

# Government signals changes to ECEC wages in Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals could benefit from a new Bill to be introduced to Federal Parliament next week which aims to “make it easier for the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases for workers in low-paid, female-dominated industries (sic.) by putting in place a statutory Equal Remuneration Principle.”

The Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill is the first tranche of the Labor Government’s workplace relations reforms – designed to modernise Australia’s workplace relations system and “get wages moving.”

Specifically to the ECEC sector, the Bill has a core objective to ‘help close the gender pay gap’ with Tony Burke, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for the Arts saying “we have made a deliberate decision to support workers in female-dominated professions who have been underpaid and undervalued for too long.”

Latest Census data shows that 98 per cent of the ECEC sector are women, making Mr Burke’s comments particularly relevant.

In addition to supporting female dominated sectors, the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill will:

- Ban pay secrecy clauses so that companies cannot prohibit staff from talking about their pay if they want to.

“These clauses have long been used to conceal gender pay discrepancies. Banning them will improve transparency, reduce the risk of gender pay discrimination and empower women to ask their employers for pay rises,” Mr Burke said.

- Make gender equity a central objective of the Fair Work Act, including the modern award system.
- Establish two new Fair Work Commission Expert Panels, one on Pay Equity and one on the Care and Community Sector.

“One of the main causes of the gender pay gap is low pay and conditions in the female-dominated care sector,” Mr Burke explained.

“Care work is undervalued, underpaid, and increasingly insecure. This is making it hard to attract the new care workers we need – and to keep those already working in the sector in their jobs. These new panels will give the Fair Work Commission the specific expertise it needs to deliver pay equity.”

- Make it easier for the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases for workers in low-paid, female-dominated industries by putting in place a statutory Equal Remuneration Principle like that which exists in Queensland.

The Government will announce further measures from the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill before its introduction later this month.

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** wages and working conditions <sup>[4]</sup>

early childhood education and care workforce <sup>[5]</sup>

early childhood educators <sup>[6]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 24 Nov 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/11/government-signals-changes-ecec-wages-secure-jobs-better-pay-bill>

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