

# Child carers desert jobs <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

TASMANIA'S child carers joined forces in Hobart yesterday as part of a national push for recognition and better pay across the expanding profession.

United Voice childcare union secretary Helen Gibbons said the industry was in crisis, with almost one in three carers leaving every year because of low wages that failed to acknowledge the valuable educational role they played in the formative years.

Ms Gibbons said the union and its members would begin lobbying the Federal Government for additional funding in the sector to boost the average worker's pay of between \$18 and \$20 an hour by about \$10.

She said the Tasmanian workforce of about 1300 long-day carers would no longer accept the low wages, which were linked to the broader gender pay gap across all industries.

"Women's work has always been undervalued and that has continued up until today but let's draw a line in the sand and say that's not OK any more," Ms Gibbons said.

"There needs to be an improvement ... what's important here is that the children in our community get the best quality care that they can be given."

Lady Gowrie Child Centre University South manager Rebecca Hayes said the pay increase was needed now as a new national quality framework would be enforced from January next year, requiring all workers to have at least a certificate three in children's services and many of them also requiring a higher diploma qualification.

"We do need to attract and retain educators who will fulfil those standards. Therefore we feel that we need a professional wage to match," Ms Hayes said.

Lipscombe Child Care Services director Kelly Ashton said low wages were forcing dedicated workers out of the sector because they couldn't pay their mortgages - and it was affecting the children.

"We're ultimately missing out on consistency for children," Ms Ashton said.

"We know from research about children in their early years that consistent strong relationships built with the people who are caring and educating them are absolutely crucial to children's ability to develop and learn.

"So we need to make sure we have those same faces every day and people who are dedicated to what they're doing."

Ms Gibbons said the demand on the industry was sure to increase.

-reprinted from The Mercury

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** staff <sup>[3]</sup>

pay equity <sup>[4]</sup>

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