

23 June 2026

### **Optimism for community preschool funding boost as NSW budget handed down**

The union representing teachers and support staff in non-government schools and early childhood education and care in NSW is today optimistic about increased funding for community preschools.

While a funding boost is not part of the NSW government's budget handed down today, the government has separately advised the IEU that an announcement on a funding uplift for community preschools is likely in coming weeks.

"We are hopeful that after a long campaign, increased funding to facilitate pay rises and improved conditions for teachers and educators in the community preschool sector is imminent," Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said.

"Our members have relentlessly called for pay rises for over two years through their Start Strong Pay Fair campaign," Matthews said.

"Community preschool teachers, educators, families and communities feel this issue deeply. They are disappointed today, and we all look forward to a positive outcome as soon as possible.

"It's time for wages that properly value the work of community preschool staff."

The union will seek greater clarity about the government's position before the next report back to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) on 29 June.

In February, the FWC recommended that the NSW government review and boost funding for community preschools so they can provide long overdue pay rises to teachers and educators.

There are over 700 community preschools across NSW that provide a vital service to families and communities by educating and caring for children aged 3-to-5.

More than 90 per cent of preschool staff are women. "We need to fix this gender-based pay undervaluation," Matthews said.

The IEU also welcomes several measures in the state budget that support working people.

This includes freezing of Opal fares for the next 12 months at 2025 levels; relief to motorists through reducing vehicle registration costs and a \$50/week cap on tolls; and home energy-saver measures for households to reduce electricity costs.

The union movement also welcomes \$184 million in funding for frontline domestic and family violence services and continuing strong growth in public housing construction.

"Union members will be pleased by improved services and some financial relief during a cost-of-living crisis," Matthews said.

#### **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**