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Childcare Leadership Alliance reaches key milestone with BMA partnership renewal

MORANBAH, QLD – The Childcare Leadership Alliance (CLA) has reached a major organisational milestone, officially signing a direct Social Investment Project Contract with BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA).

The new three-year agreement (FY26–FY29) marks a significant evolution in the CLA's governance and maturity. BMA initially contracted Astute Early Years Specialists in 2022 as the delivery partner to facilitate the formal establishment of the Alliance, set up its initial operational infrastructure, and trial foundational programs. Having now matured into an independent, board-governed Company Limited by Guarantee, the CLA has secured this strategic partnership directly with BMA, while continuing to engage Astute Early Years Specialists under a managed service framework to support ongoing delivery.

"Securing this direct contract with BMA is a monumental step forward for the Alliance," said **Melissa Westcott, Chair of the Childcare Leadership Alliance**. "It reflects the governance strength, organisational maturity, and proven track record we have built since launching in 2022. By continuing to work with Astute under our managed service model, we maintain seamless operational expertise while taking full strategic ownership of our regional mission."

Since its inception, the CLA model has transformed early childhood education and care (ECEC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) across the Isaac region, shifting local childcare from a fragmented landscape into a coordinated, sustainable community asset.

The initiative's industry-leading approach has earned prestigious accolades, including winning the 2024 Queensland Mining Award for community contribution, while BMA's childcare investment was recognised with the 2025 Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance Award at the QRC/WIMARQ Resources Awards for Women.

Key regional impacts achieved through the initiative to date include:

- **83% Reduction in Educator Turnover:** Dropping local turnover to just 7.5%, well below the national industry average of 30%. Stabilising the local workforce across participating services.
- **40 Qualified Educators Relocated:** Successfully pioneering an international recruitment and subsidised housing model for Moranbah and Dysart.
- **Increased Access for Families:** 56% drop in waitlists, supporting more than 100 additional families to access local care and driving an 8% increase in service occupancy.
- **Enhanced Professional Development:** Achieving over 200 professional development engagements with local educators across the region.

Under the renewed \$1.5 million contract, the CLA will continue to deliver core interventions, including international recruitment, educator housing solutions, AI-supported HR capability tools, and the Place-Based Funding Program. The agreement guarantees core workforce deliverables while supporting the CLA's multi-funder sustainability model alongside REGIONAL partners such as Isaac Regional Council, Stanmore, and Moranbah Solar.

BMA Asset President, Adam Lancey said BMA was proud to continue its partnership with the CLA and build on the positive outcomes it has delivered across the region.

“Quality childcare is essential to the wellbeing and prosperity of regional communities.

“The Childcare Leadership Alliance has made a significant impact in Moranbah and Dysart by improving access to care and helping parents and carers balance work, education and family commitments.

“We're proud to support the Alliance for another three years and help ensure local families continue to benefit from these important services,” he said.

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About the Childcare Leadership Alliance (CLA):

The Childcare Leadership Alliance Ltd is an independent, community-led not-for-profit organisation driving stable, sustainable, and high-quality early childhood education and care across regional Queensland. By acting as a central coordinator between community, industry, government, and local providers, the CLA develops scalable workforce, housing, and capability solutions to ensure regional families have reliable access to essential early learning and care services.