

**INQUIRY INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND  
CARE SECTOR IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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**From:** [Jason Lockwood](#)  
**To:** [Portfolio Committee 3](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to NSW Early Childhood Education Inquiry – Workforce Issues  
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Hello,

I am writing to contribute to the inquiry into early childhood education and care (ECEC) in NSW, specifically regarding workforce challenges.

After completing my Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, I ultimately chose not to pursue a career in the sector. The reason? The sheer workload and expectations placed on Educators made the profession entirely unsustainable.

During my university placements, I saw firsthand how Educators were drowning in planning, evaluating plans, supervision, scheduling, parent meetings, and even food preparation—tasks that should not fall on their shoulders when cooks were not budgeted for or simply not recruited. The management's unrealistic demands left many overworked, stressed, and unsupported. The end result? A work environment that was neither productive nor suitable for children's development.

In addition to the overwhelming workload, I also experienced hostile and unprofessional behavior from some senior Educators. Instead of fostering a positive learning and working environment, they created an atmosphere of rudeness and pressure, making it clear that new graduates, let alone top talent, would struggle to thrive in this field. With poor pay and conditions, it is little wonder the industry is facing a staffing crisis—many passionate professionals are pushed out before they even begin.

Frankly, early childhood education in Australia is stuck in the 1960s. Educators are still referred to as Childcare Workers, a term that diminishes the importance of their role in shaping young minds. Unlike primary school teachers, whose pay is significantly higher, early childhood Educators are expected to do just as much, if not more, with far fewer resources and little recognition. Further issues that need to be addressed include:

**Inadequate pay parity:** Despite holding equivalent qualifications, early childhood Educators earn considerably less than primary school teachers.

**Lack of professional recognition:** The outdated title of Childcare Worker undermines the expertise and impact of the profession.

**Workload and burnout:** Excessive administrative tasks and inadequate staffing levels lead to unsustainable conditions.

**Retention crisis:** Without improvements in pay, conditions, and workplace culture, the sector will continue to lose dedicated professionals.

I am glad I left, and I pity those who stayed—they are courageous, but they should not have to be. If NSW wants to attract and retain high-quality Educators, urgent reforms are needed. Otherwise, the industry will continue to chew up and spit out those who once had the passion to make a difference.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Jason Lockwood  
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