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## Union welcomes free kindergarten for all

The union representing staff in Queensland community kindergartens has welcomed the state government's announcement that kindergarten will be free for all children from 2024.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke welcomed the government's historic investment in the sector and said it recognised the importance of early childhood education in setting children up for successful lives.

"Today the Queensland government has set an example which other governments should follow," Mr Burke said.

"Research has shown early childhood education's critical role in a child's development and the broader benefit to the community.

"No child should be denied such an education because of the financial constraints of their family.

"Our union welcomes any steps to ensure all children have access to early childhood education and the difference it makes.

"The new funding will help address critical issues raised by our members.

"Increasing access to kindergarten for vulnerable families and committing to ongoing long-term funding will allow centres to employ staff long-term.

"It will also provide further opportunities for professional development and training to upskill staff and increase job security for our members.

"This critical funding not only ensures the viability of the sector, but means employers no longer have excuses to avoid enhancing the wages and working conditions of early childhood education employees.

"Kindergarten teachers and assistants deserve the professional respect, recognition and remuneration afforded to staff in primary and secondary schools," Mr Burke said.

**ENDS**

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