

the
FrontProject

Impact Report

www.thefrontproject.org.au

2024-2025



October 2025

www.thefrontproject.org.au

The Front Project respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and learn, and pay respect to Elders, past and present.

Sovereignty has never been ceded.

**It always was and always will be,
Aboriginal land.**

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About Us

The Front Project aims to build systems that support warm, reciprocal relationships as the foundation of early learning and healthy child development.

Current system settings, including narratives around 'child minding' and the marketisation of early childhood education and care (ECEC) service delivery, drive toward a transactional approach to early learning and undermine the ability of services to support high quality, reciprocal relationships.

To achieve this purpose, we target a range of system settings, including funding models, industrial conditions and policy settings that could positively influence the ability of professionals to build high quality, positive relationships with children and families.



Strategic positioning

In 2024–25, the Front Project recalibrated its strategy to leverage a unique ‘unfrozen moment’ in ECEC reform. This period of heightened political will, public attention, and policy activity created an opportunity to influence systemic change.

Our purpose - to build systems that support warm, reciprocal relationships as the foundation of early learning and healthy child development - guided a targeted focus on influencing decision makers and policy, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and supporting system leadership. Three focus areas structured our work:



1. Using our expertise and credibility to **make the implicit problem with a transactional ECEC system visible**, and **providing a way of imagining solutions**, for decision makers at this critical moment.



2. **Shoring up the ‘unfrozen moment’**, by using our relationships and expertise to bring key players in ECEC back to continue to work together on the things that they agree on, even while there is conflict about next steps.



3. **Support and amplifying those coalitions** in the field whose work will drive towards the system we want in the longer term.

The dividends of this approach

The benefits of our approach become clear in light of unprecedented public attention and anxiety about safety in ECEC. We came into the crisis with a compelling problem definition – that transactional approaches to ECEC undermine relational quality and therefore child development.

Building on our history as a system intermediary, we had built credibility with policy makers through informed insights, and could mobilise strong relationships across the sector to identify and amplify aligned voices and ideas.

Together, these enabled us to shape a debate beyond reactive ‘announceables’ and build momentum for reforms that will improve the relational quality of the system.

Theory of Change

In 2024-2025 the Front Project refocussed our theory of change. We prioritised critical outcomes aligned to the unfrozen moment.

STRATEGIC ANCHOR	ECEC, as a core platform of a universal ECD system, addresses children’s experiences of inequity, vulnerability and entrenched disadvantage, delivering both immediate and lifetime benefits			
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	ECEC is sufficiently resourced to have time and build relationships to adapt to families’ and communities’ needs			
	Family, governments and sector leaders can define and identify high-quality in ECEC practice, which embeds the idea of self-determination for Aboriginal communities			
STRATEGIC OUTCOMES	Built and shape dominant narratives, including around progressive universalism and ECEC as a platform for ECD	Understanding of quality in ECEC, including the importance of relationships in quality, and as a platform for ECD	Shifts in policy landscape to (i) reflect ECEC benefits (ii) integrated ECEC with other ECD systems (iii) progressively universal	More confident and valued professionals in ECEC recognised for quality, and their unique role in supporting families and children
OUR WORK	The Apiary			
	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collective			
	Government Relations and Engagement, Strategic Policy, Evidence and Impact,			

Impact Summary

FOCUS AREA 1:

Decision makers recognise the problem of transactional approaches to ECEC, and provide a way of imagining solutions



8

Research and policy reports



5

Lunch and Learn sessions



30+

Formal meetings with Members of Parliament



828

Media mentions across print, radio and podcast

Using data

Encouraging use of data to develop policy insights and build learning systems

Regular engagement

Formal and informal regular engagements with influential Departmental staff across multiple jurisdictions

FOCUS AREA 2:

Working on the system with others to make the most of the 'unfrozen moment'



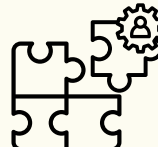
Trusted and critical friend



Actively engaged in cross-sector coalitions



Participated in significant policy development



Bridging silos
between ECEC and ECD advocates



3 webinars
Public webinars with average 306 attendees



Bridging gaps
between Commonwealth and State and Territory Government officials

FOCUS AREA 3: Developing system leadership and supporting long-term coalitions



24

New Apiary Fellows from across ECD system



75

Active member of the Impact Community



5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders onboarded into Fellowship and The Collective established



3

Convenings with 2024 and 2025 Fellows

Convening and supporting cross-sector coalitions



Reflections

During 2024-2025 the Front Project has played a significant role in shaping early childhood education and care (ECEC) reform at a critical time by embedding evidence, relationships, and system stewardship into the national agenda.

Our work has:

- Made different conversations possible by shifting policy language and priorities towards human centred and relational systems that prioritise quality, equity, and workforce stability.
- Maintained momentum on areas of strong agreement by facilitating cross-sector trust and collaboration during a politically sensitive reform period.
- Backed in long-term change by supporting and developing coalitions whose influence extends across the ECEC system.

Our role as a **trusted intermediary** means that we can connect actors who would not otherwise meet, create safe and productive spaces for exchange, and translate complex, technical insights into accessible, actionable ideas.

This brokering function allows us to bridge perspectives across government, sector leaders, advocates, and community voices, turning diversity of viewpoints into coherent, evidence-informed strategies. It positions us to rapidly align stakeholders around shared opportunities, respond collectively to emerging challenges, and redirect attention toward solutions that strengthen the foundations of quality and equity.

As the policy landscape continues to evolve, the Front Project's position as a systems-focused intermediary, that bridges evidence, relationships, and influence, will remain central to advancing a more human, equitable ECEC system.

By opening conversations to broader sets of interests, providing trusted advice, and sustaining cross-sector alignment, we are helping to create the preconditions for reforms that not only respond to the current window of opportunity but endure to deliver lasting benefits for all children and families.



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