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21 August 2026

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Submission to the Senate Education and Employment Committee's inquiry into the Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) (Extending Support and Strengthening Safety) Bill 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) (Extending Support and Strengthening Safety) Bill 2026.

Anglicare Australia believes that access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) gives children the best possible start to life. Early childhood educators play a vital role in children's learning and development journeys and must meet rigorous professional qualification standards. Yet their work is not always adequately valued and recognised, causing many educators to leave the profession due to low wages and feeling undervalued.

High turnover in ECEC also affects children. When experienced educators leave, children lose the benefit of their knowledge and expertise and miss out on forming strong, lasting relationships that are essential for early development.

The only way to deliver quality education and care is with a strong and expanded workforce that is well-trained and skilled, and wages must reflect the skills and responsibilities of educators.

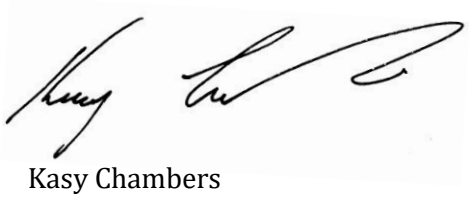
Anglicare Australia therefore welcomes the provisions of the Bill, which would extend the 15 percent worker retention payment for eligible ECEC workers until 30 June 2028, and encourage Parliament to pass the Bill promptly. This payment will assist services to provide higher wages to eligible staff without having to absorb these costs within their organisational budget or passing it along to families.

However, the Bill only provides short-term financial support to eligible ECEC services and staff. To ensure that ECEC workers receive fair wages over the long run and stay in the sector, the Government must provide adequate and ongoing funding to ECEC services. Funding should be set at a level that would enable services to meet increased wage costs and on-costs under the revised Children's Services Award and other relevant Awards, as well as overheads, without passing the bill on to families. This would also ensure that the affordability of ECEC is not impacted and does not disproportionately disadvantage children from low-income families, who stand to benefit the most from access to ECEC.

Anglicare Australia also notes that not all ECEC staff are covered by the Children's Services Award and urges the Government to review all relevant Awards to ensure that all ECEC staff receive fair pay.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Bill. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss anything raised in this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact us at anglicare@anglicare.asn.au.

Yours sincerely,



Kasy Chambers
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