

I am a dedicated and committed educator of 25 years who is absolutely shocked and horrified at many of the recommendations that have been put forward in the Productivity Commission.

I strongly believe that it is inappropriate to lump children in a group of under 13 years and have the same expectations on Mum's if their child was 12 months old or 12! Totally ludicrous. It should have been written 'Mothers of children under school age' and 'over school age' and expectations for them to return back to work being realistic based on this. Children who are under the age of 5 years require more support than older children.

The recommendation of not providing any assistance to families where the 24 hr work, study is not met in the fortnight is purely unacceptable. The current system that is means tested for CCB is fair and allows all children the right to access early childhood educations and experience the positive benefits of this. Many of these may be vulnerable families who's children SHOULD be utilising early childhood services for multiple reasons. One being that it allows educators to observe them for any indicators for child abuse and other child protection issues, which we would then as we do currently would liaise with child protection services to ensure that they receive the support that they require. I am sure your response will be that these families will still have access to services, but what if they don't make it into the centre in the first place for professionals to recognise that this is the case. On some of these occasions the children's lives are literally in your hands as a government body who suggests such reckless recommendation.

Also a sign of the short-sightedness of this report is that how will this impact on early childhood services who currently have families who do not meet the new recommended work, study etc requirements. This will have grave results on services that are currently fully functional and viable. I am sure that many of these services, predominately services in regional areas, may have to close their doors and/or cap the centre by reducing the numbers of children due to limited access of the services. From here I believe things will get worse as staff then lose their positions and are then dependent on Centrelink as they no longer have an income, more loss of economic contributions to our nation.

How is this report reflecting equality for all children and inclusive practices as all children should have the right to have access formal early childhood learning. I think this report highlights our current governments ignorance in the benefits of children attending such services. It also highlights how Australia is also lagging behind many other countries who have recognised the importance of early childhood and the positive impact on children that have attended for up to 11 years after they have left the centre. Many of these countries have realised that by investing in early childhood education that it is actually that an "investment", as things like crime is reduced which then reduces court costs and the costs of people being in prison, family break downs reduced, higher intelligence of children who then more participation in the workforce. They believe that by investing \$ into the early years that they actually get a considerable return on this money. In future years based on this we will definitely be outsourcing higher intelligence jobs to residents of these leading countries. Can you see how this then further impacts detrimentally on our country's economic position?

With a growing rates in life expectations there will be greater pressure on supporting these people, why are you not focussing on this now with this generation? Australia is being very reckless in being so short side about our countries economy.

The ratio recommendation of not ensuring that the ratio is met all times in another example of the government not valuing children's basic right to a safe environment. Has this report been written by people who actually work and understand the difficulty in providing safe environments for children in their care? I think not! It really is a ludicrous suggestion, which I believe takes us back many years ago.

As stated above that it is more than likely than some services will close or reduce their numbers of children in care and reduced staffing, the first staff to go will be the highest costing staff i.e. teachers, Diploma's etc. Lets just consider for a moment on how other recommendations of this report will impact on their future employment. If the amount of teachers is changed to be only based on the amount of children in the pre-school room then the demand for teachers will also be reduced, with many not being able to find employment and then becoming reliant on payments from Centrelink. This will also be the case for the Diploma staff if the absurd recommendation of that the highest qualification for under 3 year old children is only Certificate 3. At this stage I think it is also important to focus on the impacts on children's learning and life long outcomes due to fact that there will certainly be a reduction in the quality of programs and in the experience and teaching abilities of these cert 3 staff. I really think that this is definitely a step back into years gone by, back when the perception was that it was just child care and not education.

I am very disappointed in the recommendations in this report and the detrimental impacts that it will have if these are in fact implemented. Also what a waste of our hard earned tax \$ in coming up with such inappropriate recommendations. Someone should be held accountable for such frivolous waste and ludicrous recommendations. I think is time for a re-election, I certainly didn't vote this government in and do not support the absurd direction that they are leading towards in the early childhood field.

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