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## State funding announcement reinforces viability of early childhood education sector

The union representing Queensland's early childhood education teachers and assistants has welcomed today's (Wednesday, 23 February) Queensland government announcement of significant kindergarten funding reforms and more than \$1 billion of investment to the sector over five years.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the reforms addressed many of the issues IEU members and employers alike have been raising about the viability of the sector, including community kindergartens.

"Employers should now commit to a backlog of working condition and wage improvements," Mr Burke said.

"The level of funding promised for the sector over the next five years, particularly those in regional and rural areas, is significant – addressing financial viability concerns raised by employers.

"With these financial enhancements in place from 2023, employers must commit to comparable remuneration and working conditions for qualified teachers and assistants to their colleagues working in school settings.

"Research has identified the difference quality early childhood education makes to children's ongoing learning and development.

"When staff have professional rates of pay and professional working conditions, it attracts and retains staff to deliver high-quality early childhood education for the community," Mr Burke said.

"IEU members have campaigned for a long time over their concerns around attracting and maintaining staffing levels for regional and remote kindergartens as well as equitable access to kindergarten for disadvantaged families and children with disability," Mr Burke said.

"These reforms aim to address these issues and our members will commend the state government for listening to our concerns.

"Our union has directly advocated over a period of time for the government to recognise the importance of the sector and the importance of attracting and retaining qualified teachers and assistants, as the main driver of high-quality early childhood education.

"Members have consistently campaigned for sector reforms to increase access to kindy for all as well as permanent long-term funding which would allow centres to commit to long-term employment planning, professional development and training for staff and offering more secure work.

"Kindergarten teachers are professionals who deserve professional rates of pay and respect," Mr Burke said.

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*The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals and early childhood education employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory. [www.ieuqnt.org.au](http://www.ieuqnt.org.au)*