



11th May 2023

To: Yvette Goss - childhood@pc.gov.au

Ref: Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia (CAPAA) – submission re Early Childhood Education and Care

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write to you on behalf of the Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia (CAPAA) as the industry body representing the Au Pair industry in Australia. CAPAA advocates for Au Pairs and Australian host families. For Au Pairs, the experience of living with an Australian family is life changing. Exchanging culture and learning about each other's way of life are at the very roots of cultural exchange. It is a mutually beneficial opportunity for both host family and Au Pair, and one that should be fostered.

With youth tourism contributing \$3.2bn to the national visitor economy and the average Working Holiday Maker (Au Pair) spending \$26,800 during their time in Australia¹, we strongly believe Au Pairs are a valuable addition of the childcare landscape.

As the inquiry rightly states, quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) plays an important role in the developmental, social, and educational benefits of Australian children. It helps lay the foundation for children's future well-being and success. Effective ECEC can be the difference for women returning to the workforce or being unable to do so.

With regards to Au Pairs and the Au Pair program we note the following relating to the Terms of Reference of the inquiry:

Terms of Reference	CAPAA position
Affordability of, and access to, quality ECEC services that meet the needs of families and children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government to consider including the Au Pair model as a suitable alternative to traditional childcare options for all families in need of effective ECEC solutions.• Government to consider the role au pairs can play in regional Australia who have limited access to traditional childcare, and to families needing childcare outside of traditional hours.
Economic growth, including, through enabling workforce participation, particularly for women and contributing to productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By providing suitable alternatives to traditional childcare models, Au Pairs offer women the chance to return to the workforce, thus improving workforce participation.• Au Pairs can, and should, play a critical role in the childcare landscape in Australia. For many families an Au Pair is the only option to allow parents to return to

¹ 1 Flinders University, The Australian Experience: Perceptions of Australia's WHM Program, July 2021

	the workforce. This is particularly the case in regional Australia where formal childcare is often non-existent, and for families who work outside of the standard 9-5 work hours.
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CAPAA is also aligned with the Australian Government's development of the Early Years Strategy (the Strategy) to shape its vision for the future of Australia's children and their families. <https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services/early-years-strategy>

The Government and CAPAA recognise how critical the early years are for children's development and continued success over their lifetime, and this Strategy will aim to deliver the best possible outcomes for Australian children.

CAPAA appreciates that the Strategy will help the Commonwealth create a more integrated, holistic approach to the early years and better support the education, wellbeing and development of Australia's children. It will seek to support improved coordination between Commonwealth programs, funding and frameworks impacting early childhood development.

In summary, we request that Au Pairs are afforded due consideration in the recommendations arising from this inquiry. I would also be happy to elaborate further on the issues and to give evidence at public hearings (and arrange for host families and Au Pairs to do so too if required).

Yours sincerely,

Anna Prasad

CHAIRPERSON, CAPAA