

## Productivity Commission Submission

The most important aspect of any changes must ensure the best outcomes for children, families and the not-for-profit education and care sector. Children must have access to high quality affordable and accessible early childhood education and care, because the research evidence clearly states that this is so important for children, academically, socially and developmentally.

- Reject the Productivity Commission's proposals for Early Childhood Education and Care as it will increase the cost of childcare for families, make it less accessible, wind back improvements in the quality of care available to children and reduce the standard of provision, especially as rated on a global level.
- Substantial research has shown that the qualifications of the educator determines the quality of early childhood education and care from an early age yet the Commission is proposing to limit the number of teachers available to children and accept reduced qualifications. The rest of the world is increasing expenditure on early education because the evidence is so clear about its benefits.
- Children need and are entitled to regulatory standards that are consistent with a vision of giving them the best start in life. Watering down ratios and qualifications to below nationally recommended standards will compromise quality education and care experiences for children and add to entrenched barriers to attracting and retaining committed, qualified staff (Fenech, 2014). Retaining the standards and elements in the NQF is recommended for Pre-Schools as it improves outcomes for children and families.
- Funding families on a deemed cost of care does not take into account a range of cost factors such as the variable cost of providing care in different regions and for different ages of children. Funded care for children will not be available unless their parents are in work or study or training for at least 24 hours a fortnight creating a great divide. It also means that there will be higher quality education and care available for those families with the capacity to pay and lower quality for others. The retention of a funding system that funds parents rather than services is short-sighted.
- The report makes no allowance for the advantages of community-based and managed education and care for communities. The Commission found that not-for-profit services deliver higher quality education and care, provide more education for children with additional needs and 50% of CCB-approved services are operated by not-for-profit providers. For profit services can have needs (e.g. the need to make a profit) that can work against quality provision. Quality costs.
- The deemed cost of care may not reflect quality provision. If not-for-profit services are hampered in their ability to operate the quality and quantity of care will be reduced. The recommendations regarding preschools are exceptionally difficult for NSW Community Based Preschools-especially removal of the NQF and removal of the registered care element of CCB. Removal of eligibility of all not-for-profit childcare providers to payroll tax exemptions needs deeper analysis and further investigation.

Crescent Head Community Pre-School can only promote a system with a focus on children's well-being and outcomes. We advocate for a system that is based on an inclusive, socially just, community focussed education and care system that imagines and creates a great future for Australia (Gibbs, 2014). A quote by Eva Cox, "We need to plan and fund services that meet the complexity of parental needs, community needs and workforce needs, and foremost the good of the child."