

Wednesday 6 May 2026

**MEDIA ALERT**

- **When** Wednesday 6 May, **8.45am**
- **Where** Spinks Park, march down Magellan St to The Quad for **9am** rally and speeches
- **What** Rally and march; photo opportunity
- **Who** IEU members and supporters; community preschool teachers Bridget Isichei, Melinda Gambley and Stephen Gallen; local parents

**Community preschool teachers set to rally in Lismore**

Community preschool staff represented by the Independent Education Union will this morning rally in Lismore calling on the NSW government to fund fair pay rises in the lead-up to its June budget.

Scores of early childhood teachers and educators, parents, children and supporters, dressed in pink, will gather in Lismore's Spinks Park, then march to The Quad for a rally and speeches from local preschool teachers and parents.

Hundreds of community preschool staff and supporters will rally in Sydney at the same time.

"Preschool teachers and educators need the NSW government to boost funding for community preschools in the June budget so they can be paid fairly for providing high-quality education," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson.

The union and preschools have been calling on the NSW government for more than two years to fund pay rises that properly value the work of preschool staff.

"Community preschools are overwhelmingly staffed by women and there has long been a gender-based undervaluation of our work," said Clunes Community Preschool teacher Melinda Gambley. "To start fixing this, community preschool staff need a 15% pay rise."

In February, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) recommended that the NSW government review and boost funding for community preschools to lift pay and conditions for teachers and educators.

"The umpire has spoken – we urge the NSW government to listen to the FWC's recommendation for increased funding to fix acute staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community preschools," Towson said.

Staff in community preschools earn up to 30% less a year than their counterparts in schools with similar qualifications and roles, and 15% less than staff in long day care centres.

Community preschools are staffed by professional and experienced teachers and run by volunteer committees of parents whose only priorities are children's education and safety.

Byron Bay Preschool teacher Bridget Isichei said: "Teachers, educators, children, parents and the community all benefit from a strong preschool sector."

Funding for community preschools is derived solely from the NSW government and parent fees. In a cost-of-living crisis, it is essential that preschools avoid fee increases.

"After months of negotiating, the NSW government has still not committed to a funding increase," Towson said. "Without an increase in NSW government funding to lift pay and conditions, community preschools may be forced to cap enrolments because of staff shortages or increase fees for families."

**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 David Towson, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary**