

Goodstart appearance at Senate Committee Inquiry on Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill 2024 - Question on notice

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: *Could you briefly outline Goodstart's involvement in the development of this policy? What consultation did Goodstart have with the government?*

Mrs Geddes: *This is certainly something that the government has been working on for some time. As for our specific involvement, our chief executive is a member of the Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group, which the department hosts, and we provide feedback and advice in relation to that. We've had some other, further conversations with the department, as this is something that has been considered.*

When we've developed and provided advice to the ACCC and to the Productivity Commission, we've shared those submissions with the department as well and had conversations with them about the types of advice and things like that that we've provided to those other bodies and the Job Services Australia network. We're also a member of ELACCA.

Senator HENDERSON: *Mrs Geddes, I might ask you to take on notice your consultation with the government in relation to this bill. If you could provide the committee with any advice or other briefing notes that you have provided in relation to this bill on notice, that would be terrific.*

Answer:

- Goodstart has long advocated for a wage increase for our early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce. This has been a centre-point of our advocacy efforts, acknowledging the foundational role the workforce plays in the current and any reformed ECEC system.
- As part of this advocacy, Goodstart shared ideas with the Department of Education (Department) on how a wage increase could be funded by Government in late 2022- early 2023. Goodstart's advice focused on the various challenges faced by the sector's workforce, and the need for a multi-level response - government investment in wages and initiatives to increase the pipeline (pathways to qualification) and support for workers, paired with employer improvements to conditions.
- Consultation ceased once multi-employer bargaining processes commenced in 2023.
- Goodstart provided the attached information to the Department:
 - Productivity Commission Submissions ([1st submission](#), [2nd submission](#))
 - [Workforce capability study submission](#)
- Goodstart is also part of the ECEC Reference Group run by the Department, which is the formal and primary mechanism through which the Department consults with the sector on ECEC policies and programs, including proposed reforms. Government funding for wages was raised in some of these Reference Group meetings as the Department sought sector views to inform its advice to Government, and Goodstart provided advice on the investment needed to address workforce issues in these conversations. These meetings were attended by many sector peak bodies and ECEC providers.
- Goodstart did not participate in any consultations on the text of the Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill 2024 (the Bill).
- The inquiry undertaken by the Senate Education and Employment Committee has been the primary mechanism through which Goodstart has been consulted on the Bill.