



6 June 2023

## **New bargaining laws bring hope for early childhood education workers Joint union bargaining application to seek improved wages and secure jobs**

**New federal bargaining laws coming into effect today provide a critical opportunity to better recognise and reward the work of thousands of early childhood education workers.**

**A joint multi-employer bargaining application by the IEU, the United Workers Union and the Australian Education Union, will seek to [extend the benefits of collective bargaining](#) to a group of essential workers previously frozen out of the system.**

Today's new laws follow years of campaigning by unions to bring greater fairness and improved access to the bargaining system. The [Labor government's modernised laws](#) enable unions to now extend our strong record of collective bargaining success to areas of the workforce left behind under a previous system that was stacked against workers.

While the importance of high-quality early childhood education is universally accepted across our community, access to fair bargaining opportunities and improved wages and conditions for early childhood workers has not received the same level of practical support.

For too long, feminised industries such as early childhood education have been disregarded, and their wages and working conditions have suffered. 96% of early years workers are female and 35% are from migrant backgrounds. Turnover and staff shortages are at record highs.

These essential workers deserve a much better deal.

Our joint union bargaining application is the first step in fighting back on behalf of a disrespected workforce. This initial application, under the new [Supported Bargaining Stream](#), will include over 60 early childhood providers who currently don't have a collective agreement in place for their staff.

Winning the major changes needed to restore fairness and get wages moving only happens with the action of union members – our 2 million strong Australian union community will make the difference.