

To whom it may concern,

I am a Director of a long day care service in country town Mildura, our service is an extensive 140 place privately owned and operated business.

We have been open in our community for the best part of three years now and are looking to expand our facility to cope with the rising need of families that are working; due to local councils and red tape this has proven to be difficult and has delayed our plans to expand our service.

The future needs for our community is in the long day care industry; Mildura is made up of lower income earners and many mothers that are working work on a part time basis. Even though these people are not earning high wages the cost of child care for these people often goes over the threshold to obtain the minimum 50% or 7,500 dollars per financial year child care rebate causing financial strain. I think more of a rebate for working/ studying families should be reviewed to help cut the cost from these sorts of families.

Many families appreciate the long day care system as it provides the basis for early education and gives the children in our community a head start in learning and brain development, which we know is so important for children before the age of three as studies have shown.

It has been a slow process but we are now an industry finally being recognised as a professional education system. It is my belief that this recognition is to do with the implementation of the National quality standards and the rating and assessment process that has been in place nationwide. The early years learning framework as well regulation changes to qualifications has also added to the quality of early education and care for children, families and communities are realising more than ever that substandard care for children should not be an option.

It is my belief that all children under the age of five years deserve the opportunity, accessibility and availability to be a part of a regulated quality early education system and to do this more vulnerable families would require more benefit and easier accessibility to be a part of this amazing work that early educators do daily. Child care needs to be more affordable for all especially in our small hard working and vulnerable community and qualified educators need to be present to execute the early years learning frame work.

Review the 13 weeks free child care for children at risk and families in financial hardship and allow for this to be extended for our vulnerable families without them being made to jump through hoops, haven't they gone through enough already?

Allow exceeding centres to expand their licencing to provide for more qualified educators to remain employed, communities to grow and children to flourish. Tax breaks for private operators who are not-for-profit to be able to do this would be for Australia's advantage.

Review of the work study testing for child care rebate for families to be increased allowing more parents to go back to work and obtain qualifications.

Let's do this for our future which lies with children.

Carla Robinson –Outback Kids Child Care Centre