



Advocacy Report Card

Here's What We Did For You in Q3 2026:

Key Policy Asks

We concentrated our advocacy efforts on several key areas:



Supporting a strong & sustainable workforce

Following sustained ACA advocacy, the Australian Government extended the Worker Retention Payment (WRP) to 30 June 2028. ACA welcomed this outcome and continued advocating for funding arrangements that support service viability while providing greater workforce certainty. We also continued to champion educator wellbeing and professional recognition as critical to attraction and retention. More than **9,000 services** participated in **Early Childhood Educators' Day** on 2 September, while our **Early Years Dialogue** series brought educator wellbeing and workforce pressures into broader conversations about the future of early learning.



Ensuring future funding reflects the real cost of delivery

ACA continued to highlight the risks of a one-size-fits-all approach to supply-side funding, advocating for future arrangements that recognise diverse service models, locations and operating costs. Our **Proudly Independent, Proudly Local** campaign reinforced this advocacy by highlighting the contribution and operating realities of independent providers. We also encouraged small and medium-sized services to participate in the Australian Government's **Early Education Service Delivery Prices (SDP) Project** and promoted the **Small Provider Relief Payment** to help ensure their costs and experiences are represented.



Child Safety regulations

Following Education Ministers' agreement on further reforms on 15 July, ACA continued to support nationally consistent measures with a clear child-safety benefit. We also emphasised the need for clear guidance, coordinated implementation and meaningful consultation with the providers responsible for putting the reforms into practice.



Fix or replace the Inclusion Support Program

We continued to call for increased funding and more practical operating systems to better support children with disabilities, ensuring inclusive, high-quality care.



Recognising the cumulative impact of reform

ACA continued to highlight the practical pressures created by multiple reforms being implemented in quick succession. We emphasised the importance of coordinated implementation and clear guidance so services can maintain their focus on safe, high-quality early learning.

Key submissions



[ACA Submission - Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers \(Special Account\), \(Extending Support and Strengthening Safety\) Bill 2026 - August 2026](#)



[ACA Submission - Inquiry into the state of Australia's early childhood education and care \(ECEC\) system in rural, regional and remote communities \(*Report not yet publicly available\)](#)

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Direct engagement with political stakeholders

- ✓ Our relentless political engagement at the federal level means that your voice was heard at the highest levels of government.

Formal correspondence

ACA launched ***Proudly Independent, Proudly Local*** on 18 August to champion independent, community-focused early learning providers and strengthen their voice in policy discussions. We wrote directly to **55 key politicians and senior departmental stakeholders** to highlight the campaign and its key messages.

Govt policy forums

ACA President Paul Mondo represented members through key government policy forums, including the Department of Education's **Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group** (three meetings), **SDP Price Reference Group** (four meetings) and a **Child Safety Reform Tranche 2 Reference Group** follow-up in July.

Sector & regulatory

ACA continued its engagement with **ACECQA** on issues affecting providers and the broader sector. Paul also represented ACA through HumanAbility's **Children's Education and Care Industry Advisory Committee**, contributing the provider perspective to national workforce and skills discussions.

Formal Correspondence

- In June, we wrote to Federal and State Ministers and Departments of Education, expressing the ACA's support for the National Educator Register in principle, while emphasising that it must be significantly strengthened to function as a genuine child safety and workforce integrity tool, rather than a basic educator database.

Early Years Dialogue

- ACA launched ***Early Years Dialogue*** on 31 August as a new public advocacy channel, in collaboration with Ticker News.
- The filmed series brings together sector leaders and practitioners to discuss the pressures facing early learning, educator wellbeing and the cumulative impact of reform, while keeping children's needs at the centre of the conversation.

Media & News

We produced the following media releases and news stories, supporting broader awareness of ACA's advocacy, campaigns, and sector priorities:

- ✓ [ACA urges small & medium providers to participate in the SDP project to help shape future early learning - 09.07.2026](#)
- ✓ [Our new campaign shines a light on small business early learning centres - 18.08.2026](#)
- ✓ [We're proud to introduce Early Years Dialogue - 31.08.2026](#)
- ✓ [Celebrating Early Childhood Educators' Day - Australia Says Thank You - 02.09.2026](#)
- ✓ [Early Years Dialogue 3: Keeping children at the heart of early learning reform - 15.09.2026](#)