

**Monday 8 April 2024**

## **Unite for change: IEU launches pay rise campaign for preschools**

The Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch (IEU) is launching a pay rise campaign for staff employed in community-based preschools in NSW.

Community-based, not-for-profit preschools are run by voluntary parent committees of mums and dads. Preschools provide high-quality early childhood education to many children throughout NSW, but they need help to address the workforce crisis that is threatening early childhood education.

“For too long, the work of preschool teachers has been undervalued,” said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews. “It’s time for a fair deal for preschools: respect the profession; pay teachers and educators properly; and invest in the future.”

The IEU is accessing the new ‘supported bargaining’ stream designed to assist employers and employees who haven’t been able to bargain successfully at the individual enterprise level to now bargain together as a group. This process would enable the union, the NSW government and employers to work together to lift pay and conditions across the sector and solve the staffing crisis.

The IEU is calling for government-supported pay rises that properly value the work of preschool staff, especially university-qualified teachers who are paid much less than school teachers.

- **Beginning preschool teachers:** are paid just \$67,513 a year under the applicable modern award, while their colleagues in schools are paid \$85,000 a year.
- **Experienced preschool teachers:** under the modern award, the top rate for an experienced teacher is \$86,876 per year. In comparison, a teacher with the same level of experience working in a NSW government school is currently paid \$122,100 a year.

“We need a 25% increase for beginning teachers and more for experienced teachers working in preschools. Preschool teachers in other states and territories receive pay rates comparable to school teachers,” Matthews said.

“The NSW government has already shown its commitment to teachers in schools by taking real action to address teacher shortages.

“Now we must focus on the needs of our preschools. We urge the NSW government to step up and address the staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community-based preschools.”

It is widely accepted that high-quality early childhood education is crucial to brain development and fundamental to achieving lifelong learning outcomes. It lays a strong foundation for academic success as children progress through school and beyond.

Not only is about 97 per cent of the early childhood education workforce female, providing high-quality, affordable preschools assists women who have young children to re-enter the workforce.

“If preschool teachers were paid comparably to school teachers, they would be more likely to enter the sector and less likely to leave,” Matthews said. “Teachers, children, parents and the community at large only stand to gain from a strong preschool sector. We need to unite for change.”

### **Contacts**

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*The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.*

**Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary**