

3rd September, 2014

Dear Commissioner

I am an early childhood teacher. I studied, part time as a mature age student for eight years to complete my Bachelor of education whilst raising my three children, who were for part of that time attending Preschool. I teach in a community based preschool in Normanhurst.

I am concerned that the commission is looking at the needs of getting women in the workforce above the needs and rights of children. The first priority should be the education and care of the child. Not just care – they cannot be separated. There is a wealth of research showing the importance of the early years and how quality of early child environments are enhanced with university qualified early childhood teachers.

Why would it be acceptable for children under three not to have access to university qualified teachers? My son is now a first year car mechanic but after six months of study he is not deemed qualified enough to be working on his own without a qualified mechanic supervising and mentoring him along with attending TAFE. I do not believe it is in the best interest of very young children for a Certificate Three (six month course) qualified person to be completely responsible for children under three without significant access to mentoring, guidance or supervision from higher qualified staff?

I do not want preschools to be removed from the NQF and therefore the funding that is attached. We WILL NOT survive. It makes me feel very angry that the removal of funding will jeopardise our very existence and when you lose community based preschools you really will lose an invaluable community resource for families. In many families that attend the preschool where I work both parents work or study so we are already providing opportunities for women to return to the workforce. Not to mention the staff that work in the preschools who, incidentally, are inadequately remunerated to keep fees low for families and due to lack of funding. It could be suggested that educators and teachers are in fact subsidising women (ie the mothers) to re-join the work force through their low pay. A teacher in a primary school can earn up to \$30,000 more pa than a teacher in a preschool – both have a four year university teaching degree.

I do not want to see a future without community based preschools or without the NQF across all early childhood settings. I am worried that my future grandchildren will not be able to attend a long

day care with highly qualified staff and there will be no community based preschools left for them to choose.

In summary my points are

- 1) The needs and rights of the child should be of paramount importance
- 2) Education and Care cannot be separated.
- 3) Children under three should have access to university qualified Early Childhood Teachers
- 4) Preschools should remain under the NQF and be adequately funded.

Yours sincerely

Julie Creasey