

Will politicians make the grade and deliver on quality childcare?

The future of childcare is currently being discussed by State and Federal governments. On 7 December, State and Federal governments will announce their plans for the childcare sector at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

LHMU childcare union members have been actively contributing to this process through the **Big Steps in childcare** campaign. All across Australia members have been writing letters, speaking to other workers, educating parents and meeting with governments to send a strong message about what childcare professionals need to win a quality childcare sector.

Childcare professionals have said loud and clear that to have a quality childcare sector in Australia, all governments must deliver:

- A commitment to improve wages to professional levels.
- Recognition of existing skill levels and help to increase qualifications in the sector. This has been shown to improve the quality of education and care. Union members have asked that all staff should be supported to get their Cert III and that at least 50% of staff helped to have diploma by 2013.



Left: Thirty nine childcare union delegates present over 2,000 parent letters and 800 worker letters to SA Minister for Early Childhood Development, Jay Weatherill.

- Appropriate non-contact time to plan and deliver a high quality program and support the new national curriculum.
- Recognition of prior learning for current early childhood educators.
- Streamlined and effective accreditation and licensing regime.
- Improved ratios - Union members have said that the governments' option four is best but could be better.

Option four

- 1:4 for 0-2 years by 2010 and 1:3 by 2020
- 1:5 for 2-3 years by 2015
- 1:10 for 3-5 years by 2013

Union members will be working together to get the best national option put in place. In states that already have better ratios than are proposed, union members have been working hard to make sure the best ratios are kept.

What's next?

Childcare professionals know what governments need to deliver to build a better quality childcare sector in Australia.

After 7 December childcare professionals all over Australia are going to be filling in report cards on their government's performance.

Childcare professionals must have a strong voice that governments listen to.

Put your voice with other childcare professionals and join your union today to create a ROAR no politician can ignore.



Make 2010 the year of the childcare worker

Does your politician make the grade?