

## The top 10 key findings in your state:

1. 296 ECEC educators from Western Australia responded to our nationwide March survey of almost 4000 educators.
2. Educator retention and turnover will be a major problem for Western Australia in the near future. Overall, 35% of educators told us they intend to leave the sector long term. Of these educators, a concerning 79% of intend to leave within the next three years – this is higher than the overall national rate of 73% – and worryingly over a quarter (28%) intend to leave in the next 12 months.
3. Western Australia’s best and brightest educators are the mostly likely to leave. 46% of educators currently upskilling to an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) degree and a shocking 83% upskilling to a master’s degree say they intend to leave. Only a third of educators who aren’t upskilling are intending to leave. These rates are far higher than national rates, which show that 40% of educators upskilling to ECT degrees and 51% upskilling to master’s degrees intend to leave.
4. Like educators across Australia, Western Australian educators told us that the top three reasons they want to leave the sector are:
  - ‘Excessive workload and insufficient time to provide quality ECEC’ (75%)
  - ‘Low pay – I can’t afford to stay’ (63%)
  - ‘Feeling undervalued’ (41%)
5. Concerningly, of the Western Australian educators who do intend to stay in the sector 43% say that they think about leaving ‘all the time’ or ‘most of the time’.
6. Just under half of all Western Australian educators surveyed (47%) would not recommend a career in the sector.
7. The workforce crisis is a breaking point in Western Australia:
  - Understaffing is rampant with 60% of educators saying that their centres are understaffed.
  - 67% of educators say that their workload has increased ‘greatly’ in the last few years.
  - Educators are not able to take leave when sick: 70% of educators said they ‘often’ felt pressured to avoid taking leave and more than two-thirds (67%) said they had come to work sick or stayed at work after becoming sick due to staff shortages.
  - Over 90% of educators said they were concerned with ‘under-the-roof’ ratios. 87% agreed that they compromise quality ECEC for children and 89% agreed that they compromise children’s safety and wellbeing.
8. Low pay is putting severe financial stress on Western Australia’s early educators. 65% of educators surveyed said they ‘always’ or ‘often’ worry about their financial situation. 88% of educators also said they would find it difficult to cover an unexpected, emergency \$400 expense. This means Western Australia’s educators are the most financially stressed in the country. This 88% figure is the highest of all states, and the overall national figure of 84%.
9. The impact of all these issues – high turnover, understaffing, excessive workload, and low pay – is compromising the care and education of Western Australia’s children every day:
  - 76% of educators say they feel they do not have sufficient time to provide children with the quality ECEC they need.
  - 83% of educators report feeling rushed when performing key caring and/or educational tasks.
  - Almost 75% of educators ‘strongly agreed’ that increased workload has compromised their ability to provide high quality early learning to children (74%) and provide them with the emotional support they need for their wellbeing (74%).
10. Western Australian educators in their own words on staffing shortages, ‘under-the-roof’ ratios, feeling undervalued, and how this affects quality care and education for children:
  - “Staff shortages in the industry have become more obvious in the last couple of years. It’s especially difficult to find strong, passionate and experienced educators. This makes it hard for everyone because it takes time to train new educators, which just means more workload for the rest of us, which then negatively affects children. The children in my centre have been unsettled and are not receiving quality care.”
  - “I worry about the use of ‘under-the-roof’ ratios because it means the quality of care being provided slips, which results in more stress on children and educators, gaps in curriculum and planning cycles, inconsistencies in staffing for families so there are more unsettled children and upset parents.”
  - “At the moment educators put up with long hours, high workloads, low pay and wage stagnation, ever growing expectations, and a lack of respect in society for this role. We have been advocating for a long time to have early education recognised as an important part of the education sector and things need to change soon otherwise there will be no sector to speak of.”