

*SUBMISSION COVER SHEET*



**Jobs and Skills Australia  
Early Childhood Education and Care Capacity Study  
Draft Terms of Reference**

**10 November 2023**

**Organisation:** Independent Education Union of Australia

**Principal contact:** Brad Hayes

**Position:** Federal Secretary

**Phone:** 0419 737 020

**Email address:** [bhayes@ieu.au](mailto:bhayes@ieu.au)

**Street address:** Unit 11 & 12  
3 – 5 Phipps Close  
Deakin ACT 2600

**Postal address:** PO Box 177  
Deakin West ACT 2600

**Submitted to:** Jobs and Skills Australia

Dear Jobs and Skills Australia,

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft terms of reference for the capacity study on the workforce needs of Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector.

The IEUA is the federally registered union representing approximately 75,000 education professionals, comprised of teachers and other education staff in the non-government sector. Our union represents university educated teachers employed in early education and care services across Australia, including preschools, long day care centres and early childhood teachers that work in early intervention services. We also represent early childhood education assistants employed in community kindergartens and preschools.

The IEUA has won improvements in pay and conditions for employees in community based centres and negotiated stand-alone agreements for members employed in individual services and larger organisations. Our brief comments here are informed by the priorities and expertise of our ECEC membership.

The draft terms of reference for the capacity study appear appropriate. As the union for early childhood education teachers and assistants, the IEUA will be well-placed to provide feedback as part of the study, in particular to the matters identified in Terms of Reference 3 (b, e, f) and 7.

In addition, we propose that a review of excessive documentation and workload intensification in the ECEC sector be added to the scope of the study given the significance of this issue to staff retention.

To meet the workforce needs of Australia's ECEC sector, and ensure this workforce is qualified, skilled, and valued, four distinct elements must be considered:

1. Professional recognition
2. Qualifications, Skills, and Pathways
3. Recruitment and Retention
4. Workforce Expertise

Early childhood education professionals need access to promotional positions and career recognition, including provision for higher classifications recognised elsewhere in the education sector, along with teacher registration. For example, in Queensland early childhood teachers do not have access to Experienced Senior Teacher or certification as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, which are available to their counterparts working within the school sector. It is not currently possible for early childhood teachers to be registered in some jurisdictions unless they are employed in a school setting.

Employers must provide wages that are appropriate for these higher classifications, to reflect the requirement for early childhood teachers to maintain their roles as curriculum and pedagogical leaders.

The IEUA also has some concerns around staff in regional and remote areas and those employed in stand-alone services lacking access to professional networks, and programs such as employee assistance programs. We emphasise that employers have a responsibility to enable access to these networks and programs to support employee wellbeing and resilience.

Lastly, we acknowledge and welcome the inclusion of relevant unions on the steering committee for the capacity study and we look forward to the opportunity to share our insights with the committee. Delivering the workforce that meets the needs of Australia's ECEC sector depends upon the Federal Government and employers conducting consistent and comprehensive consultation with the early childhood education workforce and their union representation.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Hayes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**BRAD HAYES**  
**IEUA FEDERAL SECRETARY**