

Dear Sir / Madam,

We the educators and families at Berkeley Vale Pre-school are **gravely concerned** with a number of recommendations made within the Draft Productivity Commission Report.

- “The CCB category for “registered” child care should **NOT** be removed” – Many families who choose to use “registered” care, such as pre-school, also work / study – why should we be not eligible for CCB? That is not equitable!
- Pre-schools should not be removed from the NQF – Pre-school services are committed to on-going quality improvement and should remain under this National Quality Framework.
- We have grave concerns in relation to the recommendation to drop qualification requirement to Cert. III qualified educators being responsible for children under 3 years of age. This suggestion fails to recognise the signification brain, language and social development that occurs with young children under 3 years of age and quality developmental outcomes are strongly linked to the qualifications of under 3 year old children – Diploma trained and Early Childhood teachers are a must for Under 3 year olds!! All the research within the Early Childhood sector strongly supports this.
- OSHC services being encouraged to care for PRESCHOOL aged children – This suggestion is MADNESS!!! Children under school age need higher staff ratios and cannot adequately have their needs attended to when they are grouped with school aged children.
- The recommendation to **REMOVE** tax benefits for Not-for-Profit services and the suggestion to **REMOVE** Payroll Tax exemptions from the State – by doing this will only increase our fees to families – which thus directly impacts AFFORDABILITY.
- There is no division between “care” and “education” for young children – the Productivity Commission is doing our Nation’s children the greatest disservice by even considering that there is a different between “care” and “education”. The Abbott Government needs to invest significantly into Early Childhood Education, regardless of the type of service a family choose to use. Please start thinking about the interest and needs of children **FIRST** not the economy!! If we don’t start investing in our early years education – we won’t have a future generation to continue to drive and fuel the economy. **QUALITY CARE AND EDUCATION COSTS!!**

Suggestions **we would support** include:

- Means testing a single child-based funded subsidy to families – The Early Care and Learning Subsidy – all families should receive the same subsidy – regardless of the type of learning environment they choose for their child / family.
- Moving all State funded community based pre-schools to be aligned to their local Public School – that will ensure State Government funding – smoother transition to school processes and better wages for Early Childhood teachers – until this wage disparity is addressed our Nation will continue to have difficulty attracting Early Childhood teachers to the sector – we are losing these teachers to Government schools due to better wages.
- Assessment and Rating system must be redesigned for faster assessment of services.
- The “Excellent” rating should be abolished.

- Governments and ACECQA should ‘explore ways to determine services’ ratings so they are more reflective of overall quality – current system is inconsistent and provides significant flaws.

We strongly urge the Productivity Commission representatives sit down with Early Childhood advisory bodies and University Academics to gain a clearer picture on how our Nation should steer Early Childhood Education.

Colleen Templeton  
Nominated Supervisor  
Berkeley Vale Pre-school