



# Press Release

## All Means All – The Australian Alliance for Inclusive Education

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### **Call for National Action to Prevent Violence, Abuse, and Neglect in Early Childhood Education**

All Means All supports National Children’s Commissioner Anne Hollonds’ call for urgent, coordinated national action to prevent violence, abuse, and neglect of children in early childhood education.

The ABC Four Corners investigation aired on 17 March 2025 exposed shocking practices against children. This included the use of restrictive practices against young children, in particular children with disability, alongside widespread neglect.

All children have the right to be free from violence, abuse, and neglect, and to learn in an inclusive and safe education system.

We share Commissioner Hollonds’ concern that the investigation laid bare serious failures in the regulatory system governing Australia’s early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. This system is failing to prevent and adequately respond to violence, abuse, and neglect against children, including children with disability.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AC, Patron of All Means All:

*"The Disability Royal Commission heard about horrific instances of violence, abuse and neglect of children with disability in early childhood education.*

*We found widespread systemic failings across education systems that allow such serious harm against children to go unchecked. The Four Corners investigation has reinforced this disturbing reality within the ECEC sector."*

*"Urgent reform is needed to ensure that all children, including those with disability, can receive an early childhood education that is safe and free from violence, abuse and neglect. This is a foundation of ensuring a quality and inclusive ECEC sector for all."*

We call on the Education Ministers Meeting to take immediate action to address the critical gaps in laws, regulations, policies and enforcement that allow violence, abuse and neglect of children in ECEC to continue. This should include establishing an Independent ECEC Commission as recommended by the Productivity Commission in 2024. Regulators must be adequately resourced to deliver timely assessments of service quality and safety and take action to tackle concerns.

Reforms should be informed by the findings of the Disability Royal Commission and its recommendations should be adapted and implemented in the ECEC sector. This includes prohibiting restrictive practices and strengthening monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure these practices never occur.

Urgent action is needed to ensure every child has access to a safe, high-quality and inclusive early childhood education.