

Commissioner Wendy Craik AM
Australian Government
Productivity Commission
Childcare and Early Childhood Learning

To Whomever It May Concern,

I am an Australian mother of two boys, aged 3 and 5 years, both in their final years of early childhood care and learning. My sons have had the good fortune to experience an Australian childcare environment with quality of care and education that puts them in excellent stead for their Australian kindergarten and school years ahead. Therefore it is not on their behalf that I write this letter; I am instead compelled to write on behalf of future Australian children who stand to benefit, as my boys have, from ongoing outstanding quality of early childhood care and learning within Australia.

I urge the Productivity Commission to uphold, and further increase, a standard within the NQF that Australia can continue to be proud of on a local and world scale, and in doing so recognize the broader benefit of what this standard provides for the Australian community and society as a whole: socially adept, emotionally developed and instinctive, cognitive early learners and preschoolers; stimulated, dedicated and highly sought after early childhood staff; emotionally and financially supported parents, empowered to contribute and thrive within Australia's working sector while knowing their children, from young yet critical early-learning ages, are receiving a quality of care uncompromised by the environment within which they are placed to receive such care.

The NQF can only be upheld with the ongoing support of its present-day framework, including current staff to child ratios (especially for children under three years) and the employment of staff highly trained in early childhood development and education. Most critically, however, the standard of the NQF

should be further elevated by the implementation of recommendations from the Productivity Commission, specifically ongoing funding by the Australian Government of universal access to 15 hours of preschool, extending the scope of the NQF to include all centre and home based services receiving Australian Government assistance, and increased investment in subsidies for low income families.

As stated, I am one of the more fortunate Australian parents whose children have benefited from the current, outstanding NQF in place for early childhood care and education. I urge the Australian Government not to disallow these benefits for future Australian parents and children, and rather to strive for an ever-increasingly productive, higher benchmark for current and future standards, by way of the Productivity Commission.

Sincerely,

Anna McLeish