

Thursday 4 July 2024

**MEDIA ALERT**

- **When** Friday 5 July, 9.15am for 9.30am
- **Where** Outside Fair Work Commission (FWC), 80 William Street, East Sydney
- **What** Press conference and photo opportunity
- **Who** IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews; Preschool teachers Michelle Thompson and Janene Rox; CELA CEO Michele Carnegie

**Union files revolutionary pay-rise application for staff in over 100 preschools**

The Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch (IEU) will on Friday file a special application with the Fair Work Commission to lift the pay of teachers and educators in more than 100 community-based preschools throughout NSW.

“A successful outcome would be a game changer,” Matthews said. “Community preschools are crying out for teachers. Their work has been undervalued for far too long and this must be fixed.”

The early childhood workforce is a highly feminised sector (about 97%) and a win would help narrow the gender pay gap. The sector also helps parents juggle caring responsibilities.

“We need a 25% increase for beginning teachers and more for experienced teachers working in preschools,” Matthews said. “Preschool teachers in other states and territories receive pay rates comparable to school teachers.” Currently in NSW:

- **Beginning preschool teachers:** earn just \$70,045 a year under the applicable modern award, while their colleagues in schools are paid \$85,000 a year.
- **Experienced preschool teachers:** under the modern award, the top rate for an experienced teacher is \$90,134 per year. In comparison, a teacher with the same level of experience working in a NSW government school is paid \$122,100 a year.

Preschools provide high-quality early childhood education to many children throughout NSW, laying the foundations for success at school and lifelong learning. “But they need help to address the workforce crisis that is threatening early childhood education,” Matthews said.

Community-based preschools are run by voluntary parent committees of mums and dads. As the union representing university-qualified preschool teachers, the IEU is using the new supported bargaining stream to assist employees and not-for-profit preschools to bargain together as a group. The process would enable the union, the NSW government and preschools to work together to lift pay and conditions across the sector and solve the workforce crisis.

The IEU’s application is supported by Community Early Learning Australia (CELA), which will represent the preschools.

As part of the IEU’s Unite for Change campaign, the union and the preschools are calling on the NSW government to fund pay rises that properly value the work of preschool staff.

“We urge the NSW government to step up and address the staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community-based preschools,” Matthews said. “Teachers, children, parents and the wider community only stand to gain from a strong preschool sector.”

**Contacts**

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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.*

**Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary**