

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate Release

20 September 2020

### **Support extended for Australian Families and Victorian Early Learning Services**

Australia's peak body for early learning (childcare) services, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), has applauded the Australian Government for extending support for Victorian services severely impacted by COVID-19 and also ensuring that all Australian families still have access for up to 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight.

As recently announced by Education Minister Dan Tehan, early learning services will receive a Recovery Payment of 25 per cent of their fee revenue during the relief package reference period (17 February to 1 March) from 28 September. These payments will continue until January 31, 2021.

"Victorian early learning services have been severely impacted through the current restrictions in Victoria that were required to address the second wave of COVID-19." ACA Paul Mondo said.

"We commend the government for recognising the unique circumstances facing Victorian early learning services and for continuing the extensive support offered to our vital sector since the beginning of the pandemic."

Whilst it is expected that Victorian families will be able to return to their early learning services from 28 September, the current employment and economic conditions may have a negative impact on attendance numbers.

"This Recovery Payment, coupled with the extension of the Activity Test exemption, ensures financial viability for Victorian service providers during a period of economic uncertainty," Mr Mondo said. "It allows all Australian families up to 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight, regardless of any recent changes to their income or work activities in the COVID-19 climate."

"Early learning service providers must continue to guarantee employment of educators in line with the conditions in place since the return to the Child Care Subsidy in July and they cannot increase fees beyond what they were charging in February," Mr Mondo continued.

"As the bedrock of Australia's economy, the ECEC sector has fought hard to stand by the children and their families who are helping keep the economy afloat."

"We would like to wholeheartedly thank Minister Tehan, the Treasurer and the Prime Minister for their ongoing support of our vital sector during this recovery period, and for their timely, targeted response to the unique circumstances facing Victorian service providers." Mr Mondo said.

**ENDS**

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#### **Australian Childcare Alliance**

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#### **State Presidents**

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NSW	Lyn Connolly	0425 225 275
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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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