

**20 May 2026**

## **Parliamentary report urges NSW government to fund pay rises for preschool teachers**

A NSW parliamentary inquiry has today recommended that the state government fully fund community preschools to deliver fair pay and conditions for teachers and educators.

The NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care report said the state government should “work with the Independent Education Union of Australia, Community Early Learning Australia [employer group] and United Workers Union to address workforce attraction and retention challenges”.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson said: “This parliamentary inquiry states what the union and its members already know: a funding boost for community preschools is urgently needed so teachers and educators are paid fairly for providing high-quality education to children aged 3-to-5.

“The time for the NSW government to act is now – as it prepares its June budget.”

IEU preschool teacher members and officials gave evidence at the inquiry in August and September last year about serious staffing shortages that put children at risk.

Teachers and educators are leaving the sector at unprecedented rates due to stress and burnout arising from excessive workloads.

“Our members have been campaigning for two years now – they have rallied twice in Sydney and regional centres calling on the NSW government to solve this crisis with increased funding,” Towson said.

“There is a systemic, gender-based undervaluation of this highly feminised workforce. To start addressing this, community preschool staff need a 15% pay rise.”

The inquiry’s report reinforces the Fair Work Commission’s recommendation from February this year that the NSW government review and increase funding for community preschools to improve pay and conditions for teachers and educators.

“The industrial umpire has spoken, and now the Parliament has too,” Towson said.

“We urge the NSW government to listen to both recommendations for increased funding to fix acute staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community preschools.”

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 their colleagues in long day care centres.

Community preschools are run by volunteer committees of parents whose only priorities are children’s education and safety.

Funding for community preschools is derived solely from the NSW government and parent fees. They do not receive funding from the federal government. In a cost-of-living crisis, it is essential that preschools avoid fee increases.

“Despite months of negotiations, the NSW government has still not committed to a funding boost,” Towson said. “Without it, community preschools may be forced to cap enrolments due to staff shortages or increase fees for families.

“The entire community stands to gain from a strong preschool sector.”

### **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**