

Media Release

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Labor promise on free TAFE courses and Uni scholarships makes sense

Victorian Labor's pre-election promise to add the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care to the list of Free TAFE courses makes sense.

"It's a welcome announcement given the need to massively boost Victoria's early years workforce to support the rollout of the ALP's promised universal access to three-year-old kindergarten," said ELAA CEO David Worland.

Two years of high quality early learning also needs more degree qualified early years teachers so ELAA also welcomes Labor's additional pledge to provide 8000 scholarships for people studying to become degree qualified teachers.

"The Victorian government estimates that its promised three-year-old kindergarten reforms will require about 4,900 new degree qualified teachers and about 2,000 new educators over the coming decade," said Mr Worland. "Encouraging an increase in the supply of teachers and educators therefore makes sense."

In a recent submission entitled *Creating Children's Future Today* to the ALP, Liberal/National, and Greens spokespersons on early childhood education and care, ELAA (in partnership with Community Child Care and ECA Vic) called on all political parties contesting the Victorian Election to commit to developing a "Workforce Strategy" for early childhood education and care professionals.

"A part of that proposed workforce strategy sought a commitment to reinstate early childhood education qualifications on the TAFE for Priority Courses Initiative (Free TAFE list), make more places available at RTOs and increase access to higher education qualifications to ensure a supply of suitably qualified early years professionals," added Mr Worland.

"Today's announcement by Victorian Labor is certainly a big step in the right direction and we look forward to working with the Government to develop a comprehensive workforce strategy for our sector."

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