



# WONDERSCHOOL

## EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 15th DECEMBER 2022

### **New wages and conditions initiative by Wonderschool leads the way in early childhood education and care sector**

Canberra's privately owned early childhood education and care provider, [Wonderschool Early Learning Centres](#), has just introduced a new wages and conditions initiative for employees with flexible and competitive remuneration packages and generous benefits in a bid to counter the national staffing crisis affecting the early childhood education and care sector.

Last week dozens of early childhood centres across Australia were forced to close due to the sector's staffing crisis.

"Early childhood educators supported Australians through the pandemic. Now they are leaving the sector in droves. There are early childhood educator shortages nationally, we are in a real crisis. Recent walk-offs, centre closures all over the country, and consistent calls for better wages and conditions for those in the sector have gone unheard for far too long.

"We consulted our team to find out what they wanted. Our team spoke, we listened and we acted. This is an exciting initiative with the potential for national impact. Educators need to be paid fairly for the important work that they do and we hope that other early childhood providers will follow," said Sarah Wilcox, Wonderschool Operations Manager.

“According to data from the National Skills Commission from earlier this year, there were more than 7,000 vacancies across the sector. The time to act is now. Across Australia the early childhood education and care sector is experiencing high turnover causing chronic staff shortages, with lower pay and less than favourable conditions.

“The flow-on effect is that tens of thousands of Australians with caring responsibilities, most of them women, cannot work because they cannot access care for their children.

“We continue to experience these staff shortages ourselves for both new Wonderschool centre openings and across our six existing centres. We wanted to proactively get ahead and launch new wages and conditions to better support our staff,” Ms Wilcox continued.

Wonderschool’s 150 staff were surveyed revealing a higher rate of pay was preferred over more leave, higher superannuation or other benefits. In response, Wonderschool has developed a sector-leading wages and conditions initiative that offers generous financial and non-financial incentives to attract, retain and support staff in their workforce.

Wonderschool’s new wages and conditions initiative includes wage incentives that meet the needs of their employees. Both current and future employees have the flexibility to choose one of five package options. These package options include wages 10% above award rates inclusive of leave loading (and the allowance for Educational Leaders for staff employed as Educational Leaders); nine days off paid per year, between March and November; one week of additional annual leave, pro-rata based on contracted hours; 15% superannuation guarantee rate; or up to a 95% childcare gap discount for permanent employees with children in a Wonderschool centre. Some conditions may apply for each package option.

“As a small business, we recognise the vital importance of early childhood educators as an enabler of workforce participation, particularly for women.

“By advancing growth and stability in the early childhood education and care workforce through improved wages and conditions, we hope this initiative might go some way toward addressing gender pay gaps – noting that women make up more than 90% of the sector’s workforce,” Ms Wilcox continued.

The new wages and conditions initiative will start rolling out on 12th December 2022, for all existing employees, or on commencement for new employees.

“We value our employees very highly and are committed to developing and supporting their careers in early childhood education and care,” concluded Ms Wilcox.

For more information on Wonderschool, visit [www.wonderschool.com.au](http://www.wonderschool.com.au)

**For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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## **Media Backgrounder – About Wonderschool**

- Wonderschool has 6 Early Learning Centres across ACT and NSW.
- Locations include Chifley, Conder, Dickson, Monash, Throsby, Woden and Taylor (opening soon).
- Wonderschool’s approach to education is thoughtfully planned and carefully implemented by their teams of high-performing professional educators.
- Wonderschool offers children uninterrupted time and opportunities to discover, learn, create, play and experience moments of genuine wonder.
- We provide children with enriching experiences that build communities and establish strong dispositions for learning. We value children as active participants in our community.
- Our educators empower children to develop resilience, empathy, conflict resolution, social justice perspectives and self-efficacy.
- For more information on Wonderschool visit [www.wonderschool.com.au](http://www.wonderschool.com.au)

Images for the release

