

MEDIA RELEASE

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Peak Body calls on Government to work with ACCO Sector on accessibility of wage increase for Early Childhood and Education Workers

The Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia, SNAICC – National Voice for our children has said Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations delivering Early Childhood Education and Care services risk being excluded from the Government’s 15% pay rise for educators.

In a Public Hearing into the provisions of the Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill 2024, the organisation has called for Government to work in Partnership with ACCOs, so they are not unintentionally excluded from meeting the conditions of and accessing the wage increase.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC said the organisation welcomes the Federal Government’s commitment and action to fund a 15 per cent pay rise for ECEC workers.

“While we welcome the payment increase, we believe there are unintended consequences around the wage increases processes which are creating barriers for ACCO early years services to access the payment,” Ms Liddle said

“The design and implementation of this wage increase, including the Bill, was not done in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies or organisations so we have urged governments to work with us so ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not left behind.

SNAICC has said the Government should implement targeted exemptions to the limit set for fee increases for ACCO ECEC services, make considerations which would reflect how integrated entre Based Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services are for many ACCOs and provide tailored support about workplace instruments, which are all requirements for the grant.

“We continue to hear from our members that there are significant concerns around workforce attraction and retention, and the real possibility that some centres may be at risk of closing due to continuing workforce issues,” Ms Liddle said.

“Community Controlled ECEC services are a vital part of the ECEC sector - they are proven to better engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and see better outcomes for our children and often operate in regional and remote areas where services are needed most.

“To ensure these changes don’t inadvertently weaken our ACCO sector and widen the gap, SNAICC urges the Australian Government to work in partnership with the sector to ensure the Bill has a positive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood outcomes across all services.”

SNAICC made a submission to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee's Inquiry into the provisions of the Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill 2024. You can find this submission here -

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/ECECWa/geJustice/Submissions

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