

As a parent, my key concerns with childcare are the quality of the carers and educators who care for my children and the price I have to pay when choosing to return to work.

I have 1 child, 2 years old, in a not for profit long day care centre and another child on the way who both will be attending long day care at a South East Melbourne suburb in the City of Casey next year.

I do not think reducing the rebate for families earning \$160,000 plus is well thought out. Currently with the rebate we pay over \$10,000 per year for 1 child and soon to have 2 children, this will grow to \$21,000 of out of pocket expenses for child care at this year's rate. Every year child care prices increase, so this amount will only continue to grow.

If Government cuts the rebate for these families' prices could hit \$30,000 for one child and double for 2 children and so on. What would be the point of returning to work? This is more than what grammar schools costs with no choice for cheaper or alternative care as there is with public education.

Cutting the rebate will only increase these out of pocket expenses and is not encouraging women to return to the workforce or contribute paying tax to the greater community. Why childcare isn't seen as an early pre-extension to primary education is beyond me.

If families are earning decent amounts in excess of \$250,000 than the rebate should be cut or reduced. Currently it stands at \$150,000 per the primary carer the changes suggested for this to reduce is DRASTIC for these families. I don't know where the Government gets the figure of \$160,000 as being well off when there are expensive mortgages and bills to be paid and then with childcare costs on top!

By choosing to return to work I am contributing to the public purse by paying tax. If the rebate is cut for families earning over \$160,000 more women will have to stop work altogether or drastically reduce their hours to have anything left over in wages to take home after paying for childcare, this is absurd. This also means less dollars going towards the government via tax.

It should not matter how many days a parent studies or work, if they require child care they should have access to it and the rebate, regardless of the number of days required. Changing this will only have a negative impact. Furthermore, priority should be given to families who actually use childcare for studying and work purposes. After all it is these families who require the care the most whilst they are contributing to the Australian economy and taxes.

What is the point of giving women 6 months of paid maternity leave to encourage them to have children when they won't be able to afford returning to work due to childcare fees? The money proposed for paid maternity leave should be put back into childcare and rebates for families whose children require childcare until they begin school.

I am concerned with the proposal to reduce qualifications requirements for educators of children aged zero to three years. Accessing affordable childcare is a big challenge for many families. I welcome the recognition that the overall level of childcare assistance needs to be increased.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds get the biggest benefit from accessing quality early learning and care. It would be a backward step if access to early learning for disadvantaged children became harder.

I expect, if I choose to entrust my children to a formal care environment that I leave them with educators who are qualified to support their individual learning and care needs at a price I can afford.

My family values quality early learning for children, particularly in the early years before they are three. We want to feel comfortable leaving our children with educators who know and understand the development of my child. The first three years of life are a vital part of a child's development, having educators who understand and contribute to my child's development is important to me.