

9 April 2026

The Hon. Jess Walsh
Minister for Early Childhood Education

By your side



By Email:

Dear Minister,

WORKER RETENTION PAYMENT - EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

We write on behalf of our members working in New South Wales Local Government Early Childhood sector.

We also include in this correspondence our fellow Branch of the Australian Services Union, the Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities & Services Branch, who similarly represent members in the Early Childhood sector within local government.

Collectively the ASU represents 130,000 workers across Australia, and we have a keen interest in ensuring that local government is able to continue delivering a high quality Early Childhood Education service, staffed by professional, experienced, and appropriately remunerated educators.

To that end, we have been supportive of your Government's announcement of the Worker Retention Payment grant program. We see the program as an important step in attracting and retaining high quality professional staff to the sector.

With the first iteration of the program set to conclude in November of this year, we are keen to ensure ongoing support for the sector from the Government.

Were the WRP grant program not to continue, our members would face a direct reduction in their take-home pay.

Such a reduction would undo much of your Government's good work in arresting the flight of staff from the sector, and in the current economic climate of ever rising costs, it would place many of our members in severe financial distress.

Local government ECEC services, delivered by our members, provide an exemplary and essential level of service for communities, and we are keen to understand the Government's plans for the ongoing support of the sector post November 2026.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graeme Kelly", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Graeme Kelly OAM
General Secretary

Per: Daniel Papps, Manager Industrial, Rules, Governance & Compliance

Cc: Zoe Edwards (ASU Vic/Tas)

UNITED SERVICES UNION

**NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CLERICAL,
ADMINISTRATIVE, ENERGY, AIRLINES
AND UTILITIES UNION**

T 1300 136 604
E united@usu.org.au
www.usu.org.au
ABN 95 571 805 442

Sydney Head Office

Level 7, 321 Pitt St
Sydney NSW 2000

Regional Offices

Newcastle (Rutherford),
Wollongong

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