

- **The contribution of childcare to workforce participation and child development**

Early years learning is vital for developing children. Parents need to know that early learning centres located close to schools and kindergartens have well -educated and experienced staff.

Recommend: These staff require access to ongoing Professional Development and better wage scales and starting salaries.

Parents whose part time salaries cover the costs of early learning placements for their children would continue to benefit from the current childcare rebate. The incentive (financial) to work remains for those women. Single mothers require this incentive. Equally professional and corporately motivated women must not be means tested to see if they are eligible for the childcare rebate. Why does their talent become a burden because they earn more?

Recommend: A fairer sliding scale for the rebate according to salary amounts.

- **Current and future need for childcare in Australia, particularly given changes in work patterns, early learning needs, childcare affordability and government assistance**

There is a clear and ever present need for childcare that incorporates a quality early learning program in Australia.

Work patterns do go beyond nine to five.

Children are curious and try to make sense of their world as they develop.

Childcare needs to be affordable and governments need to assist.

Recommend: Universal high quality early learning programs are introduced to all locations. Children aged two to four can access these programs twice a week. The actual days chosen would depend on parents' work patterns/ participation.

- **The capacity of the childcare system to ensure a satisfactory transition to schools, in particular for vulnerable or at risk children**

To be fair is to care about the vulnerable and at risk children and provide them with a "safe haven" where they can grow and develop and have chances in life that provide for their human rights.

- **Alternative models of care, including those overseas, which could be considered for trial in Australia**

Recommend: Universal early learning provided for children, twice a week, two to four year olds. Flexible booking service with well-qualified early learning trained staff paid at reasonable rates.

- **Options - within existing funding parameters - for improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability of childcare for families with diverse circumstances**

Flexibility is the key to improved work opportunities for some father's as well. A mother becomes ill and the father still needs to work. He may require assistance, out of hours.

Nannies deserve access to government rebates.

Childcare places in popular inner city growth areas may be scarce due to lack of land to locate larger facilities with all the necessary car parking spaces. e.g. Albert Park, VIC

Childcare places in new growth outer suburb areas may be located close to kindergartens and child health centres making access ideal for working and stay at home Mums. E.g Berwick, VIC

- **The impacts of regulatory changes, including the implementation of the National Quality Framework, on the childcare sector over the past decade.**

Quality early learning is essential.

Staff need to be well versed on what is written in this National Quality Framework. TAFE and University courses need to include study of this framework in their courses.