



National Childcare Summit

Quality • Safety • Reform

2–3 December 2025
Mercure Sydney

In partnership with



Australian Childcare Alliance
New South Wales

**Tackling recent challenges in Australia's childcare sector
to navigate reforms and strengthen quality & safety.**

Featured speakers



Jess Walsh
Minister for Early
Childhood Education
Department of Education,
Australian Government



Anne Hollonds
National Children's
Commissioner
**Australian Humans Rights
Commission**



**Hon Natasha Maclaren-
Jones MLC**
Shadow Minister for Families
and Communities



Linda Carroll
Chief People Officer
G8 Education



Gabrielle Sinclair
Chief Executive Officer
ACECQA



Tina Holtom
Chief Executive Officer
Child Australia



Georgie Dent
Chief Executive Officer
The Parenthood



Professor Michael Salter
Director
Childlight East Asia &
Pacific Hub, UNSW

Welcome to the National Childcare Summit

On behalf of ACA NSW, it is with great excitement that we welcome you to the National Childcare Summit. This event marks an important moment in the evolution of Australia's childcare sector, and we are honoured to be part of this event at this pivotal time.

As we all know, the childcare sector is at a crossroads. With ongoing challenges, now more than ever it is crucial for leaders, providers, policymakers, and advocates to come together, share knowledge, and drive meaningful change.

The National Childcare Summit provides the ideal platform to do just that—engaging with thought leaders, policymakers, and industry experts to explore innovative solutions and strategies to shape the future of childcare in Australia.

We are proud to be part of a gathering that brings together such a dedicated and passionate group of professionals, all committed to strengthening the childcare system for the benefit of Australia's children, families, and communities. The conversations and connections made here will be essential in navigating the sector's challenges and seizing new opportunities in the years ahead.

We hope you can join us at this important event. We are confident that together, we will make strides toward creating a more sustainable, safe, and high-quality childcare system for Australia.

We look forward to an inspiring and productive summit.



Chiang Lim

CEO

Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EVENT

01

Gain valuable insights on navigating workforce sustainability, educator retention, and strategies to address staffing shortages without relying solely on pay increases, with

- **Tyler Inglis**, Early Childhood Teacher and Speaker, **Pelican Waters**
- **Darren Stevenson**, Group CEO, **Extend Group**
- **Linda Carroll**, Chief People Officer, **G8 Education**
- **Tina Holtom**, Chief Executive Officer, **Child Australia**

02

Learn how high-performing centres maintain “Excellent” ratings under the National Quality Framework, and what can be applied across your service to drive leadership, pedagogy, and child-centred practice, with

- **Bridget Isichei**, Centre & Program Director, **Northern Rivers Preschool**
- **Su Garrett**, Director, **Explore & Develop Annandale**
- **Akram Eshaghi**, Director, **Uniting Airlie Preschool Oatlands (UAPO)**
- **Sue Inglis**, Manager and Educational Leader, **Pelican Waters Golden Beach Kindergarten and Childcare Centre**

03

Maximise safety and quality standards while implementing new regulatory requirements, including the 24-hour notification rule and potential CCS funding penalties, with

- **Jess Walsh**, Minister for Early Childhood Education, **Department of Education**
- **Natasha Maclaren-Jones**, Shadow Minister for Families and Communities
- **Gabrielle Sinclair**, Chief Executive Officer, **ACECQA**

04

Explore innovative practices, technology, and service models to improve educational outcomes, operational efficiency, and family engagement without compromising personal connection and care quality, with:

- **Caroline Croser-Barlow**, Chief Executive Officer, **The Front Project**
- **Michele Carnegie**, Chief Executive Officer, **CELA**

05

Gain practical guidance on embedding cultural safety and supporting First Nations children and communities through targeted programs, early intervention, and inclusive practices, with:

- **Catherine Little**, Chief Executive Officer, **National Voice for our Children**

Who Attends?

The National Childcare Summit is designed for senior leaders from all provider organisations and decision-makers across the childcare sector. Whether you're a large multi-site operation or a single site specialist, this event will give you valuable takeaways that will help you improve the delivery of care.

KEY ATTENDEES INCLUDE:

- Senior Legal, Quality, and Risk Professionals
- COOs and other senior operation leaders
- CEOs, Directors and other senior directors
- Founders and business owners
- General Managers
- Heads of Policy, Strategy and Projects
- Directors of Finance
- Senior Managers
- Government & Policy Advisors



SPEAKERS



Jess Walsh
Minister for Early Childhood Education
Department of Education,
Australian Government



Anne Hollonds
National Children's
Commissioner
Australian Humans Rights
Commission



Dr Caroline Croser-Barlow
Chief Executive Officer
The Front Project



Gabrielle Sinclair
Chief Executive Officer
ACECQA



Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC
Shadow Minister for
Families and Communities



Leanne Cain
Chief Safeguarding
and Pedagogy Officer
Busy Bees Early
Learning



Georgie Dent
Chief Executive Officer
The Parenthood



Amanda Paton
Deputy Director, Practice Lead
Australian Centre for
Child Protection



Linda Carroll
Chief People Officer
G8 Education



Catherine Liddle
Chief Executive Officer
National Voice
for our Children



Professor Michael Salter
Director
Childlight East Asia &
Pacific Hub, UNSW



Anna Learmonth
Chief Executive Officer
Only About Children



Samantha Page
Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Australia



Akram Eshaghi
Director
Uniting Airlie Preschool
Oatlands (UAPO)

SPEAKERS



Tina Holtom
Chief Executive Officer
Child Australia



Michele Carnegie
Chief Executive Officer
CELA



Vanessa Hextall
Operation, Risk
and Quality Manager
Little Zak's Academy



Gabrielle Meagher
Emeritus Professor
Macquarie University



Bridget Isichei
Centre & Program Director
Northern Rivers Preschool



Darren Stevenson
Group CEO
Extend Group



Carolyn Smith
Branch Secretary
United Workers Union



Jo Goodrick
Executive Director
Early Childhood
Education and Care



Dr Kate Highfield
Associate Professor
Early Childhood and
Head of School of
Teacher Education
University of Canberra



Nadia Wilson-Ali
Director -
Education and Quality
Nido Early School



Trish Jarvis
Executive Officer
Catholic School Parents
South Australia



Sue Inglis
Manager and
Educational Leader
Pelican Waters Golden
Beach Kindergarten and
Childcare Centre



Su Garrett
Director
Explore & Develop
Annandale



Tyler Inglis
Early childhood teacher
and speaker
Pelican Waters Golden Beach
Kindergarten and Childcare
Centre



Skye Rose
Practice Leader -
Child Safety Team
Moores

DAY ONE | TUESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2025

7:45 Registration

8:45 Welcome to Country

9:00 Chairperson's Opening Address
Chiang Lim, Chief Executive Officer, **ACA NSW**

REFORM & RESPONSIBILITY: STRENGTHENING CHILD SAFETY IN EVERY SERVICE

9:10 Government Address: Embedding safety & quality in the next phase of ECEC reform

- With the new 7 days to 24-hour notification rule for abuse allegations coming into effect from 1 September 2025, what more can be done to truly protect children?
- Understand how the Government's reforms aim to restore public trust while improving consistency, compliance and care outcomes

Jess Walsh, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Department of Education, **Australian Government**

9:40 Reserved session – **Z Staffing**

10:10 Panel: "It shouldn't take CCTV to keep kids safe" – Or should it?

- Is surveillance in early learning centres a vital safety measure or a step too far?
- Explore the legal, ethical and financial implications of CCTV in childcare – and how it's reshaping provider accountability, supporting educator development, and also how it can be showcasing successful practices in action

Moderator: Trish Jarvis, Executive Officer, **Catholic School Parents South Australia**
Skye Rose, Practice Leader – Child Safety Team, **Moore's**
Gabrielle Meagher, Emeritus Professor, **Macquarie University**
Leanne Cain, Chief Safeguarding and Pedagogy Officer, **Busy Bees Early Learning**

10:55 Morning tea & coffee

11:25 The evolution of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and its impact on child outcomes

- How has the National Quality Framework evolved to meet the changing needs of children, families, and providers – and where is it heading next?
- Learn how ongoing reforms to the NQF are driving improved outcomes, greater consistency, and a stronger foundation for quality assurance across the sector

Gabrielle Sinclair, Chief Executive Officer, **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**

11:55 Panel: Centers with excellent ratings: What sets them apart?

- What does it take to achieve and maintain an "Excellent" rating under the National Quality Framework?
- Gain direct insights from high-performing providers on leadership, culture, safety, quality and child-centred pedagogy

Bridget Isichei, Centre & Program Director, **Northern Rivers Preschool**
Su Garrett, Director, **Explore & Develop Annandale**
Akram Eshaghi, Director, **Uniting Airlie Preschool Oatlands (UAPO)**
Sue Inglis, Manager and Educational Leader, **Pelican Waters Golden Beach Kindergarten and Childcare Centre**

12:40 Lunch

SAFETY BY DESIGN: A STRONGER SYSTEM FOR EVERY CHILD

1:30 Regulating for safety: A stronger framework for protecting every child

- With growing concerns about inconsistent safety practices in early childhood setting (i.e. from hygiene lapses to breaches in child protection protocols) there's a renewed urgency to strengthen regulatory frameworks and enforcement
- What does a regulatory system look like that doesn't just respond to harm but prevents it? How do we balance compliance with support for educators? And how can families be assured that safety standards are upheld in every service, every day?

Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Shadow Minister, Families, Communities and Disability Inclusion

2:00 Developing mandatory training for all ECEC staff: What can you expect?

- How will the new mandatory training reshape professional development, compliance, and improve the quality and safety of care?
- Gain insights on the skills and the knowledge it will cover, and learn how providers can prepare their workforce for a seamless transition

Amanda Paton, Deputy Director, Practice Lead, **Australian Centre for Child Protection**

2:30 Reserved session

BUILDING A SAFE, SKILLED, AND SUPPORTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

2:50 Panel: Preventing abuse through higher standards and stronger safeguards

- As concerns rise around the sexual exploitation of children, early learning settings must be held to the highest possible standards of safety and vigilance
- Implement proactive steps from stricter staff screening, Working With Children Checks to stronger quality standards, clearer reporting pathways, and a culture of zero tolerance to protect the most vulnerable

Professor Michael Salter, Director, **Childlight East Asia & Pacific Hub, UNSW**
Samantha Page, Chief Executive Officer, **Early Childhood Australia**
Nadia Wilson-Ali, Director – Education and Quality, **Nido Early School**
Tina Holtom, Chief Executive Officer, **Child Australia**

3:30 Afternoon tea

4:00 Celebrating the joy of teaching: A male educator's perspective

- In a sector where recent headlines have cast male educators under suspicion, how can we reframe the conversation to highlight the value, diversity, and positive impact they bring? What does it look like when men in early childhood education are not only accepted but celebrated for their contributions to children's learning, wellbeing, and growth?
- Gain an authentic, first-hand perspective on the rewards of working in early childhood education as a male educator

Tyler Inglis, Early childhood teacher and speaker, **Pelican Waters Golden Beach Kindergarten and Childcare Centre**

4:30 Panel: Certificate III in 12 months: A loophole or a lifeline?

- Are we sacrificing quality by fast-tracking education for short-term workforce solution?
- Examine the rise of condensed qualifications (i.e. 1-year courses), international student enrolments driven by migration goals, and whether these quick fixes are solving the educator shortage – or creating new risks for children, staff, and service quality

Jo Goodrick, Executive Director, **Early Childhood Education and Care**
Vanessa Hextall, Operations, Risk and Quality Manager, **Little Zak's Academy**

5:10 Chairperson's closing remarks

5:15 Networking drinks

DAY TWO | WEDNESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2025

8:20 Registration

9:00 Chairperson's Opening Address
Chiang Lim, Chief Executive Officer, **ACA NSW**

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS & ADVOCACY: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR REFORM

9:10 **Keynote: Putting children's rights at the heart of early childhood education reform**

- What does it take to create an early learning system that not just meets standards but truly nurtures every child's potential?
- Learn practical insights on driving meaningful, long-term reform grounded in children's rights and wellbeing

Anne Hollonds, National Children's Commissioner, **Australian Human Rights Commission**

9:40 Reserved session

10:00 Morning tea & coffee

10:30 **Talent lost: Addressing the educator shortage and quality decline**

- The sector's reliance on less qualified, inexperienced staff and agency workers signals a loss of seasoned educators, threatening care quality
- How do we value and retain the educators who shape our children's futures?

Darren Stevenson, Group Chief Executive Officer, **Extend Group**

11:00 **Advocating for children and families**

- How can advocacy drive meaningful change in early childhood education policy and support for families?
- Understand strategies for amplifying the voices of parents and children to influence national agendas and reforms

Georgie Dent, Chief Executive Officer, **The Parenthood**

COURAGE TO SPEAK: WHISTLEBLOWING, ETHICS & CHILD ADVOCACY

11:30 **Who speaks for the child? Whistleblowers and the cost of speaking up**

- Raising the alarm in childcare often comes at a cost - whistleblowers are too often ignored, discouraged, or sidelined
- Learn how we can build a sector where whistleblowing is supported, not punished and explore reforms that are needed to ensure concerns leading to real change, not just paperwork

THE WORKFORCE REALITY: RETENTION, TRAINING & RECOGNITION

12:00 **Panel: Fixing the workforce crisis in early education**

- With a shortfall of 22,000 educators and 60% planning to leave in the next 3 years, is the sector losing its workforce to burnout, underpay, lack of value or systemic neglect?
- Learn what needs to change to attract, retain, and respect the educators shaping our children's future

Moderator: Anna Learmonth, Chief Executive Officer, **Only About Children**
Carolyn Smith, Branch Secretary, **United Workers Union**
Linda Caroll, Chief People Officer, **G8 Education**
Tina Holtom, Chief Executive Officer, **Child Australia**

FINANCIAL PRESSURE VS. PUBLIC GOOD: SUSTAINABILITY IN A PROFIT-DRIVEN LANDSCAPE

12:40 **Using subsidy leverage to enforce safety standards: Is this what the sector truly needs?**

- Can withdrawing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) funding after a single breach truly drive better safety and quality or does it risk shutting down services without addressing root causes?
- Gain insight into how this model could reshape provider behaviour, raise accountability and influence the future of early childhood education services

1:10 Lunch

REIMAGINING QUALITY & EQUITY IN EARLY EDUCATION

2:10 **Building a system that works for every child and ensures quality**

- Quality is not an accident - it's the result of deliberate policy and funding decisions that shape educator support, ratios, and learning environments
- How high-quality early learning can close the achievement gap that begins as early as age two and influence lifelong outcomes

Caroline Croser-Barlow, Chief Executive Officer, **The Front Project**

2:40 **From strategy to action, is Australia doing enough for First Nations Children?**

- Despite \$194 million pledged for 2026-2030, AEDC data shows developmental vulnerability among First Nations children is rising. What will it take to turn strategy into real change?
- Learn what's working, what's missing, and how expanded public preschools and targeted investments can better support Aboriginal children and communities

Catherine Liddle, Chief Executive Officer, **National Voice for our Children**

3:10 **What can long day care centres learn from community and small providers**

- How can larger child care centres adopt the agility, connection, and community focus of smaller providers to improve quality and responsiveness?
- Gain insights into the strengths of community-led models and how they can inform more inclusive, flexible, and family-centred practices in larger settings

Michele Carnegie, Chief Executive Officer, **CELA**

TECHNOLOGY & THE FUTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

3:40 **Enhancing quality in early learning through technology and innovation**

- What role can technology play in improving educational outcomes and streamlining administration to increase higher quality early learning?
- Explore innovative tools and practices that support educators, families, and children without compromising personal connection and quality care

Dr Kate Highfield, Associate Professor Early Childhood and Head of School of Teacher Education, **University of Canberra**

4:10 Chairperson's closing remarks

4:20 Closing of Summit

Why Sponsor the National Childcare Summit?

Being a part of the National Childcare Summit offers a unique opportunity to position your brand as a leader in the Australian childcare sector. As an event that brings together senior decision makers from a range of childcare providers, the summit offers unparalleled visibility and access to an influential audience committed to shaping the future of childcare. By partnering with this high-profile event, you will align your company with thought leadership and innovation in areas of quality, safety, and reform.



Increased Brand Visibility: Showcase your company to a highly engaged audience of senior industry leaders, policy makers, and decision-makers in the childcare sector.



Targeted Networking: Connect directly with top executives, government officials, and influencers to build valuable relationships and grow your network.



Exclusive Brand Exposure: Gain exposure through prominent branding opportunities across event materials, website, and social media channels.



Demonstrate Thought Leadership: Position your company as a leader by sharing your expertise and innovative solutions to industry challenges during the event.



Support Sector Progress: Align your brand with the advancement of quality, safety, and sustainability in the childcare sector, demonstrating your commitment to industry development.

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If your organisation provides one of the following solutions, then our audience want to meet you:

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- Childcare management software
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Onsite branding	Banner on stage & at registration area	Banner on stage	Banner on stage during the day of your panel	Banner by Barista station	-
Delegate list with full contact details	✓	✓	-	-	-

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National Childcare Summit

Quality • Safety • Reform

2-3 December 2025 | Mercure Sydney

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childcare.aventedge.com

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