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with over 120,000 members*

Sunday 25 March 2018

*****NEWS ALERT*****

6,500 EDUCATORS TO WALK OFF NATIONWIDE ON TUESDAY 27 MARCH CENTRES TO CLOSE FOR THE DAY

*****INTERVIEW & PHOTO OPPORTUNITY TODAY – BRISBANE*****

*****10:45am AEST/11:45am AEDT SUNDAY 25 MARCH*****

Early childhood educators will provide an update to the media this morning on the sector wide walk offs taking place this Tuesday (27 March, 2018) as they fight for equal pay.

Six and a half thousand educators will be walking off and leading a day of rolling closures. For the first time, many centres will close for the whole day. Others will close at lunchtime, or early afternoon. Some centres will close down certain rooms. It is unprecedented action and the third walk off in 12 months. On Tuesday more than **double the number of educators will be walking off**, compared to the previous walk off on 7 September 2017.

Early childhood educator Gail Farrawell from Eagleby, south of Brisbane says, "As qualified professionals, we deserve fair pay, yet early educators currently earn around \$21 per hour – only half the national average wage. Last year educators gave Malcolm Turnbull a deadline of 1 February to fund the professional pay we deserve, but once again he has let us down. We've been left with no choice but to walk off the job."

Helen Gibbons, Assistant National Secretary, United Voice, the early childhood union says, "This will be next level and it is unprecedented, it will be a day of rolling chaos across the sector. Six thousand and a half thousand educators are walking off on Tuesday to fight for equal pay because they are angry and frustrated over continued inaction on professional pay. Centres will be closing for the whole day, or closing early in response to this government inaction.

"The community understands that this is a professional, skilled workforce, we've moved beyond any need to establish that. Everyone knows that the sector has met guidelines and that workers must have qualifications. That is why this pay inequity has to be addressed now, and addressed as a priority.

"Educators are being supported by parents who will keep their children at home on Tuesday, so that their child's educator can participate in the fight for equal pay."

******BRISBANE INTERVIEW & PHOTO OPPORTUNITY******

**Early childhood educators provide an update on numbers
participating in nationwide walk offs on Tuesday 27 March, 2018**

When: 10:45am BRISBANE AEST Sunday 25 March, 2018

What: Brisbane press conference with Helen Gibbons from United Voice, educators Gail Farrawell and Kirstie Fildes to announce Tuesday's walk off. Photo opportunities of educators holding banners & signs highlighting the fact that pay rates sit at \$21.29 an hour, educators interacting with children.

Where: **EAGLEBY - The Mulberry Bush Childcare Centre, 209 Fryar Road.** (The Mulberry Bush will walk off at 2:30pm on Tuesday and it is the third walk off the centre has participated in.)

Location media contact: Neva Woolmer, United Voice Queensland Branch, 0438 280 611

Media materials:

B-roll of educators at work: B-roll is available of educators teaching & interacting with children in a long day care centre, <https://we.tl/m8xQzKHmXD>

TV ads: The Big Steps Big Walk Off has been supported by a national TV ad campaign launched on 4 February. The ad has aired nationally and asks 'why are our educators paid so little?', <https://we.tl/1JA1TmSAqH>

Fact sheet: Key facts about early childhood educators, <https://we.tl/3U7f9HMX7h>

Campaign website: bigwalkoff.com.au

United Voice media contacts:

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Please call for interview requests with Helen Gibbons

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