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MEDIA RELEASE

ACA commends Australian Government for its \$72.4 million commitment to improve the training and skills for early learning educators

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) has welcomed today's announcement by the Albanese Government, that it will invest \$72 million, over five years, to boost critical professional development needs across the early learning sector Australia-wide.

Ahead of next week's Federal Budget, the government also unveiled an initiative aimed at attracting early learning (childcare) services to areas of need, in particular rural and remote communities.

The peak body for early learning (childcare) services, whose educators care for more than 850,000 families across Australia, has consistently advocated for additional government support to help attract and retain more early learning educators, as the sector reels from a critical national workforce shortage.

The President of the ACA, Mr Paul Mondo said professional development was an important part of building capacity and delivering high quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to children across the nation but with strict child-educator ratios in place, releasing staff for upskilling courses could be difficult.

"For the government to fund the backfill positions, while educators undertake their professional development, is a powerful initiative which we believe will lift one of the barriers to service providers being able to upskill their staff," Mr Mondo said. "Importantly, it shields the families from wearing any of the associated costs."

"Further, the new provision of government funding to allow educators to finish their courses whilst continuing to receive their anticipated salary is a really positive outcome for educators. Before, our educators had to choose between studying to upskill or being paid.

Mr Mondo also thanked the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP and the Minister for Early Learning, Dr Anne Aly MP, for establishing the Community Child Care Fund, which aims to help develop and provide early learning services in locations where attracting staff is difficult.

"We need to co-design policies that drive accessibility and affordability for all families, whilst building a strong workforce of highly skilled early childhood educators and teachers," Mr Mondo said. "Importantly, we need to do this without increasing the cost to working parents, who continue to struggle under the weight of the rising cost of living."

"We look forward to working with the Australian Government on implementing these important policies whilst not losing sight of the critical need to provide other educator attraction & retention initiatives in the months ahead," Mr Mondo concluded.

"Our shared mission is to ensure that that every child in Australia has the **best start in life**, regardless of their parents' socioeconomic circumstances or where they live."

Australian Childcare Alliance

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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. We represent over 3,000 early learning service providers across the country.

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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