



media release

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Last-minute election promise puts early childhood education on the agenda

On the eve of the state election, peak body Community Child Care Association (CCC) has applauded Labor's announcement that early childhood TAFE courses will be free and there will be 8,000 university scholarships for prospective kindergarten teachers.

'With the promised introduction of three-year-old kindergarten, we have been eagerly waiting for a workforce strategy to support the huge volume of teachers and educators our sector is going to need,' CCC Executive Director Julie Price said.

'We know from research, such as the Skills IQ Environmental Scan, that we currently have a shortage of qualified teachers. A boost of 8,000 scholarships will build a skilled early childhood workforce to meet the needs of Victorian families over the next decade.'

CCC welcomes the addition of two early childhood courses to be added to the free TAFE initiative. The Labor government estimates that the proposed reforms will require approximately 4,900 new degree-qualified teachers and 2,000 new educators over the next 10 years.

'It is wonderful to see that the Labor government will continue to invest in the early years, so we won't forever be playing catch-up with our OECD counterparts including New Zealand and Denmark.'

While these announcements are a fantastic step in the right direction, Ms Price believes 'we mustn't ignore the research, such as the *Lifting Our Game* report, that consistently shows that children right from birth – not just kindergarteners – need access to high quality, holistic education and care services.'

CCC is proud to be part of the ongoing conversation about the importance of the early years on children's long-term development and looks forward to working with the government to further develop the workforce strategy.

For further comment:

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