

Education and Employment Legislation Committee Public Hearing
Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill
2024

Wednesday, 23 October 2024, Melbourne

Question taken on notice (ELACCA)

Senator Hodgins-May:

Ms Death, you also highlight that the government could consider delivering grants through the existing legislation, with this bill providing added clarity for the sector. Can you elaborate on that point, please.

Response:

ELACCA notes that as per page three of the Explanatory Memorandum: *“the Program will initially be implemented through grants under section 85GA of the Family Assistance Act. This is to ensure that Program funding can commence in December 2024 while a payment system is built to support grants made under the Bill from mid-2025.*

Transitional arrangements in Part 4 of the Bill will ensure that all grant agreements in effect under section 85GA of the Family Assistance Act before 1 July 2025 and entered into under the Program will have effect from 1 July 2025 as if they were entered into under Part 3 of the Bill.”

To clarify our submission and position, ELACCA is not suggesting that the program is delivered under existing legislation, but pleased the program can commence under existing legislation, as an interim measure, while a new payment system is developed.

ELACCA supports the introduction of the Bill, specifically drafted for the purpose of establishing and operating a special account for distributing additional wages to the early learning and care workforce. It is an important Bill in its recognition of the value of the early learning and care workforce, and ongoing reform in our sector.

ELACCA supports measures to ensure implementation of the legislation and the grants program are as smooth and timely as possible, to enable increased remuneration to reach a highly deserving workforce efficiently.