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MEDIA RELEASE

ACA supports building a pipeline to more qualified jobseekers for the early learning sector

Australia's peak body for early learning (childcare) commends the Albanese Government for recognising the urgent need to address critical national shortage of early childhood educators.

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) President, Mr Paul Mondo, said today's announcement of additional early childhood degree places and fee-free TAFE and vocational education places would create a vital pipeline of additional teachers for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector.

"The single most pressing issue facing our sector, Australia-wide right now is the critical shortage of qualified educators," Mr Mondo said. "Without educators, families risk being forced out of their beloved ECEC (childcare) service due to the workforce shortage crisis and the educator-to-child ratio requirements."

Mr Mondo said funding additional university places was a 'fantastic first step' to expanding the early learning workforce and meeting the needs of the sector.

"Increasing the number of degree-qualified educators will allow more children to benefit from a teacher-led early learning program."

The ACA also applauded the Australian Government's announcement to fund over 180,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places, which will include ECEC qualifications.

"There is a more to be done in the immediate term to help attract and retain educators but we know that removing the cost barrier will incentivise more would-be educators to choose a career in the ECEC sector. Additionally, apprentices or trainees can now start learning – and earning – immediately," Mr Mondo continued.

ACA's 2,500 service provider members are committed to providing world class early learning education and care to the 850 families who rely on them and to do this we need a strong, reliable workforce. After a decade of workforce issues the need for action has become critical.

"In order to deliver high quality, affordable early childhood education, we need a strong, reliable workforce. After a decade of workforce issues the need for action has become critical," Mr Mondo said "But we have to do this without increasing costs on our families, who are already struggling with the rising cost of living."

"We look forward to working with the Australian Government to work through the finer details and maximise the outcomes of this education funding and implement other initiatives aimed at supporting our existing workforce and ensuring no child misses out on the **best start in life**".

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About the Australian Childcare Alliance

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) works on behalf of early learning (long day care) service owners and operators to ensure families have an opportunity to access affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) throughout Australia.

Our national and state bodies work collaboratively with all levels of government, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders with an evidence-based approach, to ensure that families are supported into the future with a sustainable, affordable and viable ECEC sector.

ACA believes that with the right policy and financial frameworks in place, we could ensure that every child in Australia has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning (childcare) services, and therefore the **best start in life**.

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