

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### Federal Government provides immediate support to Victorian early learning sector

Australia's peak body for early learning (childcare) services, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), has commended the Australian Government for recognising the immediate impact of the combined Stage 4 and Stage 3 Restrictions across Melbourne and regional Victoria, and providing immediate support to ensure the survival of the Victorian sector.

"Today's funding announcement and policy settings mean that Victorian early learning service providers can stay afloat over the next six weeks and allow those families working in the permitted industries to continue working and providing those essential services." ACA President Paul Mondo explained.

"This targeted support also means that Victoria's early learning services can keep the lights on and still be there for families on the other side of this lockdown period, when Victoria's whole economy is able to open up and rebuild. We're extremely grateful for this rapid response to what could have been another impending crisis for our sector."

"For those service providers located in Melbourne under the Stage 4 Restrictions, the existing Transition Payment will increase by 5 per cent, bringing it to 30 per cent of the revenue base experienced in the February reference period." Mr Mondo said.

"The funding is available to all Melbourne-based services, therefore supporting all early childhood educators, unlike the JobKeeper Payment, which excluded one third of the early learning service providers and therefore one third of sector employees."

"More broadly, the government has allowed all Victorian service providers to waive the gap fee to families during this period, while also offering all Victorian families 30 additional days of allowable absences at their service. This means that Victorian families can maintain their enrolment over the next six weeks without necessarily being charged a fee, and leaving them with the same amount of absences they have now at end of the Stage 4 Restrictions."

"For services where Child Care Subsidy (CCS) makes up less than 50 per cent of their revenue, who may be disproportionately impacted when waiving gap fees, the Government has offered to bring this funding level closer to the sector average."

"We know that our sector and their families will be impacted by the fact that only children of permitted workers with **no other care options** will be allowed to access early learning services. However we appreciate that these drastic measures are required to address the current health crisis."

"As the bedrock of Australia's economy, our sector has made every effort to stand by the children and their families during this challenging COVID-19 climate. We would like to wholeheartedly thank Minister Tehan, the Treasurer and the Prime Minister for listening to our members and recognising the importance of ensuring that Australian families have access to high quality early learning services throughout this difficult year," Mr Mondo said.

"ACA will continue to assess the situation and work with the government in the best interests of families and their children at this time." Mr Mondo concluded.

**ENDS**

#### Australian Childcare Alliance

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## Background

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.

**Affordable access to early learning services is a huge priority for many Australian families with young children**, as well as those planning to have children.

The benefits of high-quality early learning are now well recognised and acknowledged locally and globally across the education sector, as well as **among families**.

There is a wealth of academic research that demonstrates that children who enjoy quality early learning are likely to be well socialised, confident, inquisitive about the world, accepting of diversity, resilient to manage challenges and also to be life-long learners.

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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