Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch

Media release

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Union welcomes NSW government's promise to fix funding mess

The union representing teachers and educators in early childhood education and care in NSW and the ACT welcomes the NSW government's promise that community preschools will not face funding cuts over the next two years.

This follows the state-wide campaign by union members to highlight the devastating impact of the NSW government's new funding model.

The Universal Preschool Funding program, released in October, would have resulted in cuts of hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for many community preschools, impacting the quality and safety of services and leading to job losses.

"We welcome today's announcement that community preschools will not face funding cuts in 2027 or 2028 that would have impacted the viability of their services," said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

However, Matthews said many community preschools may need additional funding for wage increases owed to their staff as well as other cost increases.

"We understand the government is prepared to provide additional assistance for those services that need it to provide pay rises to their staff, and we look forward to further details," she said.

"Since wages are the largest operating cost for preschools, frozen funding levels are insufficient to cover higher expenses, creating pressure on preschool budgets."

Matthews said the NSW government must sit down with the union and employers to review its new funding model to ensure it guarantees fair wages and secure jobs in community preschools.

There are about 700 community preschools across NSW providing high-quality early childhood education and care to almost 50,000 children.

"The NSW government's announcement of additional public long day centres will not result in more childcare places if the state's community preschools are still at risk," she said.

The union acknowledges the commitment of the NSW government to work in good faith to address concerns about the new Universal Preschool Funding guidelines.

Community preschool teachers are paid less than teachers in schools, government preschools and long day care centres. An experienced teacher in a community preschool could be paid up to $30,000 a year less than a teacher in a government preschool or primary school.

"The NSW government must act to ensure its new program delivers real funding increases for community preschools that ensure job security and continuity of high-quality services," Matthews said.

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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.

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