

Tuesday, 9 June 2020

## **Morrison Government's early childhood education decision hits women the hardest**

The peak body for working people in Australia has denounced the Morrison Government's short-sighted and cruel decision to end free early childhood education and throw educators off JobKeeper.

The ACTU says this will only worsen the situation for women workers who have already suffered disproportionately during this pandemic.

The early childhood education sector is overwhelmingly female dominated and poorly paid.

95% of the 200,000 workers in the sector are women.

Women across the whole of the labour market are already losing their jobs and their hours more than men as a result of the recession.

Scott Morrison has targeted an already undervalued and underpaid group of workers and chosen to cut off support to them, while making it harder for women who rely on putting their children in early childhood education to continue to work or to find work.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:**

"It is appalling that Scott Morrison has chosen to target early childhood educators as the first group of workers to be thrown off JobKeeper.

"This is a workforce that is overwhelmingly made up of women who are undervalued and underpaid.

"Just a few short months ago, Scott Morrison was heaping praise upon early childhood educators and calling them essential.

"Educators were required to work through the pandemic, putting their own safety on the line while providing a vital service for families across the country.

"And this is the thanks they get: a direct and targeted attack on their livelihoods and economic security.

"Early childhood education will be essential to our economic rebuild and getting people back into work.

"Women have already lost hours and jobs at a higher rate than men – and now Scott Morrison is taking away the one economic life-raft he had extended to women.

"This decision will force many households to choose between trying to pay for early childhood education and exacerbating financial stress, or getting who we know will mainly be women to drop out or stay out of the workforce to care for children at home."

**ENDS**

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