



## Migration, fair wages, and a managed market all critical for early childhood in a Care and Support Economy

29 May 2023

The launch of a [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#) by Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, yesterday is a key step forward to understanding what works to attract and keep workers across the care sector including Early Childhood Education and Care workers.

“We know in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) that we rely on migrants, especially for our casual labour pool that dried up during COVID,” said Acting Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) CEO, Megan O’Connell.

“Migration and career pathways are part of the solution and so are real and fair wages for care workers. ELAA looks forward to the co-funding of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) worker wage increases by the Australian Government.”

The Draft Strategy acknowledges that the care sector, including aged care, disability, veteran's care and ECEC are all part of our social infrastructure and starts the national conversation about Australians’ vision for our care and support system. ELAA helped shape the Draft Strategy through its submission to the government and attending the Care Taskforce roundtable.

Another crucial initiative contained in the Draft Strategy is the Pricing and Market Design Action Plan.

“This is about ensuring we support quality providers to grow, and that we have solutions for where the market isn't working. In the case of ECEC we have to especially focus on regions where we have what has become known as ‘childcare deserts’.

“We also need to look at the phenomenon of ECEC ‘service flooding’... where un-managed growth of ECEC services in areas already served by quality providers is leading to worker shortages and at times prompting the decline of existing services in those areas.

“We welcome a more active government role in growing the provision of high quality ECEC services and the Draft Strategy will greatly contribute to this. The community not-for-profit sector is known for its high-quality providers but without an active hand to manage the market, without access to reserves and capital, the not-for-profit early childhood sector will struggle to sustain itself, let alone grow.

“The care and support economy matters for gender equality, socio-economic equality, poverty reduction, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. ELAA will continue to advocate for government intervention to secure well paid jobs across the ECEC sector and to grow the role of high-quality community early childhood education and care providers,” said Ms O’Connell.

# Media Release



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The Australian Government is calling for submissions and comments on its Draft Strategy at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/draft-national-strategy-care-and-support-economy/summary>

For more information or to arrange an interview with ELAA Acting CEO, Megan O’Connell, 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](http://www.elaa.org.au)*