



Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill is a welcome start

28 October, 2022

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) warmly welcomes the introduction of the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Bill 2022*.

The legislation, introduced today, provides a range of flexibilities to improve the capacity of employers and employees to strike enterprise agreements.

The legislation makes it easier for smaller employers to engage in workplace relations by providing supported bargaining for sectors such as Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). It also simplifies processes for agreements to run across multiple enterprises.

ELAA has represented Victorian kindergartens in the negotiation of the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) for over a decade. The process to date has been long and complex, requiring ministerial approval to enter into an agreement with close to 400 kindergartens. Under the new legislation, it is simpler as the Fair Work Commission can approve these processes.

“We welcome the new legislation which provides a range of options to support employers and employees to strike agreements. It is great to see support for small employers as part of the legislation,” said ELAA Acting CEO, Megan O’Connell.

ELAA is particularly pleased to see the Bill provides flexibility for employers entering into approved single-interest agreements.

“When we negotiated the VECTEA not all kinders were ready to take part,” said Ms O’Connell. “That meant we had to negotiate another two agreements over time and still some kinders missed out. We’re pleased that the government is making it easier for employers to raise pay and conditions of for their workforce.”

ELAA also welcomes clauses in the agreement to support gender pay parity including the strengthening of flexible work and fixed term contract arrangements. Whilst welcoming the changes, ELAA notes more will be needed to lift wages in ECEC.

“The bargaining mechanism is a great start. However, it can only lift wages without fee increases if, like in Victorian kinders, the Federal Government agrees to co-fund wage increases.”

For more information or to arrange an interview with ELAA contact James Gardener 0413 483 182.

ENDS

ELAA is the national peak body for not-for-profit providers of early childhood education and care. Our vision is Excellence and Equity in Early Childhood Education and Care. www.elaa.org.au