

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

NOTICE OF MOTION

MR EMERSON: I give notice that I shall move – That this Assembly:

1) notes that:

- a) there are many diligent and professional early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators across the ACT who deserve greater support, acknowledgment and appreciation for their work;
- b) documents released on 24 December 2025 have exposed poor practice in some parts of the ACT's ECEC sector that has jeopardised children's safety;
- c) Productivity Commission data shows the ACT has the least qualified and experienced ECEC sector in Australia, the second-highest rate of Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) breaches, and the second-lowest proportion of service quality rating assessments or reassessments in 2025;

2) further notes that:

- a) *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* does not focus on child safety and safeguarding measures;
- b) the ACT is the only Australian jurisdiction without an online portal for verifying Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) cards;
- c) the ACT has not fined any ECEC providers for breaching the National Law, despite egregious and repeated breaches at some centres;
- d) on 22 August 2025, Australian Education Ministers agreed to triple fines under the National Law, but the ACT has never set up a mechanism to impose these fines;
- e) Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia maintain public registers of compliance enforcement actions in the ECEC sector, but the ACT does not;
- f) many centres have not had their National Quality Standard (NQS) rating reassessed for several years, despite changing hands and/or repeatedly breaching the National Law since their last assessment;
- g) the unimpeded corporatisation of the sector means profit is being prioritised over children's safety and wellbeing in some centres;

- 3) calls on the ACT Government to:
- a) update the ACT's early childhood strategy with a renewed focus on child safety and safeguarding measures;
 - b) establish an online portal for verifying WWVP card numbers;
 - c) start fining ECEC providers for egregious and repeated child safety breaches;
 - d) increase transparency for families by establishing a public register of compliance enforcement actions;
 - e) increase professional development support in the sector to ensure staff training supports best practice;
 - f) revisit and clarify ratio requirements to ensure adequate supervision, including regarding the use of under-the-roof ratios and the inclusion of students and trainees in ratio calculations;
 - g) develop scope-of-practice guidelines for students and trainees;
 - h) deliver land use reforms that support locally-run ECEC centres, including more long-term peppercorn leases and concessional land releases for not-for-profit centres, and planning restrictions to protect small locally-run providers from being cannibalised by large conglomerates;
 - i) explore options to cap centres' surplus revenue to ensure sufficient investment back into service quality and the workforce;
 - j) strengthen information-sharing capabilities and obligations across government while simplifying reporting lines for educators and providers;
 - k) end the practice of service approval transfers;
 - l) introduce mandatory NQS reassessments within six months of an ECEC centre facing regulatory enforcement action;
 - m) increase resourcing to Children's Education and Care Assurance; and
- 4) further calls on the ACT Government to:
- a) update the Assembly on its progress in implementing these measures by the first sitting week of September 2026; and
 - b) provide a further update and table the updated early childhood strategy by the second sitting week of 2027.

Thomas Emerson MLA