



Early Learning Association Australia's response to ABC Four Corner's investigation

19 March, 2025

Our hearts go out to all children and families affected, as revealed in ABC Four Corners' investigation *Betrayal of Trust*. We also commend the educators and staff who bravely spoke up in the program, placing children and families above their own job security. At ELAA, we believe that all children have the right to be safe and thrive in an early childhood education and care setting. Sadly, as the program highlights, this is not always the case.

Profit should never come before child safety and wellbeing. We stand firm in our commitment to advocating for stronger safeguards and regulation to ensure that every child is protected and given the best start in life. We call for an enforced, national approach to sector regulations and compliance to uphold these standards.

We also want to highlight the vital role of not-for-profit service providers. Standalone kindergartens, for example, empower parents to take an active role in governance and decision-making, fostering strong connections between families, educators, and staff. This close-knit structure reinforces a shared commitment to children's safety, wellbeing, and high-quality early education. Similarly, other not-for-profit providers, such as Early Years Management (EYM) services, are committed to ensuring the highest standards of care and education while valuing children's best interests over profit.

Government funding and additional support are essential to help not-for-profit providers maintain their presence and continue prioritising children's best interests. According to ACECQA's latest NQF snapshot, the private for-profit sector has seen significant growth, now comprising 54% of services as of Q4 2024, compared to other not-for-profit providers. This is alarming, as shown in the Four Corners' program, which highlights the risks posed when profit outweighs child safety and quality education and care in our sector. ELAA urges the government to strengthen regulations, increase funding and support for not-for-profit services, and ensure that every child, regardless of the type of service they attend, receives the safe, high-quality early education and care they deserve.

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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