

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Australian Government applauded for uncapping apprentice program – early learning (childcare) to benefit 39,000 educators needed by 2023

With Australia facing a critical shortage of **39,000 educators by 2023**<sup>1</sup>; the Australian Government's decision to uncap the places in its 'Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement (BAC) wage subsidy initiative'<sup>2</sup> has been heralded a '**game changer**' by Australia's peak body for early learning (childcare) services.

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) welcomed the Australian Government's announcement to extend financial incentives to enable more apprentices or trainees to be employed, at a time when Australia is still navigating its way out of the economic and health crisis.

Educators studying for their Certificate III and /or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, and the families who rely on them, will be important beneficiaries of the uncapped program.

ACA President, Mr Paul Mondo, said the funding extension comes in the context of an **unprecedented educator shortage across the country**. Without early learning educators, some families may be forced out of their early learning service as providers are forced to reduce places to meet a strict child-educator ratio.

The shortage of educators has been further amplified:

- by the unchecked proliferation of new centre builds, particularly in areas that are already experiencing low child occupancy and struggling to find appropriately qualified, job-ready staff
- by the resignation of many older educators who fear the potential health risks posed by COVID-19 pandemic.
- in rural and remote areas where attracting suitable candidates is more challenging.

"We have been in close talks with the Government over many weeks now about the enormous benefits extending the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement (BAC) wage subsidy program would deliver to our sector," Mr Mondo said. "We need ongoing support to attract, train and retain a sustainable workforce."

The wage subsidy initiative will now be paid for a full 12 month period for new apprentices and trainees, including those apprentices who have already been signed up.

"This immediate injection of financial support is critical, at a time when across the board, there is a shortage of Cert III and Diploma ECEC candidates<sup>3</sup> in our sector," Mr Mondo said.

"The wage subsidy is welcomed support in addressing this critical recruitment issue and we applaud the Prime Minister and the Minister for Employment, Senator Michaelia Cash for their quick and strategic response."

#### ENDS

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<sup>1</sup> Progressing a national approach to the children's education and care workforce – ACECQA Workforce report November 2019 - [https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/ChildrensEducationandCareNationalWorkforceStrategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/ChildrensEducationandCareNationalWorkforceStrategy_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/thousands-new-apprentice-and-trainee-jobs>

<sup>3</sup> Jobs In Demand – Dashboard as at 3 July - <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/resource-centre/latest-data>

#### Australian Childcare Alliance

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## ACA CASE STUDIES

CA has produced a suite of Case Studies which demonstrate how the [Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement \(BAC\)](#) initiative has supported the early learning sector since its introduction in October 2020. You can [read these here](#).

### About the Australian Childcare Alliance

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) works on behalf of early learning (long day care) service owners and operators to ensure families have an opportunity to access affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) throughout Australia.

Our national and state bodies work collaboratively with all levels of government, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders with an evidence-based approach, to ensure that families are supported into the future with a sustainable, affordable and viable ECEC sector.

ACA believes that with the right policy and financial frameworks in place, we could ensure that **every child in Australia** has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning (childcare) services, and therefore the **best start in life**.

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