



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate Release

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### The time has come to support Australian Families: #All Children Count

The Australian Childcare Alliance, the peak body for privately owned Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in Australia, continues to call on all parties to commit to policies and immediate investment capable of delivering quality and affordable early childhood education and care for families across Australia.

The ACA acknowledges the comments about the ECEC sector raised by the Shadow Minister, Kate Ellis, at her address to the National Press Club last week. Whilst ACA supports the idea of a big picture discussion on the future of ECEC that ensures the best outcomes for children, this should in no way detract from the urgent need for additional support for families now.

The National Quality Reform Agenda, for its many positives, has been the most significant factor in the affordability crisis impacting families, stemming from the fact that successive Governments did not adequately provide a funding framework for families to compliment the reform agenda. The current CCR Cap of \$7500 has not changed for almost nine years and has not kept up with the implementation costs of the National Quality Framework (NQF) over this time.

“It is vitally important that we deal with the immediate pressures families are facing and that there is an opportunity with the Jobs for Families package to at least provide the additional investment required to provide this relief.” ACA President Paul Mondo said today.

“Whilst the bill is not perfect, the ACA believes a few amendments could ensure that the bill delivers on the packages workforce participation objectives whilst at the same time ensuring the bill is more child focused to achieve positive child development outcomes.”

These amendments include:

- Increasing the minimum level of access from 12 to 15 hours per week where one parent does not meet the activity test
- Increasing the income threshold from \$65,710 to \$100,000 before the activity test is applicable
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) families are provided with the access required based on the advice of the SNAICC
- Providing a 6 week transition period when parents circumstances change, to ensure continuity of access for children and allow parents to address the change in circumstances before having to withdraw their children from ECEC

The ACA strongly believes that all Australian children deserve the opportunity to receive high quality education and care, and henceforth all Australian families deserve access to affordable, high quality ECEC.

“Ensuring children across Australia have access to quality and affordable early childhood education and care means they have the best possible start in terms of school readiness and establishing a

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lifelong love of learning. It also stimulates the economy through increased workforce participation,” Mr Mondo said.

“Whilst the current system has its failings, the proposed package also has areas for improvement. Meanwhile Australian families can’t afford to wait for another round of consultation and package design.”

“Even if the bill is passed, families still have more than 18 months to wait before additional support. These issues affect more than 800 000 families across the country, and that number is increasing by the day. It is important that we make this happen without further delay.”

The ACA calls on the Members of Parliament to support the ACA’s recommended amendments and allow the Jobs for Families bill to pass.

“We stand ready to work with all parties to ensure that the Federal Government invests in our future through immediate, meaningful policy and budgetary solutions” Mr Mondo concluded.

## ENDS

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