

## MEDIA RELEASE

21st June 2022

Child Care Operators in the [City of Karratha](#) and the [Town of Port Hedland](#) who apply for skilled workers through the Pilbara Designated Area Migration Agreement will now have their endorsement fees waived.

The Pilbara DAMA is a five-year agreement between the Commonwealth and Regional Development (RDA) Australia, in partnership with the [City of Karratha](#) and the [Town of Port Hedland](#). The Pilbara DAMA provides new pathways for employers to sponsor skilled and semi-skilled overseas workers for positions they are unable to fill with Australian workers.

This initiative will allow Child Care Operators to fill vacant positions, which will open additional places in childcare centres that have previously not been able to be filled due to the shortage of skilled educators.

Regional Development Australia Pilbara Chair Nerida Kickett said, “Being a mother and a grandmother and working with the community’s most vulnerable, I understand how important it is for families and businesses to have childcare support available so that both parents are able to work to provide for their family.”

City of Karratha Deputy Mayor Kelly Nunn said the City was pleased to see RDA further supporting businesses to attract critical service workers. “We know childcare is one of the industries greatly suffering from critical labour shortages and aware of the severe impact this has on Pilbara-based families. Supporting businesses to fill essential roles such as childcare is precisely the reason the City pursued a DAMA”.



*Picture: RDA Pilbara Chair Nerida Kickett, City of Karratha Deputy Mayor Kelly Nunn, staff member and children from One Tree Millars Well*

Town of Port Hedland Mayor Peter Carter acknowledges the vital role that access to quality childcare plays in building strong regional communities. “Creating more childcare places will not only help attract families to the Pilbara and improve retainment but will also support parents and carers with the opportunity to take up employment or increase their hours at local businesses and companies – which are also experiencing recruitment challenges.”



A One Tree Community Services spokesperson said “We’re in the middle of a sector-wide early education staffing crisis. Low educator numbers are impacting the availability of care across Australia. The regional and remote locations One Tree works with are feeling this shortage more keenly. For example, in the Pilbara there are over 1,000 children on waitlists. The DAMA waiver allows One Tree to access a skilled international educator workforce and grow our team to care for as many children as possible in these places.”

Please contact Tony at RDA Pilbara at [ceo@rdapilbara.org.au](mailto:ceo@rdapilbara.org.au) or 0427 191 272 for further information.

