back then we employed mothers and grandmothers. That was better quality and nurturing than 18 year old trainees. In some bigger corporations it is the blind leading the blind. They have educators running businesses who have no business, leadership or customer service experience. In smaller services like mine (39 place), we barely make enough money to employ quality people and pay above the award. We are in a semi rural area and it has always been hard to attract staff as it is, now with the shortage due to so many centres being built, and women only wanting to work part-time, staffing is difficult and extremely costly. Parents say childcare is too expensive, yet we do not make enough money to pay staff well enough, or do amazing team events and continuously upgrade the service. While bigger service who make more money have more money to spend. The sector needs individuals who have life experience, with degrees in early childhood with business knowledge. The sector needs more money to pay for these people. How do we pay for this without pushing those costs on to parents?
111	I believe to have early childhood in Australia that accommodates working families, while also striving for quality education and care is not feasible in the current workforce climate. We have very experienced and passionate educators leaving in droves due to lack of professional recognition and income. It doesn't make sense to be employed to help shape the time in a child's life where their brain grows to 90%, where we can identify need for early intervention, where we can help shape children to love and care for their world, that our cleaners that clean centres earn more than some educators. This role is highly governed by an amazing national quality framework, and educators pour from their physical, mental, emotional selves to invest in these children's lives, and it's vital that they begin to get nationally credited alongside other professionals of quality education such as primary and high school teachers.



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112	<p>1. The current model of service provision of ECEC services is inadequate, unfair, poorly distributed, overly complex and too easily mismanaged. This results in a lack of services where and when they are needed, a gross misunderstanding and undervaluing of the work and service they provide not only to families but also communities. Most importantly, children have a right to access high quality services to promote their health, wellbeing and learning in these critical years. 2. Equity and Access: Access to early childhood services is essential for all children, regardless of their background or socio-economic status. Early childhood education can help reduce the achievement gap between disadvantaged children &amp; their more affluent peers. It provides an equal opportunity for all children to develop the foundational skills necessary for their educational journey and future success. Ensuring access to early childhood services for all children is crucial for promoting social inclusion &amp; addressing educational inequality. 3. Qualified and Well-Remunerated Staff: Highly qualified &amp; well-trained educators are fundamental to the quality of early childhood education. Research consistently demonstrates that qualified and experienced staff have a significant positive impact on children's learning outcomes. These educators possess the knowledge and expertise to create developmentally appropriate &amp; engaging learning experiences. Recognising the importance of their role, it is crucial to attract &amp; retain talented individuals in the early childhood education sector by providing adequate remuneration, professional development opportunities, and supportive working conditions. Pay parity for all degree holding teachers to match those received in schools &amp; certificate &amp; diploma qualified staff to be paid on similar rates to other fields. 4. State-Run ECEC Services: Advocating for free, state-run early childhood education &amp; care (ECEC) services over a profit-driven model is rooted in the idea of ensuring quality &amp; accessibility for all children. A state-run system can prioritise educational outcomes &amp; children's well-being, rather than profit margins. It can enable a consistent and equitable distribution of high-quality ECEC services across different regions, ensuring that all children, regardless of their families' financial circumstances, can access these vital services. Private enterprise should not be subsidised. 5. Long-Term Social &amp; Economic Benefits: Investments in early childhood education yield long-term social &amp; economic benefits for individuals &amp; society as a whole. Quality early childhood education has been linked to higher educational attainment, increased employment prospects, reduced involvement in criminal activities, improved health outcomes, &amp; higher earnings in adulthood. By providing a strong educational foundation &amp; addressing developmental gaps early on, ECEC can contribute to a more skilled workforce &amp; increased social mobility.</p>
113	<p>Help us with the staffing shortage. Drop the Diploma requirement it is not sustainable for mum and dad business. We are losing staff in such a rapid rate to NDIS (lack of reporting obligations and documentation) Aged Care industry only one level of qualification required and less reporting and reporting Director and owners are spending a fortune on recruitment and development but the reporting and constant changes in regulations and policies is impossible to keep up with. We are losing staff to state education departments who are recruiting them as support to Early child hood sector but not realising how it is also effecting centres. Cost going up on every cost centre( work cover, public liability , cost food, cost of wages, interest cost ,loss of revenue because government wants to pass on kinder funding to the families) how much cost can a provider Absorb without passing on to parents.</p>
114	<p>More money needs to be invested in the sector and for educators to be paid their worth. This could be resolved somewhat by early years centres being directly linked to public primary schools as a direct feeder to the school. They would be run by the DofE in the same way that public schools are and become</p>

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	<p>a part of the school itself. By employing ECTs and educators that could be paid under the same award as public school teachers, the level of pay will increase, the sector will be sustainable, and childcare will be more affordable to families. This would make the transition from learning through play in the early years to that in primary school easier and primary teachers would have support from early childhood teachers to make those outcomes for children tangible. Each early years service should have an Educator who takes on the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) like they do in the UK, whose role is to advocate for the child who has additional needs and to liaise with external agencies and families to work in a multi-disciplinary fashion for the benefit of the child. This would make it easier for educators to remain in the sector if they were supported by specially trained additional needs educators on site, every day. There needs to be an overhaul of the RTOs who are offering qualifications in early years and ensuring they are meeting the standards set and not just signing students off without the appropriate evidence or work. This includes getting enough practical hours and a deeper understanding of how to program and provide learning opportunities for children. Proper and appropriate guidance needs to be given for programming and planning for children and a clear expectation of what A&amp;R wants. There is so much variety in what educators and centres create when there is no set way to do it. It's a constant question and educators need much clearer direction. Educators' mental health and wellbeing is of fundamental importance. Every centre should get support on writing and implementing a wellbeing policy so that educator retention is high and burn out is low.</p>
115	<p>The sector is in crisis with staff shortages causing chaos. We are regularly calling families to tell them they can't bring their child because we can't staff their room. We are educating children in their most formative years but governments have proven they don't value educators, the way we we're treated during covid lead to a mass exodus and unless wages and conditions improve ECEC is no longer a desirable career choice.</p>
116	<p>I have been in the early childhood sector for 5 years and worked tremendously hard. I grew from an apprentice to now 2IC and am currently looking at leaving the sector if there isn't changes. I am beyond burnt out, but feel guilty leaving my team, if/when I leave. To cover ratios and the staffing crisis as management, I am put in ridiculous positions daily and doing 10-12 hour days to ensure compliance. I'm not sure what for at the moment, the pay is hardly covering the cost of living.. it's sad that I feel like I have wasted my last years to climb the ladder of the sector to be underpaid &amp; under appreciated and deal with things daily that no one ever should.</p>
117	<p>Can we consider looking at the process of increasing licensed places, surely 3 months is way too long of a time frame. With parents crying out for early childhood education and care, there should be some flexibility in the way this is handled to meet the needs of families. I have had parents have to turn down employment as not being able to find care. Building new centres is not the answer when some services have the capacity to increase their licensed capacity. Tasmania 3 year old access to care needs to be offered in services who at least meet NQS not in any other service or building. The fee charged by RTO's and the delivery of training needs to be reassessed. We have been expected to have staff travel 3 1/2 hours each way to attend classes and had a battle to allow this to be undertaken online, but had not alternative. Pay and conditions needs careful considerations. Government must make it equitable for all</p>

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	including providers. Why should services loose out when parents leave a service and then (once balanced) services incur a debt that is impossible to recover? This is such an unfair situation.
118	Our sector is in crisis! We are so short staffed, our team are exhausted and many are leaving the sector. We are not a regional or remote service. We offer many, many above award conditions and pay and we also provide extensive training. All staff are paid to attend all training and meetings out of work hours. Regardless of these conditions we cannot staff our centres and have had to turn families away. People are not coming into the sector. Even though we offer above award conditions, potential staff can work in retail or cleaning roles with flexible hours and much less responsibility and administrative load and earn more money. All of our teams took up the free Diploma training on offer at the moment and we now cannot find entry level Cert III trained staff.
119	We are seeing a huge increase in children with very challenging behaviour. Our staff are getting injured and are incredibly worn down from the pressure of supporting these children. We feel unsupported by government in this area. We are expected to give all children access to ECEC (and we agree with this expectation). However this expectation needs to come with appropriate support. The funding models are difficult, they take weeks and weeks (sometimes months) to get through, and often will not support us with the children who need it the most. We employ an additional ECT in an inclusion role to support these children and families and the team, however most centres could not afford this or have this available to them. Other than workforce shortages, this is our biggest challenge at present.
120	Early Childhood Education is of fundamental importance for children in their first 5 years of life. Educational opportunities provided by appropriately trained educators ensures children are delivered opportunity to meet their full potential and are supported in their development. Access to allied health and child development professionals supports children, families and educators to meet the individual needs of children. The provision of care for children while engaging in education supports modern society. Unfortunately educators are undervalued and disrespected as professionals by society, which is evident in their payrates and society's reaction to their pleas for fairer remuneration. Availability for children and families is impacted by staff shortages. A service can only accept children if it has staff to educate and care for them. Free or low cost care for families will not fix this issue only add burden to an already broken system. Free Training will only be affective if remuneration is improved as those studying are choosing higher paying professions. The government must step up and help subsidise educator wages now or find somewhere comfortable to sit and watch as it crumbles around them and society as it follows.
121	Hi There, I am a Centre owner with no doubt the same concerns as all Centre's. I will speak on behalf our Service that is located in Tasmania. At The moment we have noticed an increasing number of children with additional needs. We currently have funding for 5 days per week which barely covers half the wage of the Educator employed to work one on one with our children with additional needs. It is an expectation from the families, inclusion and ECIS that these children get their one on one care without the knowledge of the pressure it puts on the business financially. Let alone being unable to staff the rest of the ratio because we are bound to one on one. We are also struggling with the candidates applying for positions we have on seek. As an example we had 60 applicants for a Casual position. 2 of which met the criteria we had set. I am not prepared with fill a position with someone who isn't suitable to care for







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	<p>our children. I am also not prepared to employ people who's incentive for work in to obtain a visa. Currently our passionate team of Highly Qualified Educators are picking up extra shifts because they are loyal and care for our children and families, however they are burning out and considering higher paying jobs with a lot less responsibility. That would be an absolute shame for the children of our future. These Educators are committed, genuine and passionate about advocating for children. We are also required to employ an Early Child Teacher, which in theory is fabulous to increase the standard of our learning programs available for children. Teachers have spent their time training to work in schools and many Centre's are working with waivers due to not being able to keep their teachers or recruit suitable new ones. The other issue we face is the need to increase our fees to cover the costs of wages, inflation etc. Government funding supports the family Gap payment (CCS) which is wonderful if there are Centre's able to operate to provide the care. It's not about making huge profits, its about being able to provide quality care for children, meet the continuously growing expectations of the National Quality Framework all while trying to keep, upskill, employ Employees to meet minimum ratio. My Suggestion would be to look into ways to support Centre's with a wage increase so we are able to meet the high expectations of the NQS, to do this we need educated people, to get Educated people they should be paid accordingly. Lower the requirement for Centre's needing a Teacher. With no disrespect, all of our Educators are able to provide the same Quality care to our children from Cert 3 right through to Degree. I am really worried for the Sector. If we are not taken seriously there will be no Education and Care Centre's for Children. What happens to the workforce then? I would be more than happy to speak privately about this further. It is a problem Centre's are facing all across Australia.</p>
122	<p>Three LDC services, one in North Shore NSW and two in the northern beaches NSW Staff Issues: The sector is having serious difficulties in recruiting new staff which is impacting the current workforce and the high quality of care and education we aim to provide. With the shortages in staff available in the ELC sector, the current staff know they can leave at any stage and easily get another job. As such we are finding the staff hard to retain, less engaged in their work, and easily dissatisfied. Getting full time staff is especially difficult. We prioritise indigenous child and those with special needs. It is getting harder to take on special needs children as we cannot get the extra staff required once we complete the arduous task of getting funding granted. Increasing costs: All our expenses are increasing exponentially, rent, power, wages, food. Increasing fees is our only option to maintain a financially viable and high-quality service, however we are very aware of the impact this has on our valued families that are enrolled. Funding for ISS children does not cover the full day in a LDC environment so it is the services that must cover the additional costs. Centers that are open 10 or more hours a day are lucky to get 6 hours of ISS funding per day and the hourly rate does not cover the cost of the extra educator we need to employ. Impact of Free preschool on LDC Free childcare for community preschools is also greatly impacting our service and the LDC sector. To maximise their funding, the preschools are only enrolling children two days per week which is a departure for their previous model of three days per week for preschool the year prior to school. This two-day model means many families are having to straddle two services to meet their work requirements of care. In many instances they want to enrol their child in LDC just one day per week. This puts extra pressure on our educators to meet the reporting requirements for each child as well as programming to ensure the one-day children's educational needs are being catered to. It also often results in children instead of attending LDC 3 days for 8 hours they are now attending 2 days at free preschool for 6 hours and doing 10½ hours on the third day at LDC so the parents can make up their work hours. We are now having to roster more staff at</p>

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	<p>the beginning and end of days to ensure our ratios are covered – more costs to the service. Free pre-school is resulting in LDC becoming to be seen as baby-sitters and not the providers of quality education we strive so hard to be. To equalise the status of LDC providers as also providers of quality education there should be greater equality in the funding provider. All parents of children whose children are eligible for school the next year can access free pre-school without being means tested. Parents should have access to the same Start Strong Fee relief as community preschools. We are open 51 weeks per year, so parents currently get \$41.37 per week</p>
123	<p>The inquiry into the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector, covering centre-based day care, preschools, family day care, outside school hours care, and in-home care, highlights the challenges faced by operators in centre-based services. This comment emphasizes the difficulties arising from staffing shortages and the cost of wages, and the need to address these issues to enhance access to ECEC services and improve outcomes for children and families. Staffing shortages pose a significant challenge for operators in centre-based services. The demand for qualified early childhood educators often exceeds the available supply, making it difficult to recruit and retain skilled professionals. This shortage not only increases workloads for existing staff but also compromises the quality of care provided, affecting the holistic development of children. Ensuring an adequate number of qualified professionals is crucial for maintaining a safe and nurturing environment. The cost of wages is intricately linked to staffing shortages in centre-based services. To attract and retain qualified educators, operators need to offer competitive wages that reflect the value of their work. However, limited funding and financial constraints often hinder operators' ability to provide sufficient compensation. Inadequate wages can discourage talented individuals from entering or remaining in the early childhood education sector, leading to a drain in skilled workforce and negatively impacting the quality of care provided. Operators in centre-based services face significant challenges due to staffing shortages and the high cost of wages. Staffing difficulties can result in increased turnover rates, disrupting the continuity of care and hindering children's social and emotional development. Moreover, operators must navigate financial pressures, such as balancing budgets, maintaining affordable fees for families, and complying with regulatory requirements. To support centre-based services, it is essential to invest in workforce development initiatives. Increasing funding for professional development, offering scholarships, and implementing targeted recruitment campaigns can attract and retain qualified educators. Additionally, government support in the form of enhanced funding models and subsidies can alleviate the financial burden on operators, enabling them to provide competitive wages without compromising affordability for families. Addressing staffing shortages and offering fair compensation to early childhood educators will strengthen the foundation of centre-based services. This recognition promotes high-quality care and positive outcomes for children and families. By collaborating with government, operators, and stakeholders, we can build a future where all children have access to excellent early childhood education and care.</p>
124	<p>The current staffing crisis, with multiple educators leaving the sector, has created enormous costs to services. Service's must pass this cost on to families, many services are making no profit due to this. Job agencies now have a monopoly on the job market, raising costs further. A casual certificate 3 can be over \$50 per hour minimum. Services have also seen a 200% increase in children needing additional educators (inclusion support) due to behavioural and</p>

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	developmental needs. Inclusion support pays only a tiny part, and does not have concrete solutions for educators who are not trained to care for children with complex needs.
125	I have been in Childcare industry for past ten years, and I never been this depression and want to give up. the shortage of qualified educators and sky rocketing cost of food, rent, other expenses like insurance, educational resources, utilities costs. after Covid-19, we try our best to recruit qualified educators, through job agents, seek advertising. from Jan to May 2013, 4 month, we spend over 80,000 dollars on recruitment only. I believe the problem we facing is that there is less and less young people want to study early childhood education even they did, they want to work casual because they does not want to take the responsibilities. I believe government body should spend some of the budgets on the sector like free education for ECT, Diploma and cert III studies. and have more ways to increase the condition of working environment. How to encourage people to join the industry and we can then improve our standards and qualities.
126	It is important that all children should have access to preschool across Australia. Free preschool in NSW is of great benefit to families, eg vulnerable single income families. It is disappointing that during the recent pandemic Early Childhood Educators were expected to become essential workers . This was described as keeping the economy ticking over . This was while receiving extremely poor wages and conditions - and no increase in sick leave or expected to take leave as in long service leave or leave with out pay to support services and families of essential workers. Consideration must be given to increased sick leave/ discretionary leave and increased hourly rates that match our training, experience , responsibility and accountability , representing the true value to the economy of ECEC in a realistic way. In fact more planning and programming time - being paid in a way that reflects that we are required to by the regulatory authorities . We are governed by a curriculum that requires us like all professions to follow a continuum of personal learning , adhering to policies and procederes that are continually updated. ECEC are responsible for the well-being and mental health of young children. The behaviours of young children are reflecting the many pressures that families are experiencing in our communities. Increased challenges for Educators to keep all children safe when violence occurs , driven by trauma and impacting the safety of all who attend services - all stake holders I feel that ECEC is undervalued because primarily women are the majority of professionals.
127	I work in Early Childhood Education. Some days it is beautiful in that familiar educators are there to welcome the children into their day, work with them during their day to help them build resilliance when educators have to leave the space, work with children who are at the same emotional development stage as they are and don't understand what I want I cannot have right now . Some days are not so beautiful. Educators on leave or sick, casuals who, as hard as they try, do not fill the role and honestly, lucky to get at the moment. We are talking about the building blocks of adult humans yet we dismiss the crucial role we are leading and who we are leading. We need to advocate for our roles in that we are proactive in demonstrating and explaining what we do. Let's not dismiss the pay. How many early childhood educators cannot afford to live where they work due to the fact you can earn more packing shelves at the supermarket? I would like to think I live in a society that acknowledges the role of early childhood education as important.

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128	I think that 3yo and 4yo kinder should follow a set curriculum designed by the Dept of Ed. So much time is wasted by Educators trying to plan and create new and different activities/programs. All children could get a basic level of pre school education, educators could improve their teaching skills and employers could provide better pay for their skilled workers. Kinder would then operate more like our primary schools from 9-3.30pm. Long day care should only be for children up to 3 years of age.
129	It does not make sense that in NSW, centres under 30 places can use clause 242 but over 30 cannot when they have higher numbers of ect requirements than other states. Surely if they have one fully qualified ECT then their second ect can qualify under 242. It is ridiculous that we should be asking families to stay at home if we have adequate ratio but cannot meet either the 50% diploma or ect ratios. Degrees do not always equate to quality. I've employed many ECTs just for their qualification and they have been completely inadequate. I've also had many others who would be much more suitable as responsible persons or leaders etc.
130	Our service struggles with finding experienced staff, retaining them also as large companies paying above the award and other incentives. Then the financials factors we are only just covering wages, we are trying not to raise fees so families can still afford to use our services, but we need to increase to cover wages, resources, cleaning products, nappies etc. A lot more behavioural problems and extra needs coming through, a lot more families who are struggling to feed and clothe the children as well that we try to support. Staff overwhelmed and mentally not coping getting over covid and their own financial issues with low wages.
131	We have no staff to cover sick or holidays. We have to go to work sick or non working families need to keep their children home. Our Cet iii staff have to complete their cet iii again to study their diploma so they are not upskilling. We can't get any diploma qualified staff so it is hard to legally comply with the 50/50 qualification regulation I am struggling to pay my mortgage. I have to get a second job. I can't afforded to work in early childhood education. I am studying to get out. You will lose another diploma qualified educator if our wages don't dramatically increase. We are not crying poor, we are exhausted, burnt out, overworked, underpaid and unappreciated. There are 12 people graduating diploma qualified this YEAR from TAFE NSW! You can't even give the qualification away! <b>WE WILL NOT BE IGNORED ANY LONGER!</b>
132	I am a single mother with two primary aged children. I was the main earner in the family before my partner walked out on us and am now the sole financial provider for my children who also live with me full time. Although I work in the finance industry and earn what is supposedly in the top 2% of taxpayers (I am PAYG so unable to do unlawful expense management like employing my babysitters through a company structure), approximately 30% of my after tax income is spent on in-home care. We live frugally and there is very little left over each month. It's not possible to perform at the level expected in a higher earning job AND access childcare only via approved providers. Even with flexible arrangements, workplaces reasonably expect their employees to work an 8 hour day. With travel that is 10 hours out of the home. Furthermore, utilizing before and afterschool care in a formal setting over extended periods leads to



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	<p>very sub-optimal outcomes for my children (all children need downtime at home and enough sleep). It is unfair that a two income family on \$530k are able to access childcare subsidies for BASC BECAUSE they have the additional adult in the household to deal with the logistics of getting children to and from the care facility. Single parents on higher incomes who are receiving no financial support from the second parent and limited care help should be able to access a similar level of subsidy for in-home care as two parent families accessing formal BASC care. A simple way to control roting would be to require the in-home care providers to be paid on the books through an approved payroll company like Domestic Payroll (NSW - domesticpayroll.com.au). If you are genuinely assessing ways to support better outcomes for children, please take into account the realistic time impost and logistics involved in the intersection of 1) the needs of children, 2) the practical logistics and time impost of travel to and from formal care locations and workplaces, 3) the realistic needs of employers.</p>
133	<p>For rural and remote families the following would make a huge difference without significantly increasing program costs.  Permanent extension of Ministers transitional provision of qualification exemption for remote and rural educators.  A continuation of permitting IHC educators to be working toward a relevant Childcare qualification  Inclusion of primary teaching degree as an acceptable qualification for IHC by ASEQA  Inclusion of primary teaching to be an acceptable qualification to be working towards  A provision for CCS to be paid for children attending in home-care sessions in remote and rural areas, where the Educator is providing supervision to children engaged in public distance education schooling. In recognition that the parents of children who live in remote areas should not have to forego paid work to stay home and supervise distance education, nor should they have to personally pay Educators to provide that supervision, as it is every child's right to free public school and no matter where they live.  Last but not least, increase the IHC hourly rate to \$47 Allow educators to care for children for more than 1 family at once and/or their own child to recognise the limited availability of accommodation in remote areas and widen the pool of available educators.</p>
134	<p>Family Day Educator Fees in the ACT Family Day care Educators in the ACT are predominantly self employed contractors and are required by ACT Government to be covered for workers compensation. This adds around 5% to the Educator Fees as FDC services pass on the costs to the Educators. An Educator charging \$12.00 per hour, will forego 60 cents towards WC premium contributions.</p>
135	<p>IHC should be available to families where children complete their primary schooling via an approved Distance Education School. Current policy excludes the supervision of Distance Education as an acceptable use of IHC. Enrolment in approved Distance Education Schools state that you must provide supervision of the student. Thus policy means parents as productive members of the workforce must forego work and income for the entirety of their children's primary school education. No other school in Australia requires parents not to work. This is unproductive for the country and crippling for remote Australia. Working towards a primary teaching degree should be acceptable in remote locations. Plenty on uni students wish to take a gap year and gain some experience in a school room. Policy is now stating that they must pay for a lesser qualification that will never be required again just so that can gain valuable work experience. In Home Care Educators in remote locations should be acceptable employment to satisfy the working holiday visa conditions of 88 days rural work. Workers in remote Australia are extremely hard to come by. And some backpackers have suitable Early childhood qualification, yet policy states that</p>



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	<p>they must not be employed in remote locations for this purpose. Policy seems to think that instead it's a great idea to send them out by themselves to a remote location on a station and fix a fence. Reality says it makes sense for the parent to complete the isolated farm work and the qualified person provide the care to the child. There needs to be an urgent continuation of IHC educators to be working towards a relevant qualification in remote location to ensure supervision of children continues. Unfortunately schooling and farm work does not stop just because policy changes. There is an urgent undersupply of early childhood workers in rural and remote locations and we must not put extra conditions upon those who may choose this as a working option. IHC educators should be able to care for children from multiple families at the one time. It is completely unrealistic to think that on remote stations there can be multiple carers for each family. There is no supply of carers to start with so what are families supposed to do. Again this is policy removing productive members of the workforce where no other care option exists. IHC agencies should be able to provide a service across state boundaries if no other service is able to provide the option.</p>
136	<p>Many rural and remote families struggle to find educators to care for their children during school hours, especially those who meet to number of qualifications required through In Home Care. While some level of qualification is necessary, it is absurd that working towards a childcare diploma is relevant while working towards a teaching degree is not, particularly where school-aged children and not early-childhood children are concerned. The crackdown on this will only make it harder for parents to find educators for their children, and educators to gain work. This will negatively impact students' education and create further difficulties for rural families.</p>
137	<p>I believe IHC should be accessible for the supervision of children studying via an approved Distance Education School. by making parents responsible for the supervision of the children during their whole primary education you are taking an active participant out of the rural workforce. Children who are studying via an approved Distance Education School is NOT home schooling. These children are enrolled at the most appropriate government school. We need a permanent extension of Ministers transitional provision of qualification exemption for rural and remote educators. Sourcing workers in remote areas is extremely difficult by requiring qualifications you are excluding more people from that workforce. You need to include primary teaching degrees as an acceptable qualification to be working towards. Current educators who want to continue working are being forced to lose their job as they are working towards a primary teaching degree. An IHC Agency specific to remote families should be considered. The employment conditions of remote educators are very different to metropolitan educators and in most instances include accommodation, fuel, vehicle, food. The needs of remote families are very different and could be more appropriately supported by a dedicated agency. You need to look at making Working with Children checks a nationally system. This would allow better movement of this workforce from state to state. Remote In Home Care Educators should be an acceptable occupation to satisfy the work vis condition of 88 days rural. IHC is currently not accessible in some remote locations in particular outback South Australia and this is not acceptable. Agencies should be able to provide a service to those where no other service exists.</p>
138	<p>IHC should be accessible for the supervision of children studying via an approved Distance Education School. Explanation – There is no other school in Australia where the parents must be responsible for supervising their child for the entirety of the child's primary schooling. Enforcing this is removing an</p>

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	<p>active participant in the rural workforce and in most cases placing significant pressure on small businesses. · Studying via an approved Distance Education School is NOT home schooling. You do not home school your children, they are enrolled in the most appropriate government school. · Permanent extension of Ministers transitional provision of qualification exemption for rural and remote educators. Explanation – It is extremely difficult to source remote workers. By requiring qualifications, you are excluding even more people from the potential workforce. · A continuation of permitting IHC educators to be working towards a relevant qualification. · Inclusion of primary teaching degree as an acceptable qualification to be working towards. · Working with Children Checks should be implemented nationally to allow the movement of the workforce. The current system of state based is prohibitive for employees wishing to accept a position in another state. · Remote In Home Care Educators should be an acceptable occupation to satisfy the work visa condition of 88 days rural. Explanation – Many backpackers with Early Childhood qualifications and experience are permitted to work in very remote locations in isolation where the OH&amp;S risk is greatly increased, yet they are not allowed to relieve a parent supervising their child to complete approved Distance Education. This is completely unproductive for the Australian Workforce. · An IHC Agency specific to remote families should be considered. The employment conditions of remote educators are very different to metropolitan educators and in most instances include accommodation, fuel, vehicle, food. The needs of these families are very different and could be more appropriately supported by a dedicated agency.</p>
139	<p>Rebate for in home care needs to be increased otherwise it is unaffordable compared to childcare. Can be crazy for in home care e.g. easy \$200 out of pocket for one day of in home care where others pay that much for multiple days at daycare.</p>
140	<p>In home care, particularly for those of us in rural and remote areas is a very unworkable system. In the NT and WA we only have the choice of one provider, Wanslea. Who on top of our child care subsidy also charge a 10% admin fee, to the educator and to the parent - making this a 20% of the total fee required to be paid ON TOP of the already high fees. Those of us in remote areas, who literally have no other access to subsidised child care, (or any child care) are also required to feed and house our educators, another expense on top of the service fee and the 20% 'admin fee' charged by wanslea. It is actually more expensive and bothersome to employ someone via the IHC system than to just employ privately, thus many families do not have access to subsidised childcare. To access IHC we have no other choice but to go through wanslea, which have proved themselves to be very unhelpful, we supply / source our own educators and do all of our own training as per the requirements of wanslea. There are no resources or additional support provided, other than a fee charging system. It is for this reason that many families do not use IHC and may educators will refuse to be employed under this system.</p>
141	<p>IHC should be accessible for the supervision of children studying via an approved Distance Education School. There is no other school in Australia where the parents must be responsible for supervising their child for the entirety of the child's primary schooling. Enforcing this is removing an active participant in the rural workforce and in most cases placing significant pressure on small businesses. · Studying via an approved Distance Education School is NOT home schooling as they are enrolled in an appropriate government school. · Permanent extension of Ministers transitional provision of qualification exemption for rural and remote educators. It is extremely difficult to source remote workers. By requiring qualifications, you are excluding even more people from the potential workforce. · Inclusion of primary teaching degree as an acceptable qualification to be working towards. · Working with Children Checks should be</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>implemented nationally to allow the movement of the workforce. The current system of state based is prohibitive for employees wishing to accept a position in another state. · Remote In Home Care Educators should be an acceptable occupation to satisfy the work visa condition of 88 days rural. Many backpackers with Early Childhood qualifications and experience are permitted to work in very remote locations in isolation where the OH&amp;S risk is greatly increased, yet they are not allowed to relieve a parent supervising their child to complete approved Distance Education. This is completely unproductive for the Australian Workforce. · An IHC Agency specific to remote families should be considered. The employment conditions of remote educators are very different to metropolitan educators and in most instances include accommodation, fuel, vehicle, food. The needs of these families are very different and could be more appropriately supported by a dedicated agency. · IHC is not accessible in some remote locations (particularly outback SA) and this is not acceptable. Agencies should be able to provide a service to those where no other service exists.</p>
142	<p>Our family lives in outback New South Wales where we are located 80km from our nearest town of White Cliffs. On a good day, it takes us 1.5 hours each way and quite often, especially after rain, the roads are not safe to travel on or just not passable which is not acceptable if we were relying on this town to educate our children. Instead, we use In Home Care (IHC) to allow us to find a supervisor to educate our children through Broken Hill School of the Air (BHSOTA). We have 4 children - Clancy (10), Indi (8), Charlie (6) and Jesse (1) and we run our own 300,000 acre sheep, cattle and goat business. Three out of our 4 children attend BHSOTA and without an educator to supervise our children, their education would unfortunately be seriously disadvantaged in comparison to their city friends and family who have the opportunity to access a free education very close to home. Over the past 5 years we have been fortunate enough to have several amazing young women supervise our children. If the new rules had have been in during these years, we wouldn't have had access to any of them as the girls weren't/aren't working towards their Certificate 3 in Early Childhood. It is already difficult enough to source remote workers, let alone those with qualifications. During times when we have advertised for supervisors on a short-term basis, we have had to rule out any international applicants. Even if a backpacker had Early Childhood qualifications, they are not allowed to relieve a parent supervising their children to complete approved Distance Education. This is extremely unproductive for the Australian Workforce. If we were unable to access IHC, several problems would arise; - We would be paying more money than some private boarding schools to educate our primary aged children. - Our farming business would be under pressure as we as parents would both need to supervise and educate our children as well as run a challenging agricultural business. Studying via an approved Distance Education School such as BHSOTA is not home schooling. Our 3 children are all enrolled in the most appropriate government school for our isolated situation. We think that an IHC Agency specific to remote families should be considered. Our employment conditions are completely different to that of our city friends and in most cases, include accommodation, fuel, vehicles, food, internet, and power. The needs of these families are very different and could be more appropriately supported by a dedicated agency. In conclusion, we believe that IHC should be accessible for the supervision of children studying via an approved Distance Education School such as BHSOTA. There is no other school in Australia where the parents must be responsible for supervising their child for the entirety of the child's primary schooling. Enforcing this is removing an active participant in the rural workforce and in most cases, placing significant pressure on small businesses, family relations.</p>

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143	Why do Educators spend just as many years studying as primary school teachers, & yet are paid so underwhelmingly? Why is this sector still referred to as 'childcare'? This term does not accurately represent what do nor the expectations/ regulations we comply with.
144	The currently shortage of qualified educators is leading to increased workloads, compromised quality of care, and most importantly, a shortage of available spaces for children in our community. This situation not only hampers the immediate wellbeing of our children but also has long term consequences for the future of our society. We need to be recognised for the important job we do and be paid accordingly. This pay increase needs to be subsidised by the government so that the quality of care can continue and families are not further out of pocket (as fees are already so expensive).
145	Wanting to make the commission aware, Child Support legislation Registration and Collect Act allows for separated parents to make application for additional assistance from the other parent to assist with Child Care and before/after school care costs. See Application to Change your Assessment in Special Circumstances, Form CS1970 on the Services Australia website, in particular Reason 6. This may assist separated parents with the increasing costs of child care.
146	We have been on a waitlist since we were 12 weeks pregnant. We have a 2 week old baby and we do not know when we can get care and we are at risk of losing our home if we cannot both return to work.
147	I am currently on maternity leave from my public sector role. I am due to return back in July 2024, I have been on daycare wait lists since December 2022. I have no secured a position for my child for 2024. I am currently on 15 wait lists and will need to join more that are out of area. I cannot return to my paid employment if I cannot find childcare for my child. This will severely affect my family financial and put us into great risk with our mortgage.
148	I have had to choose between my job and my kids because of the childcare crisis. Luckily, I'm in a position where choosing my kids was a no-brainer for me and I was able to leave the job to help raise them. Because of this, though, we may not be able to move to a bigger house.
149	Govt funding for raising award wages, ECT qualified staff receiving the same incentives as other Teachers, closure over end of year, shorter hours across long day cares eg 10hrs not 12hrs of operation.
150	The childcare crisis is coupled with the housing/rental crisis, we are new parents with a 1 year old, we've lived in Sydney's eastern suburbs for 11 years but are now forced to leave the area due to the cost of rental properties. We have been on childcare waitlists since May 2022. We were recently offered a spot for 2 days but had to turn it down due to eviction on 'no grounds' leaving us unsure about where we will live. Moving out of the area we will have to start the process of childcare search and applications again. The area we move to will be decided on cost of living and availability of childcare. We have previously remained in the area due to access to work, IVF treatment and of course, friendship support, which is important without family support. If we are able to find

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	<p>childcare, we have an opportunity to work more. Currently my partner and I are working part time to care for our child. This has proved very stressful and continues to present stress into the future. We are even considering moving back to Europe to love with family. Becoming new parents is stressful enough. Our concern is for the well-being of our family.</p>
151	<p>The Early Childhood industry is suffering. We have an incredibly high demand for care across the central coast in NSW in particular and not enough spaces to cater to the children needing care. Our educators are struggling with the demand and as a Centre Manager, it is heartbreaking having to tell families they may not get a spot for 1-2 years. Families are at a loss. There are centres out there who have the space, but they do not have the staff to cater for new children. The government need to look at the Children Services award and significantly increase our wages. This will create more interest into one of the most important jobs our country relies on. There needs to also be a significant different between a certificate III worker and a diploma to entice people to further their studies. Our regulations require to have 50% diploma trained educators, however, many people dont want to further their studies due to only receiving around a \$1-2 pay increase. During covid, we were seen as babysitters, just a means for those who are seen as more important be able to go to work. We were not thanked, instead 'child care' was made free for all families which enabled families who weren't working to send their children. We were over worked during such a stressful time with absolutely no care towards us and our own families. The higher CCS for siblings, again such a fantastic initiative for families. however again this created a huge influx of enrolments of siblings that has now left no spaces for new parents. again, where is the acknowledgement to our educators? for 2024 enrolments we have only been able to offer around 12 new families a space in our centre out of nearly 400 on our waitlist. Another struggle we are having is the impact of covid to the younger children and the increase in challenging behaviours. So many of our children do not receive the NDIS funding they deserve and our access to government funding for an ISS worker is incredibly time consuming (time that we just don't have) as well as very limited to what we can do. The funding allows for an additional worker for the room that reduces ratio sizes however this is not someone who is trained in additional needs. This funding is also given only if we have children with a diagnosis, however a lot of parents of 0-5 year olds are in denial but also sometimes the children just display challenging behaviours that does warrant a diagnosis, but we could do wonders if we could provide an additional educator in the rooms. Bottom line, to fix the early childhood shortages of spaces you need to fix our wages to attract new talent. We are predominately women and one of the lowest paid in our country. If we all walked away, no one could work.</p>
152	<p>In June 2023 I waitlisted my three year old daughter and 9 month old at more than 43 daycare locations across the central coast - to start in Jan 2024. From September to November I received a call from two locations saying they had a few days available for my 3 year old. I still haven't received a place anywhere for my 9 month old. I'm meant to go back to work in January after maternity leave and have to delay it until I find childcare for my baby.</p>
153	<p>Early childhood educator is very hard working for little pay. The pay should be more attractive and more appreciated and we should be look after well by government. It is getting harder to work in industry as there are more challenging behaviour and disabilities children that required more individual care. The ratio to child and educator should be less for younger baby as they will need more care.</p>

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154	<p>To whom it may concern, I'm reaching out to you because I want to explain my personal situation. The most important for the Australian Government is to find ways to support better outcomes for children and families and I guess also educators. After finishing my degree in educational training (4 years) back in Germany, I worked with children (0-6 years old) for almost 5 years. Since the rules for the 494 visa (sponsored visa) changed July 2023 (you now need to earn 70,000\$ a year) I'm not able to work in this field in Australia anymore. When I came here in July 2023, I got all my qualifications assessed, passed the IELTS (International English Language Test) and found a sponsor already, it was a really big setback for me. The Child Care Center was in big need for an educator, but there was no way to pay me 70,000\$ a year. It's worrying me to see how Child Care Centers struggle and this big change is making it even harder for qualified internationals to work in that field in Australia. I'm really hoping that there will be a change, since I love my job and I would be happy to support Child care centres in Australia.</p>
155	<p>We moved to the central coast in the last six months. We phoned over 20 providers and are on the waiting list for 8 of them. The rest of the centres wouldn't add us to the waiting list as they said a space wouldn't be available until 2025 and my son would be at school by then. The shortest waiting list was 110. The longest was 410. My son is now at three different centres. 1 day in Mount Colah, 1 day in Hornsby and 2 days in the City. Insanity.</p>
156	<p>Staffing has become a huge issue in childcare and current employees are struggling. The pay is not worth the cost of qualifications, the responsibility nor expectations of knowledge and expertise. We are a child behaviourist and family counsellor. We provide informed support for emotional, physical and cognitive development, planning (and reporting) around each individual in your care. The demands of being face to face means paper work usually takes place in our own time and the cost of smaller resources out of our own pocket.</p>
157	<p>I am moving to north Avoca in January from Sydney, we have two young boys - aged 3 and 18 months. Both my husband and I are required to work to pay the mortgage however we have been told the current wait times for my youngest is 12 months, one centre said they have 350 on the waitlist so really no point. We have tried 25 different centres of which some are not even letting us put our names down. What will we do? The government must immediately provide relief/subsidies for nannies - we will have no other option but that could result in my husband not actually making an income after paying for the nanny. HELP!</p>
158	<p>We live in Umina Bch, I joined several daycare waiting lists in February 2022 when I was pregnant and just got a spot offered for 2024. I was lucky that my 70 yr OLD mother came from overseas (18hrs flight) and helped me looking after my baby because I couldn't afford to take more than 7 months unpaid leave, it's very distressing dealing with post partum and going back to work earlier than expected. Food, electricity, council rates, house interest rates are going up and up. We are forced to return to work in order to keep up with inflation, but guess what? In addition to the stress we need to deal with the shortage of daycare/staff in the CC. When is this going to stop? Are we living in a third world country or in Australia? I pay my taxes to support others that don't want to work or work cash on hand while I have to work being away from my kids to try to maintain a 'decent' life style. We are a family of 4 with no</p>

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	family near us able to help us, As mentioned before our problem is now fixed but I'm here to support all other families that are in the same stress that we have been for the last 2 years.
159	Australia has a large percentage of Early Childhood Services being run and operated by individuals with no interest in learning anything about the services they sell. The sector itself is viewed as a foot Into business and property investments. They see basic health and safety standards as 'burdens' because they don't know how to meet the regulatory requirements and refuse to open a book and learn. I have seen many directors leave in anguish as their passion is slowly depleted from them. Once a passionate educator now a slave driven business operator. Their leaders only communicating to spend less and enrol more. The lack of personal investment from these operators, strips the whole purpose of the NQF away from the service and puts the babysitting back into childcare. Now picture this as an educator. Your time is only valued when you are in ratio. Do not plan to teach, do not receive time to assess. Your time is only valued when you are supervising. Isn't that the definition of a professional babysitter? The on-going wage theft from overtime and expecting staff to be setting up the premises prior to paid time is so normalised that it's a common expectation of employment. What other industry does not pay you for the overtime that is demanded? Educators are struck with moral dilemmas every afternoon when their shift is finished but the ratios are too high. You wont get paid if you stay longer, you won't get paid for staff meetings, but you're expected to 'always be a team player' and engage in 'self-directed professional development'. This type of industry culture is what is ruining the sector. Educators and Directors need purpose, they are passionate about children, so when you are overworked, underpaid, gaslight and psychologically abused the last thing you want to hear is that the roster cost too much or that we didn't get enough enrolments this week so the classrooms get no resources.
160	First things first, Childcare Subsidy should not be hours based - it should be day based. Can be silly for families to only have access to 72 hours. Make it 10 days in the fortnight, and if families earn too much, lower their CCS percentage so that it doesn't hurt low income families. The fact that OSHC is governed under a Long Day Care governing body is crazy. We are expected to perform the same amount of observations on 2x the children (in my services case - 4x the children). There isn't enough time in the day to maintain the standards expected of documentation requirements for when you have over 300 children a week and need to write about their progress regularly. Families only think of us as a child-minding service (Babysitting), not an early education and care service.
161	If it wasn't for my son's grandmother I would have to quit work entirely. I can only work part time and my husband has reduced work hours throughout the week. All because the waitlists for daycare on the Central Coast NSW are not budging. My son is on 20 waitlists and my response from the daycare centres is all the same - no spots for 2024. How can a family support themselves without the ability to work. This should be a top priority - please help!
162	There is not nearly enough childcare spaces on the central Coast of NSW. It is at the point where everyone is panic waitlisting at all facilities which makes it worse because they are going to ones further afield from where they live making the Waitlists longer.



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163	<p>Over the past 35 years I have observed many changes within our sector from regulations and accreditation to the now unreliable and inconsistent assessment and rating through yet another governing body. The sector is tired of having tantrums to get attention! Covid has helped our plea for recognition with increased awareness from community, NGO's, Government's both state and federal and families. The paperwork is unrealistic, outdated and just not relevant and is not clear or consistent across the sector. Hoping that finally this gets some balance and equity to all families and early childhood educators alike.</p>
164	<p>Addressing the critical shortage of qualified directors, teachers and educators is not only bound to pay inequities but is also intimately linked to the ever-growing workload and the need for evidence of compliance. This workload and these requirements, not only comes from the State Education Department for regulatory compliance and NQF, but also includes ACECQA, NSW Office of Childrens Guardian, KU Childrens Services (as brokers of our DIP funding) NSW Food Authority, Department of Health, NSW Fire and Rescue to name a few. I do not include internal stakeholders or payroll /ATO in this list. The everchanging priorities of external departments and organizations regarding changes needing our immediate attention is bewildering and impacts on wellbeing. Often these changes are linked to our funding in what appears to be a coercive way. This causes burnout and staff unhappiness. Our work with children brings us joy and fulfillment as we bear witness to a life being lived in all its astounding wonder. When we are stuck in a room away from this, completing endless amounts of paperwork and compliance proof, the reason we chose Early Childhood disappears, our work becomes onerous and meaningless. Why would we stay? Everyone needs something from us, they empty their in-tray into ours thinking they are the only ones asking things of us, but they are not. After 35 years in Early Childhood, I can say I have never had so many external organization's wanting us to prioritise their goals. It is actually impossible and leads us to be terrified of breaches and legal action if we unintentionally get it wrong. Why would you choose to do this? Whilst never scared of change and using evidence-based understandings, displayed by our heroics holding the workforce together during COVID, we need to reduce the overwhelming amount of paperwork "needed "by others. We need one organisation to deal with not multiple. One organisation supporting us through all the changes that take place and keeping us informed. What is ACECQA for if not this? We need one funding arrangement that is inclusive of all service types for the 5 years prior to a child going to school, and we need to increase Community Based Not for Profit services who meet the community where they are, regardless of the socio-economic area, and decrease the Governments reliance on corporate for- profit behemoths.</p>
165	<p>The critical shortage of early childhood professionals needs urgent attention. The demands faced by ECEC workers have taken a toll on the profession resulting in many leaving the profession. As a former director I have seen this happen and faced the challenges of trying to recruit more staff. The lack of recognition of the importance of high quality early childhood education beyond keeping parents at work results in educators feeling undervalued. In addition to this, the expectations that ECEC professionals remain at wor during COVID with no recognition of the important role that they played and without timely and practical advice put an extreme burden on educators and directors. I left my role as a director because I just couldn't deal with the unrelenting pressure any more - pressure from regulatory authorities, families, the managing organisation and team members. I believed in striving for high quality but covid saw team members really struggling at times are there was little to no support available outside of the work place to help with this. What is needed is a single</p>

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	regulatory authority that sets expectations and funding for all children's services operating for children between 0 and 6 years of age. That sets us up with the professional recognition that truly and meaningfully demonstrates the value of early childhood education in the development and ongoing learning of children in our communities. It also needs to address the continuing approval of new services when there are not enough educators to operate the services that are already operational. Early childhood can be a wonderful and fulfilling profession when the conditions are good. I am now employed as a teacher at a wonderful service but I can see the pressure and unreasonable expectations on the service director to meet the expectations of different agencies and the impact that this has on them.
166	I put ourselves on the wait-list for three local childcare centres in September 2022 for a spot 4 days a week commencing in January 2024. I was practically laughed off the phone at the time, yet come October 2023, we did not get into any of these childcare centres as "spots were already taken". The waiting lists seemed arbitrary and I was forced to ring 20+ childcare centres when most had already finalized their enrolments. We ended up getting into a childcare facility, however the service is woeful. We have no idea how long our little one has slept, only a vague idea of what food they've had and most days we're picking him up so hungry and tired, that we have to feed him and put him straight down for a nap at 5.30pm, if he hasn't already fallen asleep in the car. This is despite promises of using an app, but best we've received is an occasional update on a written chart. The educators and carers are lovely, but are clearly overworked and don't have time to properly care for the nursery kids, despite meeting the recommended ratio of 1:4. They provide food but it's not even nutritious, some day cares I visited were serving melted ice cream at 10am to nursery children. How bad is it, when you're forced to work due to cost of living and payment entitlements dried up, but the childcare centres can't even take care of your child properly.
167	As an early childhood educator, whilst we would love childcare to be more affordable, you need to take into account us the educators. We are overworked and underpaid. We do 2 observations per month per child, set up room programs, experiences, daily journals plus general duties. We are looked at as less than educators and teachers and our settings being early learning environments. Without us the world simply could not run. Along with this we are working over ratio most days as the struggle to find and keep staff, as well as money hungry owners who do not want to pay for casuals. The educators that have chosen to stay in the industry should have better working conditions and better pay. We should be in the same group as primary and high school teachers. It's time for the government and the rest of Australia to start recognising us as more than baby sitters. If you want us to be baby sitters then lessen our work load and let us play with the children all day and not spend the whole time focussing on writing day books and taking hundreds of photos to get for the journals and observations. If you don't want to do this, make it regulation for more then 2 hours off the floor a week and give us better pay.
168	I worked at a centre in Canberra for 18 months as the educational leader. During my time I worked overtime at least once a fortnight. One fortnight I worked 84 hours to- a full day over my contracted hours, to help the service meet the minimum ratio requirements. I reported being over ratio to NQAITS at least once a month and we reported so many injuries due to lack of supervision. On top of that the director of the centre demonstrated bullying behaviours and due to no other suitable replacements, got away with it. I understand why people leave the sector and don't come back. This experience broke me.

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169	<p>I have been working for 8 years within this industry of Early childhood and educator and care. The fact is children are attending longer hours and days at the service as parents are working longer. Therefore there has been a lot of times were when we have been out of ratio for more than 30mins. This isn't about roaster system its fact that educators are getting burn out and have more sick days due to the mental and physical stress and demand and expectations across the services. Using the under the roof line doesn't help with dynamic flow and routines of the room to give the children care and teachable moments. On top of that there are more services getting build but not enough staff enrolled we also need to think about why the turn over rate is high within this industry. we also do not get paid enough with all responsibility, chores, duty of care and no overtime with meeting. Company I have work for made me pay for first aid which is part of requirement. we also don't getting enough tools ad resources to help children from special needs or behaviour management. I am a room leader and its been 2 weeks without any planning done even its only jan getting slightly behind can caused more stress with the planning cycle. How is it possible to run the room when we are over book the room because it meets under the roof line its ok to add extra children in my room but I don't have enough space for bed and needed more educators in my room to help with ratio and then not getting consistig because people are often calling in sick which again having different educators from agency and yes helps for supervision but not following the plan of the room and what we are learning. so not only I'm teaching children but teaching educators as well then starting all over again next day. This has a domino effect from not giving the children the best quality and care and how corners and bad practices start. This is also just scratching the surfaces as we haven't even began to see the effect of COVID babies that were born at the time and having more difficult adjusting at the centre.</p>
170	<p>Early childhood educators are being stretched to their limits, and with the way that they are treated, it is no wonder there is staff shortages. Educators are seen as airy and brainless, when in reality they are a vital part of a child's early development, and a critical support towards teaching children how to be socially responsible and confident human beings. They are constantly left over ratio, and are expected to uphold professional standards under high levels of stress, both from management and the community around them. Educators are treated as less of a human than a rock these days, except for the few who understand the depth of the industry. All of this stress for ridiculously low payrates at any level, despite constant responsibilities and commitments both inside and outside of work hours. Australia needs to do better for the people who are helping to raise the next generations. Services are having to hire inexperienced younger educators due to shortages and lower payrates, which furthers the stereotypes of educators being dull brained and encourages the mistreatment and bullying of educators.</p>
171	<p>As an educator I have experienced being left out of ratio and knowingly by other experienced educators, I have felt a lack of proper training and support by my management, I have felt unsafe when dealing with children that have behavioural needs and not receiving support, I have been underpaid for staff meetings, I have been expected to work outside of my rostered hours and childcare and contributed to my burn out.</p>
172	<p>As an educator, I've faced challenges like exclusion from my team, inadequate support, safety concerns with behavioural needs, extra work beyond scheduled hours, and burnout. The pay rate is too low for what is expected of you on the job. There is no barely any support in this industry.</p>

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173	Over worked with little to no training. We have been left out of ratio. We have not been paid for overtime correctly and not paid correctly for attending meetings. Faced with work place bullying.
174	i was always required to be in the centre 15 mins before my shift (not paid) to then be on floor on my exact start time. during covid, we had to do the RAT tests in an additional 15 mins earlier (again not paid time). we never had professional cleaners it was always staff. I was having to leave 15-20 mins min late everyday (not paid). ratio at times was extremely sparse and we would often have to "bump up" children. behaviours were ignored by management as they had a good relationship with the parents and parents were not willing to hear it/ acknowledge it.
175	Early childcare is a industry which is commonly forgotten about. As educators we bring up the new generation and help to support them through the most important years of their life's. We are committed to the children and families yet we seem over worked and squeezed for every last bit of our energy. While families enjoy their Christmas breaks, educators are still working and looking after children whose parents are enjoying their time off work. As an early childcare educator we support each individual child through their unique life experiences which includes knowing their dietary requirements, their family dynamics, culture, their development and learning needs. We are not only just an early childcare provider, are we teachers which are commonly forgotten about.
176	As an EDUCATOR who has worked within multiple ECEC service I have seen that cramming 25 plus children between the ages of 2-4 years old into a room will not get them the quality care and education they need. No one wants to work in this sector because of how underpaid we are. But still Centre are enrolling more and more children because of how high demand care is but, still being over in ratios and centre directors are just letting it slid. As an educator, the stress and pressure we feel in our days because of understaffing and over booking children is ridiculous. We have studies for these qualifications and would not be able to work in this sector without these qualifications so saying that we are snot wiping, diaper changing air heads is just crazy. A lot of people don't realise all the details, routines, guidelines, safety standards, policies and procedures we have to follow just before we open the doors. We teach the children many skills including literacy and maths and I can guarantee that children who are 5 days a week learn more with us than they do with you at home. Even children who attended less days are provided with so many learning opportunities. More than anyone not in the sector would understand.
177	I have been in the sector for 8 years and started off as a trainee at \$10 an hour, I was worked to the ground but hey you do that for the job you love. I completed my course and was still not given any appreciation for the hours of unpaid work, the bullying, the harsh words from many. I studied for 2 years to be paid less than most who don't have to study for their job role. We are constantly used, abused, mistreated, overworked, underappreciated and by far underpaid, you don't have quality educators in the sector anymore because all the good ones woke up to the disgusting way educators are treated. The constant upskill, meetings, first aids, cpr, modules, late nights, the PDs and what do we get.

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178	We are not given enough time to adequately program and plan for the children. A lot of Educators do this in their own time. Not enough qualified staff, being left with Trainees. Over ratio and left with unqualified staff. Expectations for programming are becoming higher and higher without any extra time.
179	Working at a centre that is constantly over ratio and understaffed, extremely high expectations of working longer due to ratios with no additional pay. Not able to have full breaks and complete burn out daily. My passion is childcare but getting paid just over \$20 an hour completing my cert 3 as a 30 year old female whilst working so hard daily to make a change in the life's of these children. The whole industry is struggling to make ends meet. Educators are relying on lunch at the centre to eat due to cost of living and no increase in wages. There needs to be reform ASAP or the ECE sector will lose a lot of amazing educators who just can't fathom living under financial stress anymore.
180	I work as an ECT in a childcare setting, we are constantly left out of ratio, to avoid paying extra staffing. Inclusion support is not being given for children in the room when funding has been approved. We are also expected to just put up and deal with children's behaviour even to the point that it has put staff members on work cover for injuries from children. The industry has let down its workers to the point that we have lost all hardworking educators.
181	The Early Childhood Education and Care sector is falling apart. -Constantly being over-ratio -No support for children with additional needs (including children that display acts of violence towards educator and children) -No resources (educators end up buying resources for their room as many centres refuse to buy many) -No cleaners, and educators needing to clean whilst on the floor with the children in ratio. This leads to minimised supervision, more incidents, and less time spent with the children. Not to mention that chemicals should not be used when children are present. -Being verbally abused by parents. -Being told to stay back but not being paid overtime. -The amount of documentation we are expected to do with no programming time due to lack of staff (daily journals, observations, follow ups, fortnightly mini observations, educational program planning and reflection, checklists, individual learning plans, projects etc. -Minimal relief staff meaning sick staff are being forced to come into work and spreading viruses around amongst other staff and children. There is so much more wrong with this sector, however I believe these are the issues that need to be addressed immediately. If these issues aren't resolved, expect many more educators to leave the industry in the near future.
182	Early Childhood is critical to establish the foundational skills a child will need for the rest of their life. The most significant factors that are impacting the ECEC sector is the impossible expectations and demands placed upon educators and services. Not only are educators given the high and stressful responsibilities of providing care and learning to multiple children at once, but we are given poor pay, negative connotations and derogatory remarks regarding our profession, lacking support, unattainable and high expectations, hostile environments and poor ratios. Educators often end up staying back for hours each week to cover unmet ratios due to lack of qualified educators. There is an issue with the quality of educators, but with the poor conditions and lack of recognition for what Early Childhood Educators do, there is no incentive to gain quality educators and the quality educators soon move off to other professions. With the lack of respect, pay and horrible conditions, it is no wonder that there is a shortage of quality educators and poor programs for

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	children. There needs to be investment, support and recognition for Educators otherwise there will be nothing left of this sector. This sector is in crisis, it will only continue to get worse unless you INVEST IN US!
183	As I early years educated I have spent countless hours outside of my working hours unpaid to make and provide children with learning resources that are not reimbursed by my employer, I also spend countless hours outside of work unpaid writing observations and writing up plans to meet the needs of the education department as they believe 15 minutes per child is enough to plan and write up observations in a paid working time, while also dealing being understaffed and parents sending children into care.
184	I currently work in early childhood and have done since 2016 when I finished school. I studied at collage for 2 years, done a 2 year apprenticeship, and then also done a 12 month traineeship to gain my cert 3 qualification and diploma . Alongside this I had to ensure I undertook first aid training, child protection training, supervision training, a working with children check and a police check all before I could work with the children. Being in a management role means taking care of ALL the children's wellbeing, health and development as well as the teams. Everyday I am responsible for over 100 people. I don't just sit and sing happy and you know it, I track the children's learning ensuring they are reaching their developmental milestones, I help them build relationships with peers and adults, we teach them social skills, language skills, ALL of the foundational skills they will need for life. A child's brain develops most in the first 5 years of their life and I am in charge of ensuring they receive the best opportunity to do so. We are expected to do all of that mentioned above and more but yet are just treated as babysitters. Who do you think prepares your child for school and teaches them all of the important life skills they need before being able to attend? Us early childhood educators that's who. Yet the teacher at kindy and upwards get all the credit with a much lower work load and a much fatter pay check. We have to worry about ratios, laws, regulations, policies etc yet we are in one of the lowest paid industries out there. It is beyond a joke. I am incredibly passionate about my job as are many other educators but we deserve so much more recognition for all the hard work we put in everyday. Do more government, do more.
185	Working overtime almost daily. Being over ratio daily because lack of staff/ too many children enrolled. Copping abuse from families. Not having recourses to manage special needs children or complex behaviours. Not having the time to complete all documentation to create meaningful programs to engage with the children. Only 10 sick days a year even though we are around and caring for children who are sick all day.
186	As a professional in the EC sector for almost 10 years it has become increasingly more difficult over the last few years to retain quality staff who have a passion for the sector. Passionate educators are leaving the industry in droves to afford to live and for better working conditions. Ratios are constantly not being met due to the decrease in staff and increase in child numbers, additional needs and challenging behaviours with little support are higher then ever, meetings outside work hours are frequently unpaid and wages are barely enough to get by. The government needs to conduct a serious overhaul of the sector and provide those in the industry with higher pay and ensure better working conditions. Not only will this attract quality professionals to a sector that is drowning in shortages, but a higher quality education will be delivered. ECTs in Qld are in dire need, yet pay and incentive wise they don't even compare to

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	those in a school, this is why more and more ECTs are leaving to go to schools where they are appreciated. Heart jobs don't pay the bills, passion these days is not enough, something needs to be done now to secure a better future for the Early Years sector.
187	<p>Early childcare settings have many different aspects to be looked at, from the staff and qualifications, the work environment conditions, support systems, ongoing centre financial support for resources and educator skill building and injury support and management. The centre I work for has a main focus of attendance percentage of enrolments, they follow a day to day basis as opposed to a reality of the whole enrolment numbers through the week. Injuries in the workplace to educators have been brutally ignored and left unreported, while educators are forced to provide evidence and medical clearance before return all while using their own annual and sick leave and God forbid if your child is also enrolled you are still required to pay for those days even when you struggle to get out of bed and no apology or check in until staff are needed so they contact you to come back! Support to do any type of improvement training for staff is very far and few between, and if something is found and suitable it take weeks or months to be approved due to funding. When doing any qualification to enter this industry there needs to be more hands on teachings and equal amounts or less paperwork involved. Too many workers in this industry are leaving school sitting in another class room and going straight into the job with inadequate hands on training, leading to more injuries in children and uncertainty into how to handle most situations through the day, you are not taught any curriculum planning, how to set activities appropriate to the ages and in too many cases how to calm and assure a child. The pay isn't great but also the new lot of workers coming into this field isn't either, those that have been around for more than 3 years will understand this and need to be given so much more credit than they ever get now! Parents also need to learn that we don't just sit around wiping noses and singing nursery rhymes, we cater to your child's every need all day, we assure them that they are safe, offer them many learning activities all day, all week, some are in childcare more than they are at home some spend all their day their only to go home to bathe, eat dinner and be sent to bed only to do it all again the next day! Some have a better relationship with their educators than their parents! This is the reality! The cleaning, the programming, the long hours, the ratios the ratio of permanent educators to agency staff is ridiculous, why because being contracted out pays way more than having a secure job, being an agency you don't have to deal with departments or parents or directors but you will be paid a ton lot more than those who dedicate their time, energy and have employment security on a day to day basis only to be treated worse off all around. Things need to change dramatically and starting with centre owners being held responsible and government programs too!</p>
188	<p>My partner and I both work as educators we can barely survive of our low paid wage. If I hold a diploma in any other area I would be paid a substantial amount more. We are constantly under staffed, overworked and under paid. Educators are leaving as they are burnt out. Fix it. The rich get richer with these companies and their educators well they struggle to pay the bills.</p>
189	<p>The level of stress and lack of support for additional needs is driving educators out of the workforce. 2 hours per week for one member of staff per room is not nearly enough to get all of the planning done to a quality standard, there needs to be more time off the floor as trying to do this whilst also supervising a group of children is dangerous and causes a great deal of accidents. We need to get rid of the 3 month trial period without a qualification as it is a managers way of getting new staff and meeting ratios however these people have never changed a nappy or sometimes held a baby in their life, it puts more pressure</p>



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	<p>on qualified staff. The pay rate for the considerable amount of work done and responsibility is not right and needs to be increased. We have many children with additional needs that can take months if not years to get the help they need which leaves educators taken out of ratio to work one on one with the child to help them and when asked for extra staff are told no as we can't afford it.</p>
190	<p>The Early Childhood sector has been increasingly getting worse over the years. As an early childhood educator, I often feel the lack of support from the government. There should be more funding for childcare as we are the ones experiencing most children's first vital years. The hours, the demands, the pressures that are faced daily is what is draining educators everyday, not the children. Not only is there a lack of respect from the government in terms of wages, documents and demands but there is also the ongoing needs from parents. Daily we are faced with parents who expect a certain level of care for their individual children. However how are we supposed to meet these needs when there is a certain ratio that is unrealistic. Not mention that not all children are simple, some may have additional needs, behavioural issues, life impacts. Too often I would be in a room with one other educator and 22 children, half of which had behavioural issues. You then expect me to set up educational activities and programs, to keep all documents up to date and have the room kept in a hygienic condition. How are these realistic expectations? Though if all of this isn't done then my director gets in trouble and then the centre gets in trouble, resulting in loss of staff and children. There needs to be a change. There is also an increasing need for staff but due to poor pay we often are left with little to no staff. Another thing I do not understand is how you can still allow "working towards" certificate 3 and diploma in the workplace however you can't be "working towards" a bachelor. This does not make sense. Allowing "working towards" bachelor level educators to work and be paid as such would really enhance the level of care. These students are the ones who are currently receiving the education meaning it's most fresh in their minds which results in a better level of care. Please we need a change in terms of education, pays, ratios and benefits.</p>
191	<p>As early childcare workers we are an integral part of a child's upbringing. Without early childhood educators many families would only have one income. We make it possible for the working community to exist. Children who attend early childhood centres are cared for by hard working, under paid, under appreciated fully trained educators who take on the role of the parent for those hours that the parent cannot. Early childhood Educators are not just called educators because we think we teach your children , we actually teach them how to interact positively with others, we teach them the building blocks of life and provide the stepping stones to their education future. During our career we are provided with the tools to guide the children from birth to school age the essential basics that will give them the best start in life. Some of the community look at us like glorified baby sitters but if we didn't step up and care for their children, many families would only have one income and wouldn't be able to afford the house they live in or to put food on their table. I have worked as an Early childhood educator for the past 19 years, I am proud to say the children who I know, have benefited from the care and education that I myself and my peers have provided have become strong, happy, well adjusted humans who can seamlessly enter into mainstream school with confidence and pride in themselves. I love being an early childhood educator even if the pay is crap and the work can be tedious days. I would rather know that I have contributed to the health and education of our future little humans than to go back to where children were told to be seen but not heard.</p>

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192	<p>Working 14 hour shifts away from my own children due to the lack of educators now willing to work within the early education sector is ridiculous. Educators are dropping like flies because they simply can not afford to be paid minimum wage to get by with inflation making everything so expensive. Having employers press you to get time in Lieu for staff meetings rather than paying or using "we bought dinner that's our contribution" is disgusting. The early childhood sector is already a stressful place to be caring for the minimum children in a ratio is hard but being made to be over ratio is harder. I've been put in rooms with 3 educators with children 0-1.5. 24 children under 2 in nsw the ratio is 1 educator for 4 children in that age group we were 12 children over.</p>
193	<p>I have been working in a centre-based daycare for 4 years. Early Childhood Educators are not paid anywhere near enough for all of the duties and responsibilities they are expected to perform daily. Early Childhood Educators are living pay check to pay check and can barely afford to live. Early Childhood Educators are pressured to work even very ill, due to extreme understaffing and not being able to cover ratios. More and More educators are leaving the sector every day to work in other higher-paying professions that do not bring on the stress, body pain and challenges that this one does. In order for early childhood educators to continue to meet the needs of every child, and for ECE to remain of a high quality that has been diminishing for years, the pay for educators must be raised.</p>
194	<p>1 Staff shortage and lack of competent staff - need the workforce to be more attractive and enticing 2 Bring face to face learning back 3 Inclusion support approved (IDFM) we have a high need child and developmental delay child of a toddler, behavioural challenges, screamer, sensory overload attend 5 hours and only 3 hours approved at \$23 ph (is this a joke) 4 KIS fund approved - provided not qualified staff 5 under payment for educators in the Sector overall 6 Free Kinder has taken hit with our service - we are integrated kinder and long day care, we are a non for profit one classroom centre and can't compete with sessional or stand alone - our enrolments are way down, given how hard families are doing it tough with finance it's understandable why they choose free Kinder over Intergraded. We have 5 of our 8 educators who have been with us for over 10 years and are feeling despondent with the lack if support and recognition by our powers to be and the lack of quality educators coming through.</p>
195	<p>As someone with personal experience as well as friends and family that work in the industry, early childhood education and educators deserve better. The obvious reasons being that they're underpaid, under educated and neglected by upper management but also lack support, empathy and recognition when it comes to working over-time, ratios and workplace bullying/discrimination. Not to mention the impact mentally and physically early childhood education has on staff. Staff are constantly putting themselves at risk of sickness and injury when walking into a centre - to have their work unrecognised financially and professionally. As well as all of this - parents are paying over \$100 a day MINIMUM to have their children looked after by staff that are under appreciated in so many disrespectful/inhumane ways. Where is this money going? Why is there not more resources and support for children with behavioural/learning difficulties? Why is the money not going to improving the quality of education, support and staff acknowledgment? Instead of asking WHY we need to ask HOW and WHEN this industry will get the help and assistance it deserves.</p>

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200	Educators need better support, for all we've been asking for as long as we've been asking. From personal experience we are not " baby sitters " we are Educators. We experience mental exhaustion, we have to deal with bad management, we have to deal with unfair families, we deal with being under ratio, we deal with not getting paid for staff meetings, losing educators, being understaffed because the industry is declining rapidly. yet we continue on with a smile on our face to ensure all families and children remain happy. If we aren't here to TEACH your children, what will you do? Leave your jobs to educate them? This is unfair. We as Educators deserve more.
201	Large Early Years Management organisations lose their ability to support the most vulnerable families in their processes and procedures. Cost cutting measures employed by these organisations reduce teachers ability to support families and children by removing orientation and parent information evenings. Penny pinching from these organisations for staff amenities eg \$2.50/mth/staff member for tea, coffee, milk, sugar, detracts from the procession and drives good staff out of the industry, making access to quality education harder and harder. There is no accountability for EYMs. Kinders can't leave, but they can drop services at a whim, reduce budgets by 1/3, remove resource budgets, employ incompetent staff and there is nothing Kinders can do about it.
202	The time to process CcS is more than 4 weeks. A parent entering the workforce will need to pay full fees until their CCS is approved. Some families do not have the funds available to pay \$130 a day until their CCS is approved. So they then loose the job. It's a vicious cycle and if it's your first child you do not know that you need to apply for CCS months before you need child care.
203	The sector has become so money driven. With private companies more interested in profits that are made off the back of the women who work there. The hours are long, physical and mental. The paperwork as an early childhood teacher that is required with only 2 hours of programming provided. Let alone the registration fees and training costs pf \$5000 to complete the teacher accreditation hours. That is mostly completed in our own time.
204	Childcare is really a financial burden on my family. We are here on a visa. And contribute to the tax system. Although my earnings are okay, my wife's aren't. She basically works to pay for childcare whereas i would have loved for her to spend more time taking care of our kids. She also had no parental leave so that meant she needed to return to work after 3 months of saving for that time unpaid. It's really difficult never mind trying to find a spot at a good rate
205	My husband and I will be moving to Central Coast shortly with our young son of 18 months. We are both in full time work and I am so scared that we are not going to be able to afford our mortgage purely because we have to bay for a Nanny 5 days a week for care for our son which we can not receive any child care subsidy for. I have emailed 26 day cares some are more than 30 minutes away from where we will be living and the earliest we have been advised a spot will become available is mid 2025. Please do something - this is a horrible burden to put on families.
206	Due to cost of living and competition for housing, we are soon to relocate from Sydney to the central coast. Initially we had ruled out a move to the central coast due to lack of childcare options, but in the end we had to chose between cost of living pressures (increases in rent of \$300/week) & housing availability

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	<p>(queues of 150 people for a 2 bedroom apartment) with the option of childcare (after 2 years on waitlists we were finally receiving offers for our 16 month old to attend childcare), versus a more affordable home and no childcare. Without childcare we are unable to work part time. Financially we are stretched. Mentally we are stressed. It took 2 years of waitlist applications, centre tours, phone calls and emails to get a spot for our daughter, only to have to give it up and start all over again by joining waitlists with similar lengths and wait times. Offer better pay and conditions for the sector, open more centres where there is the demand, prioritise access for families based on household income and working capacity, offer rebates for home care. Support families who are facing increased cost of living pressures.</p>
207	<p>As a pre-service teacher, working towards completing my Bachelor of Education in Early Learning, over the past six years of constant study, I have learnt that being the Early Learning Industry, also known as 'Childcare,' my role is vital for children to gain an understanding through a play-based environment, where they are able to discover the basic fundamental concepts of life. Through play, in a safe environment with the correct pedagogies that are implemented, devised by early learning educators, every child is gaining an understanding of how the world works which is supported by theoretical perspectives. We explore theorists whose work informs and guides our teaching practices, known as Montessori, Vygotsky, Piaget, Locke, Bronfenbrenner. They have researched, examined and communicated their ideas are being used today, so that children have the best start in becoming ready their lifelong educational journey, beginning with the start of primary school. In a play-based environment, where children's minds are increasingly curious and suspicious, educators have been educated, so they possess the professional knowledge, professional engagement, drive and motivation to ensure that the proper and correct facilities are available, specifically designed for that child. A plethora of circumstances are being supported by educators to ensure that each child is individually being catered for, from social and emotional techniques, diversity, inclusion, health and physical wellbeing, learning resources, safe environments, quality and documentation. The job description can be overwhelming, but the rewards speak for themselves, when educators get a spark of recognition and acknowledgment in what they have accomplished- witnessing learning being achieved by children through their teaching activities and experiences that they have instigated. But unfortunately, as this career can be overwhelming at times, due to a high demand of responsibilities and duties that must be fulfilled every day, as well as some of the public members perceive this career as 'wiping runny noses' and 'babysitting,' educator levels are in short demand. Subsequently, pay is considerably low for the hard-working, exploited employees that choose to take an interest in children's education. This is the main barrier in hiring the correct people for this type of employment. More pay is required that would assist the current employees with their role and responsibilities, so that they are able to deliver beyond quality better teaching.</p>
208	<p>As a middle to high income household who both went to university, I think it's silly that the Government doesn't do more for women who had careers. We fall outside of Family Tax Benefits and we pay higher Childcare too. We also missed out on Parental Leave as I was earning over \$150k pre-baby and the Govt didn't like women breadwinners. Every time the subsidy is tweaked the child care centre puts up their fees. In the last 18 months, my fees have increased 16% and that's my gross fees so comparing apples with apples! I'm a university post grad that's doing less hours of work due to the ridiculous cost of childcare. The GDP of Australia could do much better if middle families are helped out some more. Also, when my child starts school next year I will be cutting hours further as there are no OOSH available in the area. I'm willing to work more but it's unsustainable in cost so my family and the economy lose</p>

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	<p>out. We are having ONE child because of the cost of raising our child. Canada now has 45% of their families as ONE child families - Australia will have the same fate given the similarities with their childcare costs. <a href="https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-one-and-done-parenting-canada/#:~:text=Forty%2Dfive%20per%20cent%20of,to%20delay%20having%20a%20child">https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-one-and-done-parenting-canada/#:~:text=Forty%2Dfive%20per%20cent%20of,to%20delay%20having%20a%20child</a> Stop looking at just the lower families and start looking at the skilled middle families and the workforce WAITING for you to make it economical to go back to work. BUT there are too few places available IF it does become affordable, so that really does need fixing too. I worry about the next step in our child's journey and the lack of OOSH. Australia has the highest number of part time women and this is why.</p>
209	<p>The draft report highlights the need for more quality ECEC services by increasing the number of trained assessors to ensure accreditation is on time. I would like to express my concerns as a Nominated Supervisor of a Long Day Care Service, that the documentation required to meet the National Quality Framework at an exceeding level is leading to educator burnout. Many educators are leaving the sector due to the demands of paperwork, and how these requirements are taking away from valuable interactions with children. Continuous critical reflection is just one of the 3 exceeding themes required across all 7 quality areas of the NQF. Educators are time poor, overworked and underpaid; and unfortunately, the sector is losing quality educators (especially in Long Day Care) due to the immense daily pressure to tick boxes. We have to do better for the young children of today.</p>
210	<p>In response to the draft recommendation to support out of preschool hours ECEC: As a Community based not for profit Preschool, we have been running extended hours for a number of years and usually only break even or run at a small loss as we try to keep fees to a minimum, however it is definitely something a lot of our families need. Any access to CCS for outside preschool hours service would be most welcome here.</p>
211	<p>The whole system is broken. The current model of government funding simply funds private businesses to pocket ever more and more public money, raising their fees to chew up every new government contribution that is supposed to assist parents. The workers themselves are the lowest paid of any industry, doing the hardest job. What is the incentive to work in this field? Why do wealthy business owners profit at expense of those paid the least and struggling families? Meanwhile thanks to excessively high immigration and a tax system that rewards the wealthy getting wealthier, childcare workers will soon never even afford a rental near their workplace, let alone a home of their own. Look to the Quebec system of a flat day rate (etc) and make drastic changes. They look at Australia of an example of what not to do. We should also be looking at subsidizing nannies, especially for children under 2.5, and subsidizing parents to look after their own children for longer if they wish to. Very young children being put in care 5 days per week simply to benefit the economy isn't right either and we need more options for those mums/parents who want them. As it stands, the lack of places also means some mums are trapped without ability to work or support themselves, and there's a big mental health cost too for some. Some mums find it extremely hard and need to return to work at least part time for their own sanity, for some, being home alone with young children all day is arduous and lonely. Another issue for me is, I wasn't organised and I didn't put my 3 year old down on any preschool waiting lists. Now his current daycare have axed the pre kindergarten room this year due to staff shortages.</p>

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	So at a key period in his development he will be missing out on quality learning, and I am powerless to get him a spot anywhere else. I pray he'll get a spot somewhere else at least 6 months before he starts school.
212	I started working in childcare before centres were privatised or well funded. As soon as centres/owners are trying to make a profit, there is a conflict of interest. The children's needs are not the only thing that is considered - how much food, equipment and staffing costs is paramount as it needs to be done in the cheapest way so that there is money left over. A family member working in EC casually sees centres so focused on making money that there is poor food, limited equipment, disengaged staff and families who are desperate for childcare so have no other option than to send their children there. Not all privatised for-profit centres are poor quality and not all not-for-profits are quality centres, but it has a significant impact. It is difficult to change but impacts all decisions in a privatised centre and needs to be addressed. I no longer work in the sector but am a teacher (in a school with a low socio-economic index) and see disadvantaged children starting school too early when they are not yet ready because school is free and 5 days/week. The changes to the availability and funding of childcare have been important but need to go further for disadvantaged children. Of course, it doesn't help when centres are full and there is a lack of places, especially in regional areas.
213	The conversations being held regarding early childhood education and care always seem to revolve around the families and their children. Supporting families to have access to care, making it affordable, engaging with families to ensure they feel welcomed. Yet the people providing these services and care are an afterthought, if they are thought about at all. I myself am a diploma qualified educator, and have worked within childcare providers long enough to know that the system is severely broken. Educators are the foundations of early childhood education, yet we are underpaid, undervalued, overworked and burnt out. We give our personal time because there is not enough time during the work day to complete the tasks expected of us. We put up with poor working conditions such as not being able to have adequate breaks during the day to keep up with ratios and staffing issues. We are expected to keep up with ever changing regulations, policies, procedures and requirements set out by owners who have no childcare experience or a seemingly invisible body of government who maybe visit every 2-5 years if we are lucky. We push ourselves to the limit physically caring for a classroom full of children ranging from 6 weeks to 5 years old to meet all of their needs. We endeavour to study to further our knowledge and gain more qualifications just to be used and abused rather than valued and supported. We are expected to purchase our own resources, use our personal devices, and pay for our own training because most providers/owners will not put an adequate amount of funds back into the centres. Just to name a few things. All the while, these educators are being paid below the average Australian wage, and are expected to stay in this profession. Stay to give 100% of whatever they have while we get back peanuts. We love our children and our families, but something needs to change, and it needs to start with these wonderful human beings that give so much of themselves for so little reward.

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214	<p>Some of the barriers to quality early childhood education is that the government’s focus is on adults requiring “childcare” rather than children’s right to quality education. For this quality to be more evident we need highly trained and well paid educators. Money needs to be invested in early childhood as every dollar spent is saved in juvenile justice. Our kids are our future - invest, educate and care for them.</p>
215	<p>I work with First Time Parents in the Blue Mountains. Here most families are struggling just to find childcare places, and frequently Centres cannot offer 30 hours or 3 days a week. Families are cobbling together places in multiple centres , and relying on family and friends to manage their childcare needs. Waiting lists are long and places are limited. There is a strong argument for additional government funding in the Blue Mountains. Families report that due to cost of living increases for both families and childcare providers government subsidies have not decreased the amount they pay for care. An increase in subsidies is of little benefit childcare places do not exist. Out of school hours care is essential for working families, but OSHC workers are not familiar with the needs of neurodivergent children. As a result those children are frequently excluded from care because sensory overwhelm can cause behaviours that staff do not understand and are not trained to manage. More inclusive care is needed across the board.</p>
216	<p>The Health and Social Care Unit from Monash University concur with the submission made by the Alannah &amp; Madeline Foundation. We agree that the draft report could better reflect the findings of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) – namely, that abuse and neglect of children is tragically common and aligns strongly with poor mental health, substance misuse and high service use in adult life. The ACMS report calls out a number of developments required to address this, including: - financial resourcing, policy and governance infrastructure to ensure child maltreatment is treated as an ongoing national concern. - pre-service and ongoing education for practitioners (e.g. education, health) to understand, identify and respond to child maltreatment. Our work across education settings highlights that trauma-informed approaches (e.g., focusing on safety and security, building trust through relationships, empowerment etc.) promote high-quality, inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). As such, prioritising them in pre-service education and embedding resources, supports and programs within services has universal benefit – beyond those children and families effected by trauma. The steps to embed trauma-informed practice in ECEC and to address the ACMS recommendations described above are well-aligned, and include: 1. Recognising the vital role played by early years educators in identifying children experiencing harm early, and in ensuring earlier intervention for families to address risk. Whilst educators undertake training in identifying and reporting signs of harm, these signs are often nuanced and can be difficult to identify without expert support. Such support is largely unavailable for educators as a part of their day-to-day work. 2. Recognising that while childhood trauma often overlaps with broader vulnerability and/or disadvantage, it is a specific and urgent issue requiring its own responses. 3. Working with state and territory governments and tertiary early years education and training providers to ensure ECEC qualifications feature standardised, high-quality content on creating trauma-informed early years environments. 4. Providing educators with ongoing opportunities to develop skills and knowledge and connect with high-quality supports that enable them to work with children affected by trauma. 5. Working with state and territory governments and the ECEC and not-for-profit sectors to continue and scale-up evidence-based programs that build ECEC services' capacity to be trauma-informed. 6. Recognising educators’ exposure to trauma and supporting them through encouraging – and promoting meaningful access to - self-care and reflective practice; providing on-the-job training; encouraging</p>



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	and sustaining supportive professional relationships; and valuing the contribution educators make. This should be addressed in the context of broader improvements to make ECEC a safer, more rewarding place to work in the long term.
217	We are a Community House that has a 14 place occasional care centre. We strongly support the recommendations of the Productivity Commission and the submission made by Neighbourhood House Victoria. We are in an outer metropolitan area of Melbourne on the Mornington Peninsula. We get constant calls from families who are moving down to the Peninsula and are looking for childcare for their children. We have a long waitlist and usually tell families that we are unlikely to have any availability before the end of the year.
218	Points of difference for our NFP organisation - → Neighbourhood House in semi-rural location located within Manningham LGA with lack of transport options within our catchment → Non CCS provider - due to funding constraints we run to school terms to stretch our funding ie. 40 weeks → Socio-demographics - higher SEIFA range than regional colleagues and not all participants qualify for the CCS, however, this means this cohort are disadvantaged too with lack of options, transport and availability of childcare to support working from home arrangements. We are mindful of keeping fees to a minimum for everyone! → Flexibility – as we do not offer CCS we charge only for sessions booked and attended. Option to cancel bookings with prior notice (at least day prior) for illness, holidays etc and session not charged as we attempt to backfill from waitlist → New partnership with adjacent Kindergarten with pick up service once per week with a backfill opportunity for our childcare from 12-2pm → As a full fee for service for our Occasional Care program, the option for flexibility, discounts and subsidies for siblings, class participation etc. is sourced from built in costings from our community programs → Challenge since change of ratios of 1:5 to 1:4 for under 3 year olds has necessitated further increase of fees and an ongoing shortfall to budgets if we do not meet targets for enrolments → In the past decade there has been a noticeable decline in the reason to use occasional care - from ‘take a break’ to most participants utilising as a alternate childcare for working from home or flexible working arrangements. This includes grandparents and other carers doing drop off/pick ups. → During the pandemic we reduced our days of operation due to staffing issues, lockdowns and ratios - by Term 4 2023 we finally reinstated to 5 days per week as previously delivered prior to the pandemic. In the past twelve months we have seen a large increase of need locally for the occasional care service and a resurgence - we have not been able to keep up with demand. This term we have extended our day on Tuesdays to support the partnership with our local Kindergarten. → To ensure the viability of this much needed service locally we also believe Government need a rehaul of the Childcare Subsidy requirements or a different stream and reduce the onerous administration to facilitate, as a small team this is certainly a barrier. As a full fee for service it is a balancing act to ensure viable and with the every change to ratios and wages puts more pressure on keeping this service viable. A constant review and monitoring by our Committee of Management for viability. Any financial loss is a concern to make sure this program stays on our scope of delivery.
219	The age of children and facility where OSHC is provided needs to be taken into consideration when setting regulations for this age group. Children can go to the bathroom, walk to and from school, play on school play equipment and move around the inbound areas of a school until OSHC time. They then need to be supervised, documented, evaluated and have their autonomy restricted because of regulations intended for 0-5 years. The regulations relating to transport or going to eliminate small services catering for small schools. These children are not of an age to be left in a car. 5 to 13 yr olds can exit a car

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	independently. I understand the purpose on the law but it just isn't necessary for OSHC We need to have a process for dropping this age group to school not legislation that makes it unviable for services to provide. A&R discrepancies are a nightmare. The requirements do not fit our service model. OSHC is getting pulled up on things that are ridiculous.. needing an excursion note to use the room next door, having a risk assessment for a stool, not having enough nature, not recognising the limitations of using shared spaces, storage, signage and projects being required to be left out on display -we are not all provided a private building. It is a school. A school the Education Department deems safe and sufficient for education but not by A&R for children to play in for OSHC. The expectation and growing burden of A&R for a sector that does not require qualifications is deterring people from staying in OSHC as a career choice. It is too intense and overwhelms amazing educators. Let us make OSHC a fun place for both children and educators by understanding the competence and ability of this age group.
220	Working in management across early childhood services, it is more like child slavery and the Australian Government has allowed this. Manipulating families to offer their children in return of money in situations where they are getting scammed by greedy businessmen is unbelievable and the Australian government should be ashamed they are allowed this to take place. From businessmen who are native to China, to American investors who barely set foot in Australia or care about the children and families using their services. Education should be owned by the government to avoid all of these modern slavery issues.
221	I have found the NQF restrictive for BAC and vacation care. Too many times educators struggle with filling a leisure based program into a 'curriculum'. I have run a Playwork pedagogy alongside the MTOP in most centres I have worked in recently , alongside child lead and directed outcomes. We are still having to 'make it fit' the NQF curriculum..... why?
222	For oshc having a ratio of 1-15 is impossible when planning and implementing activities and cleaning up the service / kitchen Children stay until closing time & we have no time to clean When we run the planned activity it's hard to also supervise the other children. Ratio should change to 1-10
223	I just wanted to say that I think this is fantastic. I have no further suggestions, I just enjoyed reading and am proud to be part of a Neighbourhood House Occasional Care.
224	I endorse the recommendations of the Alannah & Madeline Foundation [AMF] wholeheartedly, concerning the need for better resourcing of educators to enact trauma-informed practice. The importance of trauma-informed approaches to educators' practice is now reflected in the EYLF, which includes definitions of trauma and trauma-informed practice (p. 69) and the expectation that educators make use of trauma-informed lenses in their practice (see pp. 15 and 17). The AMF is well placed to contribute expert advice on these matters, being a provider of a Trauma Consultancy Service that supports educators holistically in their trauma-informed practice. As reported in the submission, recent evaluation of TraCS showed the positive impact of a coaching and feedback model, especially as it was tailored to be responsive to the needs of each service. Relatedly, as the AMF submission suggests, ongoing training

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	<p>and support of educators in their practice is needed so they can best support children and families, and their own wellbeing. In areas of natural disaster for example, educators are also part of the collective community trauma; or, may find their own historical trauma triggered through the need to support children and families. Without appropriate professional supports – such as coaching interventions (Ng et al., 2023) or clinical supervision (Wong, 2023), these challenges may compromise educators' well-being to the point that they leave the sector. Indeed, of participants in the AMF's TraCS intervention over 40% were considering leaving the sector due to workplace stresses. The Commission might consider further recognition of the type of professional development needed for educators to be able to: "provide secure and predictable environments, relationships and engagement in learning to support children affected by trauma" EYLF, p. 36), and, to sustain their well-being. In relation to the Draft Finding on page 68 for example, coaching and feedback models that operate (at least partly) with educators during their practice may help overcome some of the known challenges of backfilling positions for staff to undertake professional development. Accordingly, additions could be made to the points regarding professional development on page 58 of the draft report. E.g., the problem of 'Inadequate professional development opportunities' could also include '...and appropriate models of professional development'. The draft recommendation could then be to 'provide greater support for access to appropriate and responsive models of professional development (DR 3.6)', with benefits of 'enhancing the learning, development and wellbeing of children' (EYLF, p. 15). As the AMF submission notes, there is little attention to educator well-being in the draft report. However, educator well-being is now a focus area of the National Workforce Strategy (Education Services, 2023) and therefore requires recognition by the Commission as part of efforts to address workforce challenges.</p>
225	<p>In recent years, our Neighbourhood House has experienced a noticeable shift in our Occasional Care program, with a growing preference among families for sessions catering to younger children, particularly those under the age of three. While we have maintained consistent regular bookings, this trend has led to increased pressure on our educator-to-child ratios, impacting our budget as additional staffing is required. At times, we find ourselves unable to accommodate all bookings due to a shortage of available educators. Furthermore, we've observed a rising number of families opting for funded kindergarten sessions, resulting in attrition from our program. Despite offering casual bookings to meet fluctuating demand, the uncertainty of employment makes it challenging to retain our valued permanent part-time educators, many of whom have been with us for over 12 years. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach that balances the needs of our families with the sustainability of our program. We are committed to finding innovative solutions to maintain the quality of our Occasional Care services while ensuring stability for our dedicated team of educators. Though it is becoming more of a challenge for us.</p>
226	<p>I'm one of the parents in Central Coast NSW having difficulty to get a spot for child care specifically in Umina Beach and Woy Woy. I'm not aware that there is a child care shortage here all of them have a long waitlist, one of the day care have 390 on the waiting list and most of them doesn't accept anymore. Some says maybe after 2 yrs I can get a spot for my child. I prefer getting a care near us because I don't drive. I hope you could help us</p>
227	<p>Affordable care for working families is near impossible, even with the Child Care Subsidy. Mothers return from Maternity Leave often only entitled to Centrelink PPL and have trouble finding care in the first place, then to return to work the more we work the more Child Care costs and the Cost of Living</p>

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	<p>crisis is effecting everyone so much that families have to make tough decisions on whether care for children and working is even financially viable. As an ex educator I can see centres struggling to retain staff, and staff (much like myself) leaving the industry in droves for unqualified and better paying jobs not within Education. My Tik Tok page talks about Childcare and the turnover and many have commented that they have left and will never return, again, like myself. Poor pay and working conditions have a flow on effect for families wanting to utilise care with the growth in my local area we do not have enough Childcare to sustain the amount of people flooding into the area. Centres operating at a profit who could afford to pay more but won't? Quality Education and Care starts with quality staff, and the only way to implement and sustain that is to pay the workers adequately for the time, education and nurture they provide the next generation. Families will see more centres opening with retained staff and adequate ratios being followed when these issues are solved. Everything has declined since Covis in 2020 and the staff particularly the Educators on the ground and the families are feeling that. We need to be more respectful of their titles and pay them as such. Educators, because that is what they are.</p>
228	<p>We are in desperate need for care. I've had to work from home full time so I could care for my baby into toddlerhood because there was no daycare available. I'd move into the industry to help the crisis of worked but the wage these caring, companies workers get is not enough. More place's need to be available with better pay and conditions for the workers. I can't believe early education isn't a major priority for Australia for our future.</p>
229	<p>The critical shortage of Childcare Educators is further impacted by the number of poorly trained educators that are graduating from Cert III and Diploma courses run by very dodgy RTO's. There are still a number of RTO's delivering these courses that pay little to no attention to the work placement component of the qualification. This is resulting in many inexperienced and poorly educated, so called 'qualified' staff that cannot hold down their jobs. This is causing a more significant stress and financial impost on childcare services. My comment comes from a very informed position. My organisation is a provider of Occasional Care services in Victoria where we have hosted students on placement for many years. We are now aware of the reduced emphasis on the placement, reducing it to 5-10 days or not at all. In addition, some students we host are learning almost nothing of use in their course because they are ill-equipped to succeed, regardless of how hard they try, It is imperative for the National childcare sector that shonky RTO's are driven out of the market and a greater emphasis on quality is introduced.</p>
230	<p>Early childhood education is a extremely demanding job that is extremely under paid, we have to go by so some many regulation and keep up to date with paperwork through out the day whilst also supporting children's needs and development, we don't just sit around and play with the children we have multiple jobs happening through out the day whilst also ensuring the safety of all children in care some may have complex needs, some may have complex behaviours. We get hit , punched sworn at multiple times a day and have to ensure we keep calm whilst having all this throughout the day, management is a demanding job as well but what is more disappointing a 2ic gets paid a whole 13 dollars less than a director when we do the exact same jobs and under the exact same pressure or industry needs to be looked at the exact same as the government schooling because we aren't baby sitters we are educators and we have qualifications the ensure we are qualified to do the jobs needed if we were baby sitters anyone from the street could walk in a baby sit a child but NO we go through training up date qualifications through out the years and ensure we are giving the children the best start to their lives. So if I was the</p>

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	Australian government I'd highly recommend going a doing our role for a day and tell me that it is easy because it's not and we deserve the same wages as teachers in government schools.
231	<p>There are many things surrounding access to quality ECE services. For me particularly as a FDC operator, I find it so frustrating that our services aren't seen as 'equal' to LDC and that our subsidy cap is lower. We are working alone, without covered breaks to give meaningful ece experiences to children. Whilst different to a LDC service- they both are extremely beneficial and can suit many different types of children in different ways. ECE in general however needs an overhaul- free universal ECE- including FDC should be available to ALL children, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This would take away from large profit based companies not putting money back into their facilities, resources and their staff! This is also why the sector is finding it so incredibly hard to maintain staff who are underpaid, working long hours for companies lining their own pockets. Allowing families and communities to contribute to services is also a great initiative as a service and its children will greatly benefit from contributions from families as well, again regardless of socio economic standards, this can also help to increase the education standards for those children in lower socioeconomic areas- if ECE is also 'zoned' similar to that as public education in formal schooling. ACECQA also needs to be looked into- assessment and rating is simply dependant on who you get on the day and what mood they're in! More data should also be collected from families in regard to their satisfaction of the service and educators, rather than only relying on the ever growing amounts of paperwork that we are required to do. We all know services who will pull in extra staff and encourage children to stay home when they know they're up for assessment and rating! Let the parents- a very large stakeholder of a service tell you their thoughts! And I'm sure you will get some very interesting information about some services! Also by providing more outlets for educators to become anonymous whistleblowers about substandard practice (especially during a&amp;r) would also give you some very handy information! Where I am located- families have their children on waitlists for YEARS before they may secure a position, often they are stuck in services that are for profit that they are genuinely unhappy with- simply because they have no choice as there is nowhere else to send their child. I really hope this commission contributes to an amazing change in the ECE sector- both the children and our educators deserve this!</p>
232	<p>The early Childhood Education System and educators up are greatly undervalued and unappreciated by families. Family's see educators as Baby sitters when we are so much more. We plan each individual child's learning from learning how to walk learning how to talk learning how to eat, we teach children abc 123. We are underplayed for the same amount if not more work we do for each individual child, we have given no time during working hours to complete everything needed so we end up completing work at home just to meet regulations. We are understaffed yet more and more childcare centres are being built. We are over ratio because staff quit or we enrol more leaving no room for other children to transition to the next room. There is no support for educators, and the A and R mite as well be pointless because they never fully grasp the true childcare issue. The assessor's do not care about the over worked underplayed educators, burn out and losing hope in the one career they are so passionate about.</p>
233	<p>My kids EDUCATORS love my kids like their own. Having anxiety and PND, I struggle to sit and play with my kids. I love that I was able to send my kids to DC and know that they are loved, having fun and getting the attention they need while I was able to work on my issues. I could never thank my centers</p>

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	educators enough for what they have done for my kids. The ratio in the preschool room is crazy and cannot fathom having to care for 20 + kids when I can't deal with two.
234	25 years experience - pay only recently increased to \$32.57 😡 *Unpaid meetings *Have to pay for job related training *I'm Supplied with 1 free shirt per year this is not enough when I work 5 days a week 52 weeks a year. Therefore I have to purchase subsequent uniforms. *No cleaners employed so staff have to do cleaners job too *sick Children attending day care needs to be revised. Staff get sick Looking after sick children so the parents of the children don't have to take sick days but then Staff then get sick so we loose our sick days. Looking after sick children then affects ratios as a sick child generally needs one on one care. *under roof ratios is now a common occurrence as opposed to being used in emergency situations! * Working in weekends (unpaid) *Attending training outside of hours (unpaid) * buying resources because centres are badly under resourced Cost of living pressures mean if I can't earn more doing this job I love I will have no alternative but to seek work elsewhere! Childcare needs those of us with years of experience to teach/mentor the new educators coming into the profession.....
235	I am an early childhood educator. I have worked in early childhood for 7 years and working conditions have only got worse. No support from management, we are incredibly underpaid, and I have a Diploma. We are constantly over ratio, which is a legal requirement to be in ratio. The different challenging behaviours we have to deal with on a daily basis is becoming worse and more consistent, with no training or support for us to help these children to the best of our ability. A lot of the time we put ourselves in danger with these challenging behaviours, getting sworn at, getting things thrown at you buy children, with no consequences for these children. It is physically, emotionally, and mentally draining and more and more educators are leaving the sector due to poor wages and lack of support.
236	My time in the ECEC sector over the past 10 years has consisted of many roles from a trainee certificate 3, right up to my most recent role of service manager as a diploma trained educator. Unfortunately, I believe the time has come for me to make the decision to leave the sector this year due to my experiences and the standards of our entire sector ECEC. A few of which I have detailed below from my own experience as well as the general feedback from centres in my own area: Centres constantly over ratio/ under staffed/ bare minimum staff to meet requirements equaling over worked educators- causing mental health issues for educators and staff burnout. Therefore our children are not receiving the quality of care that the families are paying for because educators refuse to put in any more effort for such minimum wage. Owners are profiting beyond means whilst educators are paid way too little. Assessment and rating processes criticises educators performance rather than looking deeper into the owners of privately owned centres who are not providing educators with the means or healthy workplace to provide quality care for children. (To name a few: resources, clean workplace, supportive ownership/management) Regular/ daily occurrence of unpaid staff meetings, unpaid overtime, documentation work expected in your time and in your own home completely unpaid. My time in management has included hiring staff members. Unfortunately in the past 3 years the applications for advertised roles has declined so significantly that we managers have resorted to hiring almost anyone that applies regardless of skill set. Therefore, again lowering the standard of care we are providing for children. I honestly believe this is due to the complete lack of trained educators left in the sector. We are seeing quality,

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	trained educators leaving in droves due to such poor conditions. Action needs to be taken immediately to improve the quality of care for our children and the environments in which educators are expected to accept positions in. We are over worked and underpaid. It is time to look at the educators of the sector. Cap the fee prices and up the minimum wage educators receive significantly. Change needs to happen now to save our sector and protect our children.
237	The standard for educators varies through many services within Australia. It really frustrates me there is some centres out there that get away with doing the bare minimum and being unprofessional and not giving the families that care and education their child deserves. We need a shift educators to being seen as professionals. Each individual service has their own level of how they structure the educational program but this isn't overseen often? Assessment and rating happens every 3 + years and it's seen a daunting time for services. How about someone on the ground supporting services? Inclusion support is also extremely hard to assess and is a massive barrier for quality care for children with additional needs. The process and evidence you have to produce is so excessive for funding to support a child who needs extra support. Evidence usually is a diagnosis and when they are so young in early education they are typically not diagnosed this young so we are then unable to receive funding. I don't think this sector is a forever career which saddens me as I love my job. No respect and the pay not equalling the workload takes a toll.
238	I have worked in Early childhood for over 10 years. I have worked in many different settings. I've experienced owners placing profits over the safety of children, lack of resources, educators being expected to work over everything else to meet ratios, mismanagement, favouritism, bullying, blind eyes when it comes to low standards, staff leaving consistently which isn't good for the children, trainees who start and thrown in the deep end with no support. Please take these matters into account.
239	I am a former educator and have been for 6 years this year. I am 25 years old. I have worked within daycare centres to OSHC's and am now a former Teacher aid and Responsible Person at an OSHC. I work 2 jobs, 12 hour days 6am to 6pm to be exact, sometimes longer. I don't do this because I want to.. I do this because my pay as a qualified educator is low... it isn't enough to support myself and the cost of living.. My love for working with children sometimes feels like hell at the end of the day because I am over worked and under paid. On top of my 12 hour days, I am studying my diploma in educational support just to get a \$4 pay rise.... We need better pay and more recognition for what we do.. if not, one day you may put your child in care within the hands of someone over worked, underpaid and potentially a threat to your child due to stress, mental health issues or someone who is done with the child care industry. I myself will continue to work with children, because I have hope that better pay and more support will come to those who are raising our next generation.
240	I am an early childhood educator, emphasis on EDUCATOR I'm an studying my diploma and working towards my Bachelors, I educate ages 0-5 plus, we teach, counting, letters, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, love, patience, feeling safe, parallel play, inclusive play, diversity, language, inclusion, colour knowledge, behaviour development and daily development and so many more things not listed but also including what's listed. We assist in families getting diagnosis for children with special and extra needs and provide much needed support and guidance for many families big or small it all impacts and helps.



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	We are essential to assist children in their development before school, provide the best preparation possible for each and every child who attend and to assist working and non working families with their children, as they say it takes a village and that doesn't have to be blood family, we love, nurture, educate and cherish every single child who comes through our services and are a very important stepping stone in the future generations to come.
241	I've worked as a trainee Early Childhood Educator for a year now. Ratio is always an issue, whereby staff are pulled from different rooms to ensure ratio is met. The consequence to this is that our educators are stressed and breaks are consistently delayed. Educators provide experiences for children that would qualify as educational in any setting it is looked at. A lot of time and research goes into our planning, so that your child will have the opportunity to participate in our educational experiences. Most of you would be surprised to know that educators, will at times pay for the resources out of their own pockets. This way we can provide a great activity for the children.
242	As someone who worked within the Childcare industry for ten years I was subjected to no breaks during a shift, lack of staff to cover ratios and a lack of resources to better support the education of children.
243	Die to ratios and management not arranging appropriate coverage for staff absences, often childcare workers are expected and bullied into attending work even when they are physically unwell. This results in children at the centre getting sick, parents needing to take time off to care for their child etc. the expectation on staff is extreme for the little they get paid.
244	I have experienced area managers who will not allow staff to take breaks, centre directors to cover ratio because they 'need to focus on business', being so sick I had to lay down but couldn't go home so had to care for children laying down. Parents stalk and intimidate me, staff members try and take their life from stress and being overworked and they couldn't see a way out, having to gain a university degree for my job but not being paid enough to pay off the debt created by the university course. Having to work my 7.5 hour shift at work doing multiple roles as there is not enough staff, then coming home and working for free in order to achieve the duties of my job, having to train staff on how to create educational curriculums and document a child's education all while having covid, and temperatures of 40 degrees as there is a staff shortage and I can not be away sick. Being in bed with glandular fever on zoom meetings with KU children's services so that I can secure a small amount of funding for children with additional needs, although the funding supports the room and not the child. Having to have staff meetings outside of business hours meaning our family misses out on us again. Multiple regular instances of me covering ratio, being the cook, lunch cover and director all in a day, all for the same pay, and then having to go home and work unpaid to achieve all of the administrative duties of all of these roles as well. I have also had my own additional needs child discriminated against and not allowed on an excursion as it was too hard for the OOSH service
245	Education is a hard job, it's a even harder job when 1. you don't have supporting management 2. you have more children with big behaviours then children without big behaviours, 3. you don't have the training nor knowledge to help the children with big behaviour or disabilities 4. we are always under ratio. 5. all

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	<p>of the over time we do.. we don't get paid for. 6. We are NOT babysitters, we are EDUCATORS. We work hard, we are always keeping up with regulations and the changes in EYLF and doing extra training on the side to make sure the children are getting all the support and knowledge they need. 7. We also are there for parents, we are the ones they go to if there is a problem, with anything no matter what is it. god forbid Johnny has lost his dummy, so sorry your partner is going to jail. We are always there for the family, no matter what we have going on. We have to be there for everyone one else and not for our own staff or family. 8. and well then I guess there is the pay, the pay isn't great, it really isn't enough for the work we do - with today inflation it's just not do-able for the amount of work we do. It is exhausting it is challenging, we laugh, we cry, we go through all the emotions on a weekly basis - but you know what, we love the work, we love the children we work with. We love celebrating all of the little and of course big things. But the government needs to do something for the over worked and underpaid educators.</p>
246	<p>As a mum with three children who have attended, currently attending or will attend a child care centre, I feel it's important to make comment on how influential and important childcare educators are in very formative years of our children's lives. These workers (the ones that work at our centre) are part of our village, they provide our children with love and support just like we do while also helping prepare them for school, providing important opportunities for structured social and emotional development and I am forever grateful for their special involvement in our children's lives</p>
247	<p>I'm currently working in an understaffed centre. A trainee and a freshly graduated cert 3 are running a room, over ratio and with a child diagnosed with level 2 autism. All rooms are usually over ratio and lunch breaks covered illegally. This, along with knowledgeable staff being lacked in this centre ran by a reputable company is equalling children being inadequately supervised and circumstances such as children being in a veranda with a set of pencils and paper for over an hour. Sick staff are returning early to work due to guilt and staying sick for weeks on. Families are losing permanent childcare days due to staffing, impacting home and work balance. These children are being left behind in childcare and the impacts are also being felt at home. Knowledgeable staff that drive the centre aren't being listened to because educators are burnt out and don't care because overhead umbrella companies are saying QUOTE- "drop the compassion" and are simply not assisting in the difficulties but expecting paperwork, learning circles, professional development to still be completed. Directors don't listen regarding educator and child well-being because their focus is on ensuring overhead company's dictations are being met. My workplace is a very sad place for children at the moment. Children's safety has been met with negligence many times recently equalling department inquiries yet still being an exceeding centre and no spotlight on what the centre is lacking to simply meet the safety of children. Under the age of 5 is not thriving while being met with these difficulties while being the most important 5 years of a child's brain development.</p>
248	<p>Let's talk about the hours worked that are unpaid, the staff meetings attended that are not being paid, the issue with taking annual leave (if it's even approved), doing the job of five people at any one time. Let's talk about the abuse, entitlement and disrespect received from families that we have to endure. Let's talk about how the owner's state they aren't making a profit - yet can open up a new centre whilst the other lacks resources, nappies, gloves, sunscreen, enough nutritious food, suitable sun shades despite REAL skin cancer scares. Let's talk about how we are FAILING our children by being unkind</p>

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	and hateful towards educators and teachers who are trying their absolute best for a pitiful wage that has to be stretched. They are magicians and deserve so much more, no wonder they are leaving the industry. Who else works under such poor conditions? You all needed us during Covid-19!
249	As an Early Childhood Educator for 20 years, I have two degrees and yet my son working at Kmart has better pay and working conditions than myself or my colleagues. I am exhausted, burnt out and fed up. My main concern is with the backward thinking of the mediocre members of society in believing that ECEC employees are societies failures, C grade TAFE students that can not 'make it' in the real world, all they do is wipe noses, sing songs and play all day. This persona and outward view of the industry needs to change. Only with a new and modern societal view will we see significate moves towards industrial change to our teaching identity and therefore our work conditions. Respect child care EDUCATORS, (not child care workers). When this happens, we show respect to our children, our families and our communities.
250	The problem with early childhood education is that the purpose that the government promotes and the purpose that ACECQA promotes do not match. The government wants a system where children can be cared for so that parents can work and make money for the economy. ACECQA sees a system whereby children can be educated and boost children's lifelong learning. Educators have many facets to their jobs. The majority of their time is spent on compliance - laws and regulations from so many industries. These people give so much of themselves and their time, for people to just rudely say that they do nothing but play. Educators deserve respect and with that, higher wages. I think that the average person would be surprised at how much work early childhood educators do each day, to make children's lives better.
251	From certificate three through to teacher qualified workers we are expected to complete documentation on children's development, whilst completing the daily paper work tasks and adhering to various laws and requirements. We often work on ratio or over, with staff working without breaks, whilst dealing with children who display extreme behaviours including violence. All whilst ensuring we keep families happy with their happy snaps and finding unable items. Many are leaving due to burn out from all of this!
252	I have been in the children's services profession for over 13 years, the current state of the working environment for educators is beyond appalling. I am currently a director of a service which has the capacity to care for 110 children a day, with pressure from head office to fill this centre to capacity whilst constantly having wages watched, spending and focus on meeting financial goals, rather than providing services with the things they need. The well being of our educators is at an all time low, and this is proven personally at the moment as I am on two weeks stress leave due to my current working circumstances, I am having to use my annual leave to fund this time, and have been declared as burnt out due to my job roll, what support have i had? Not much! Something needs to change and it needs to change NOW! The quality of educators who are being passed on there qualifications is appalling, therefore makes the job of genuinely amazing educators ten times harder as they are carrying the workload of others who simply should not be in the industry. Educators also don't have the work ethic they used too, is this due to covid, due to not being respected for all that we do in our job rolls, or just too much choice in the industry so educators just up and leave? No matter the support given to them on a directors level, who as shown above are actually burning

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	out quicker than ever before. Our roll as educators is the fundamental stepping stones for children's development and that deserves respect and further support then what is currently being provided.
253	Until ratios are changed and under roof ratios are extinct, educators will not be able to provide quality care. Having 8 children in a room under 2 years of age with just 2 educators being able to meet all of their needs is not achievable. Unrealistic ratios, along with ridiculous programming requirements reduces the amount of time educators actually get to bond and connect with children. Educators are working ridiculous hours - some unpaid due to ratio and the needs of the business, families are sending their children in who are clearly unwell with an assortment of illnesses I, but refuse to take them home as they also need to work due to costs of living! Educators are then working whilst ill because they too need to work to ensure centre ratios are met and because they also need to work due to the costs of living. Fix the sector
254	Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provides financial assistance to families to meet the costs of childcare. This in turn allows children to be placed into an approved childcare provider and aids parents to participate in the workplace. The eligibility and payment amounts depend on a child's age, parents income, parental care arrangements, residency rules and immunization requirements. Additional Child Care Subsidy provisions broaden the scope under approved circumstances. Usually, you can get up to 42 allowable absence days per child each financial year, with an extra 10 allowable under certain circumstances. In cases where separated families are subject to Family Court ordered care arrangements, access to this assistance can be compromised, and limit a party's ability to participate in the workplace. For example: A court ordered parenting arrangement sets out 50/50 shared care arrangements on a week about basis. Parent A requires childcare in order to participate in the workplace, whilst Parent B has no requirement for childcare. Parent A & Parent B are unable to come to an agreement on childcare. To secure a placement for the child into an approved childcare provider, Parent A must place the child into a weekly enrolment as fortnightly placements are not an option. Not only must Parent A pay for the attendance of the child's placement on a weekly basis, including the week the child is not attending in Parent B's care, Parent A is penalized by absence days. Recently, the Government made access to childcare via CCS easier and cheaper for families, however their remains a gap to access for those with Family Court ordered care arrangements. This leaves a group of women behind and unable to participate in the workplace. Recommendation: That the Government make amendments to the Child Care Subsidy Scheme to expand upon its special circumstance considerations.
255	I currently work at an ECEC centre that holds 96 children a day. We are usually understaffed or hire agency staff to fill the gaps. Due to this inconsistency, myself and my coworkers have all suffered with our mental health and feeling unsupported as a whole. When staff feel like a centre put enrolments over their staff's well-being, that feels very counterproductive, because then we have a high turn over in staff. Trainees, (including myself) have not been able to have their allocated study time due to staff inconsistency. Due to lack of educators, we are having to program at home some days so that we are able to complete observations of the children and plan their learning for the programming period. When completing overtime to cover ratios, most of the permanent staff are losing money as employers offer TIL rather than paying overtime. If centres are using digital time sheets, they are being amended to cover 15 minute blocks instead of the extra 5 minutes that you stayed back for or if you started 5 minutes early. I love my job and educating the children that I have

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	the privilege work with, but when you feel like you are drowning everyday because of the lack of support to complete all the required tasks of your job, what else can you do but try and care for yourself or leave the sector.
256	I constantly work out of ratio. And even when we are in ratio which is 1:11 for 3 year olds (the age group I teach) it is not enough. It is near impossible to keep safe supervision of 10 other children if you are busy cleaning up an accident or changing a soiled nappy. Say you're changing the nappy and a child goes to bite another. How are we expected to intercept the fight if we have a child on a change table. With many children experiencing developmental delays, that do not have inclusion support, it makes it difficult to provide quality care and education to the other children. With low staff numbers it can be difficult to get a class of 20 3 year olds with 2 staff members safely through the day, let alone leaving time for quality education. I am expected to plan a new activity everyday, I do not receive any time while on duty to plan these activities, nor do we have resources to support this. Many of our resources and are old and broken. Educators are spending money out of their own pockets consistently. We leave work after a 9 hour shift and return home to plan activities for the next day. This does not give mention to programming time. We get 3 hours per week for our team to complete all planning/programming and observations. That must be spread amongst 4 staff members. It is simply not enough. Additional programming time is essential. Lowering ratios in order for safe supervision is essential. Increased pay rates for workers to assist with burn out and resources.
257	I work as a family day care educator in a small rural town in the North Burnett area, the lack of support and the lack of resource access is frustrating to say the least. Many are unwilling to become an Early Childhood educator, due to the substantial burden financially. The amount of money and time that is needed to be spent to ensure our homes meet the highest of standards that seem so much more stricter then some centres I've seen. Gradually out weight the pittance we are paid in return. Especially for those of us who still have our own children at home. It hardly seems worth it. Not being able to have my children's other parent be home to care for them and have access to raise the ratio, frustrating. Our children can not be at home with their father as they will be included in the 1:4 ratio. The main issue being rural, is we have little to no access to any resources, grants, any type of help. The equipment centres are able to access would be just as beneficial for child in a family daycare environment. I think the FDC sector needs an overhaul, to expect us to be able to meet the same standards as a centre is impractical given our low income average.
258	Early childhood educators, regardless of their status (certificate 3, diploma, bachelor, etc) are doing the same job - educating children of various ages, including vulnerable children which there is a lack of training for, being left in rooms and yards with no assistance despite being over ratio, toilet training and nappy changing while running out of resources such as nappies and gloves, supervising all other children and attempting to prevent incidents from occurring which happen frequently due to a lack of staff. Between all of this there are cleaning jobs, photos and written stories to be completed, observations and constant room changes, while we serve afternoon tea on paper towels because there are no plates. We have been punched, bitten, screamed at, slapped, had bones dislocated, verbally and physically abused by children and their parents, yet our pay is one of the lowest in Australia. Some more recognition for educators of all kinds should most definitely involve a pay raise, for all of us.

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259	<p>A lot of people think child care educators just get to "play with the kids all day" I know this because many parents have told me they wish they had my job so they could just play with the kids all day. When in actual fact, this is not the case, we have to plan, goal set, complete observations, reflect for every child, the paperwork is endless. Then you add children with behaviour problems, having to call parents (who don't actually treat you like a person), filling out management plans, incident forms etc. We are also often understaffed, not being able to meet ratio and not be able to go home to our own families on time to meet those ratios. We cop abuse from parents and get underpaid, while the owners and CEO's make massive profits. There have been many times when a child has asked me for more food at meal times and I've had to say no more as there isn't anymore food, is disgusting. There isn't enough resources, and these often come out of educators own pockets. Considering the amount is paid to the centres and companies, is terrible.</p>
260	<p>I have worked in the Early Childhood Education and Care industry for 5 years and have been a parent of a child in Early Childhood for 9 years. As a parent, I have witnessed my 3 year old daughter be ignored as she cried on a step after being scratched on the face by another child with no educator witnessing the incident. I have watched my son be singled out by educators that had an issue with me as a co worker. My children have been bitten on the face, hit with metal shovels by other children and had heavy wooden blocks thrown at them. This brings me to my time as an educator. Educators are not given the support required to supervise children adequately and give them the quality care that they deserve. Putting aside under roof ratios, the standard ratios are already too high, when children within that ratio have additional needs and often times require one on one. At times there can be up to 3-5 children out of 11 within the 3-5 years age range requiring this care with only one educator for all 11 children. I currently work within the 0-2 space and am alone with 4 babies at a time. These babies have never been in care before and are all expected to just wait their turn for love and affection as I change nappies, make and feed children bottles, rock/pat babies to sleep, feed them breakfast, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, wipe noses and fill out a tremendous amount of paper work!! The amount of paper work expected of educators while also keeping direct supervision of children is appalling. I know educators that work through their lunch breaks and take work home just to ensure that parents are receiving monthly observations and evaluations, summative assessments and follow ups, photos and communications. This isn't even touching on the compliance paper work that needs to be met including temp checks, daily information, sleep checks, nappy charts, daily, weekly and monthly cleaning checklists, uv and sunscreen checklists, bottle charts etc. Whenever I mention to anyone outside the industry how stressful and toll taking this industry can be, I am met with, "Well find a new job", "Work somewhere else", "I know of a job going at x, y, or z", but this is not going to fix the issues at hand and experienced, hard working and dedicated educators leaving the industry is only going to increase the current issues. Better working conditions, lower ratios and better pay is just the start to fixing the issues within the sector!!</p>
261	<p>PROFIT! The big corporations are making million's of dollars a year while educators are out here barely being able to make it week to week being paid the absolute minimum. Without Educator's these companies would be making nothing! Even whilst on minimum wage Educator's are still the ones buying resources to provide the children in our care with meaningful learning experiences. Stop monetising children and provide them with the quality care they deserve, pay good quality Educator's what they deserve!</p>

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262	<p>As an educator I've been around for 6 years within my 6 years the amount of bullying I have had to deal has mad me so burnt out but not only that, the amount of times I was left over ratio various times I was left with 8+ children on my own mind you they were infants!, I've been to many centre they are all the same you can't seem to escape the bully, mismanagement or being over ratio! Also in regards to new educators sadly they are often made to just clean, or just take they children outside so how are they supposed to learn if they are just given the jobs no one else wants to do not good enough! For amount of mental stress and how over worked educators are they certainly aren't paid enough either</p>
263	<p>I'm nine months into the Early Childhood industry as a CERT III Educator. On my first day I was put in a room of twenty six 18 month olds with four staff, including myself. My director told me this was normal. Eventually I moved into another room, often with 16 just turned two year olds and and three educators. In my short time here our ipad broke, we found glass in the sandpit, bugs in the yard causing welts on children and educators. When I had an allergic reaction to a bug bite I was told that we are out of ratio so I need to stay and work until I felt too drowsy. Then rumours started that even with a doctors certificate, a rash and two days off I had faked the reaction. I started a new job in a three year olds kinder. The first month of this job I was thrown into a position by upper management as the unofficial room leader on \$25 an hour, nine hours a day with 11 children each day. I am not trained in this room leader role and every day I had staff secretly come in and take photos of my room to show management that I wasn't handling being on my own. Management ignored every photo until another educator emailed them saying they wanted to step into the role. After taking another month to respond they promoted the educator to be my room leader. This educator got her contract the same day, while our assistant director has been waiting for her contract since January. She has been promised her contract every week since then. There have been times where it is just myself in the room where we have had asthma attacks, accidents, incidents, fights, and children with special needs getting upset and I have to prioritise and help each child on the spot. I have then been told because they are over three, they aren't a priority and I don't need a second educator to help. During all of this I manage to implement their planned kinder program, have taught them lefts and rights, emotional regulation skills, writing their names and basic sustainability. I love my job and genuinely smile whenever I see the children, but I get home from work exhausted, and feel like as an educator, no matter how much work, love and smiles I put into my day, it is never enough and I fear we will always be quoted "women who play with children all day". We are underpaid, under ratio, and plain overlooked. This needs to change if we want to keep good educators that care.</p>
264	<p>The most prevalent issue in our sector is that educators face the ever-growing unsustainable workload with inadequate "planning time", two hours a week is allotted per classroom and for many services the time isn't guaranteed. This leads to silent expectations to take work home and leaving many feeling compelled to leave the industry. Intimidation tactics, contractual clauses, and lack of access to information silence educators, preventing them from reporting misconduct or advocating for their rights, hindering transparency and accountability within the industry. The private sector discourages joining unions. Educators often sign contracts containing clauses prohibiting whistleblowing, exacerbating the culture of silence and fear within the industry, hindering necessary reforms. Current child-to-educator ratios fail to safeguard children's well-being, compromising individualized attention and care, potentially jeopardizing child development. One educator alone cannot comfort four crying babies at once. One educator alone cannot ensure that all eleven children</p>



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	<p>have their needs fully met in a long day care setting. Our classrooms are overcrowded and not supported, we need to reconsider the ratios. Emphasis on meeting bare minimum qualifications and ratio requirements undermines educational standards, prioritizing quantity over quality in staffing, perpetuating subpar education delivery. Internal traineeships within the sector often overlook crucial aspects of classroom management, child development, and cultural competence, leaving educators ill-prepared to create inclusive environments or respond effectively to trauma. Children with additional needs lack sufficient support within early childhood education settings, perpetuating systemic inequalities and hindering their academic and social development. In conclusion, urgent action is needed to reform the early childhood education industry and its regulatory authority, prioritizing the welfare of children and ensuring they receive the quality education they deserve.</p>
265	<p>Currently we are getting our roster at 9:30pm on a Saturday night for that Monday. We are not getting study or programming time and then having to explain to parents and the department why observations and learning cycles are not completed. We are not serving fruit or vegetables with meals as we can not afford it and giving the same meal 3-4 times a week. If you want a chance at career progression you need to be good friends or family of the management or you get nothing. Currently out of 34 staff we have 2 ECTs and 3 diploma staff. There are 2 staff who are actually working towards diploma, and 4 working towards Cert 3. We did not have cleaners until a month ago and now they only come 2 days leaving us to do deep cleans each night, resulting in never finishing on time and quite often management doctoring our pay slips so that we do not get paid for this time or being severely out of ratio to get everything done. Being abused daily by parents who do not value our work or our qualifications and being looked at as overpaid babysitters when we are severely underpaid for the work we do and provide. We have to provide our own resources from personal pocket as the service doesn't have enough money to buy new resources to replace broken or lost ones. Upper management want us to fill all children's positions available however will not give us more budget to hire more staff meaning that current staff are being over worked and pushed to their limits burning out and breaking down.</p>
266	<p>I worked in childcare for 6 months. The centre I worked at had rotating staff all the time as they could not keep workers there for too long. The management were more about saving there own assess as a business then making sure the staff provided a good service. More and more children are needing one on one support and are not getting it as many centre are running under ratio as it is. I had six months of working in childcare and I would never go back again. The management of these places need to be looked into and some of the expectations of worker need to be look into if they are getting paid what they are at the moment.</p>
267	<p>The focus of childcare is on productivity and not on the development of children. Please consider vulnerable children who live in disadvantage (including FV) and the barriers to access care is the complexity of obtaining CCS and ACCS. The layers of complexity accessing subsidies for care is hidden for many families but is significant. Many childcare providers are not aware of how to complete ACCS, and when they do it is too late and debt has been established due to back payment limits. There are also many families living in poverty that are unable to send their children to care because they have childcare debts or are scared of child debts (due to the complexity of the CCS system, incorrectly completing complex forms, wait times, transport issues). There are families who have many thousand dollars worth of debt and cannot engage in childcare because of the debt. To further disadvantage them, the children remain at</p>

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	home and exposed the stress of their parents, with their needs not known because they are not engaged in care. Too much money is being spent on the administration support that is not supportive.
268	Small childcare centre with no more than 25 places should be allowed to be approved by private certifiers as well as councils. This is because small childcare centres have low noise and low traffic impacts. Additionally, this alternative approving pathway creates efficiency, transparency and a uniformed platform across the state.
269	I have been a teacher for over 25 years. I find more children coming to school with speech and language issues, even though they attend childcare centres. I am concerned about the quality of childcare services and the impact on child education. The introduction of 'for profit' centres appears to have changed the quality of the industry negatively. Some new centres are being built to 'minimum standards' and lack the necessary characteristics for a quality environment to provide adequate care. Centres are being built in inappropriate locations, built to 'cram' in as many children as possible in the smallest space possible, for the cheapest price, by people with no understanding of 'Education', compromising the quality of care. The ABC's 7.30 report had a story showing the lack of proper resources being supplied including nappies and food, in for profit centres. Additionally creating a noisy environment not conducive to learning, and affecting hearing, impacts speech and language development. Some centres with unacceptable noise levels. Recent research recommends centre to be at 35 decibels 80% of the time, not 80-90 decibels that damages hearing. Teachers also forced to work in unacceptable conditions, overworked and underpaid. The industry is in crisis. It needs to be reformed from the bottom up. It is not just a matter of improving pay and conditions or adding more money that goes into the pockets of owners and shareholders. Our children deserve better. This is an investment in our country's future not a business venture build for profit.
270	NEW RESEARCH: Aggregate Implications of Child-Related Transfers with Means Testing by Chung Tran and Darapheak Tin ANU Research School of Economics and Macro Public Finance Lab Abstract. Should government transfers to families with children be means-tested? We revisit this question and provide new insights from the unique Australian policy settings where means-testing rules are widely adopted to determine eligibility and benefit of child-related transfers. Using the Australian household survey data HILDA 2001-2020, we first document the significant role of child-related transfers and distinct life cycle patterns of labor supply and earnings of women in Australia. Next, we build a dynamic general equilibrium overlapping generations model of single and married households and quantify the aggregate implications of means-tested child-related transfers. Our results demonstrate the significant adverse effects of means-testing rules on work incentives and the development of human capital among female workers. A structural reform that replaces the status quo means-tested system with a universal system not only improves efficiency and overall welfare but also enjoys majority support. Despite these benefits, the new regime increases tax burden and leads to unintended welfare consequences for single mothers—the intended beneficiaries—by reducing their lifetime take-home income and consumption. Incremental reforms to the current means-tested system, on the other hand, can enhance efficiency and achieve a more equitable distribution of welfare gains, albeit with a relatively small overall welfare improvement. Hence, our findings highlight the complex trade-offs among efficiency, overall welfare, and equity when designing an effective child-related transfer system.

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271	<p>When considering access and inclusion to participate in ECEC, the Inclusion Support Program should be reviewed to include children with complex trauma. Currently, these children and their families face many barriers to access and inclusion but are not covered under current ISP guidelines meaning most children are expelled from care as their high needs cannot be catered for, which increases their vulnerability and exposure to further trauma.</p>
272	<p>Educators are burnt out and are leaving in droves. The industry is not what it was 10 years ago rooms were more manageable, and there were less behaviours then what we have today. Have seen many centres having to do half hour lunches due to working with the bare minimum of staff and educators not getting their two ten minute tea breaks. In afternoons ratios may not even exist due to the other jobs we are expected to do. Cleaning dishes in the afternoon washing changing nappies the educators remain on premises and counted in ratio even though not actively being with the children. I have not recorded how long but I would estimate 1.5 or so one person would be doing these odd jobs and still be counted in ratio. Our expectations of documentation is very high some centres expecting a observation a day per child. I often will take the paper work home to complete as I would much prefer Supervising the children adequately then doing the necessary documentation on the floor. I spend an additional hour a day if not more out of my own time unpaid. We are severely underpaid for the work load and mental and emotional stress placed on us daily. While the children attend school from 8.30 to 3 they go to learn While at ECEC we have some children doing 12hr days and are expected to learn that whole day, gone are the days where children were allowed to be children. As the years go on we are putting so much pressure and expectations on children under the age of five. I have had instances where some children are 6.30 to 6.30 5 days a week, this can't be healthy for young development. Overall drastic changes need to be brought in to help with demand, educator burnout as well as our severe staffing shortages.</p>