



MEDIA RELEASE

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ALLIANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROVIDES CALL FOR INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS THIS EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK

DATE: THURSDAY 29 JULY 2021

This Early Learning Matters Week an Alliance of not-for-profit early childhood education and care (ECEC) providers are calling on the ACT Government to invest in early childhood educators.

In their submission to the ACT Budget, the Alliance has called for the establishment of a professional development fund, registration under the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) for early childhood teachers working in early learning centres in the ACT and reinstatement of Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care in the Skills Capital Canberra Skills List.

High quality early childhood education and care services make a significant impact on children throughout their lives. A strong qualified workforce is essential to delivering quality Early Childhood Education and Care services.

Co-Chair of the Alliance and CEO of Communities@Work Ms Lee Maiden said "This week is early learning matters week, and we are celebrating the impact early learning has on our children's lives. The role of early childhood educators is crucial in the development of children. Access to ongoing professional development for our educators is key to ensuring that the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce is supported."

It is well documented that the Early Childhood Education and Care sector is experiencing a skills shortage. In the ACT there is currently no requirement for early childhood teachers who are university qualified working in early learning centres to be registered under the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). This leaves early childhood teachers working in the ACT at a disadvantage to their New South Wales (NSW) counterparts, where registration is a requirement in an approved centre-based setting under the NSW Education Standards Authority.

Co-Chair of the Alliance and CEO of YWCA Canberra Frances Crimmins said "Early childhood teachers in our early learning centres are tertiary educated, just like Government preschools. Their valuable contribution to the lives of our children and our communities

needs to be recognised. Providing registration for our early childhood teachers in our centres would demonstrate that we as a community value the important work they do.”

The increased focus on families accessing Early Childhood Education and Care across the country, has once again shown a spotlight on the importance early childhood learning. The ACT Government’s *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* released last year includes a key foundation area of ‘Valuing educators, values children’.

Co-Chair of the Alliance, Ms Maiden said “Early childhood educators are some of the most vital workers in the country. Investing in our early childhood educators has never been more important. We look forward to working with Government to implement the workforce actions within in the Early Childhood Strategy.”

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Co-Chairs Lee Maiden, CEO of Communities@Work and Frances Crimmins, CEO of YWCA Canberra are available for interview.

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About the Children First Alliance: The ACT Children First Alliance (the Alliance) is a network of longstanding for purpose providers of children’s service in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), including early learning centres (ELCs), family day care, preschool and outside school hours care. The Alliance was established to develop and communicate a shared vision for ECEC in the ACT and to ensure that all children have access to ECEC. The Alliance has eight members: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT, Capital Region Community Services (CRCS), Communities@Work, Community Services #1, Goodstart Early Learning ACT, Woden Community Service, YMCA Canberra, and YWCA Canberra. The nine members operate 42 ELCs with more than 3,400 places to children.

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