



## **Pre-Election Forum calls for greater focus on education and care this election**

On Tuesday 5 April Community Child Care Association (CCC), Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) and Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) came together to host an Education and Care Pre-Election Forum where we shared our 6 Point Plan for the future of the sector.

The forum was an opportunity for our members to have their voices heard by politicians, and to unpack what each political party envisions for our sector in the lead up to the federal election.

With over 120 people in attendance, our audience represented a range of different ambitions from across the political spectrum. All speakers acknowledged the benefits of education and care and expressed a desire to invest in the future of our sector.

### **What the politicians had to say**

Via a statement, the Honourable Stuart Robert, Acting Minister for Education and Youth from the Liberal Party of Australia, reflected on the issues faced in education and care. He shared the government's record in improving access and inclusion and highlighted new initiatives to reduce childcare costs for families with multiple children.

Labor Party Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development, Amanda Rishworth, and Senator for the Australian Greens, Mehreen Faruqi explored the vital role played by the sector during the pandemic. Both noted the shift in perception, with education and care now being viewed as an essential service. They also commented on the growing momentum for change.

Rishworth and Faruqi committed to supporting women to work, whilst ensuring all children have the right to high-quality education and care.

Rishworth spoke about making education and care more affordable for families, and discussed bringing in mechanisms to ensure government funding is directed to families, children and quality care. She spoke passionately about the need for an early years strategy that delivers for our sector.

Faruqi explored the need for a radical shift to ensure all families have access to 24 hours of free education per week, along with a commitment to improving the number of services in operation and increasing support for the community and not-for-profit sector.

### **What our members want to see implemented**

Members put their questions to our panel and some common themes emerged. Supporting inclusion, increasing understanding of the importance of education and care for children's development, and supporting the community and not-for-profit sector were among those discussed.



Over the course of the evening, we polled our audience to get an understanding of the change they want to see implemented across the sector.

- 43% shared that education and care will play a large role in determining their vote.
- A further 20% shared it is the main issue that will determine their vote in the 2022 federal election.
- More than half the audience (56%) acknowledged that there was more work to be done to ensure education and care gets the focus it deserves.

Our polls showed a desire to see change across the sector and our audience's willingness to support advocacy by engaging media, contacting local candidates and sharing our 6 Point Plan.

You can access and share our [6 Point Plan for Education and Care](#) or [watch the Pre-Election Forum recording](#).