

The Possums Playcentre is a community managed not for profit service. It has been operating for 25 years and has built an enviable reputation based on high value education and care for local children. Consequently, the staff of our playcentre are known and trusted in our community. The caring nature of the Possums learning program builds confidence and skills in the 3-5 year old age group, preparing them for life-long learning and school readiness. Our highly qualified staff are respected and trusted due to their experience and skill. The Committee believes that it is the support of our (minimum) Diploma based staff that enable positive interactions and guidance for children, giving parents the confidence to participate productively in the workforce. Our community is not prepared to compromise the health, safety, well-being or learning and development of our children.

We submit the following:

- Qualifications of educators are a vital element of high quality education and care. The qualifications held by the staff of the Possums Playcentre (minimum Diploma) support children's literacy, and confidently guide children to a positive school experience.
- Do not remove eligibility of not for profit providers to payroll tax - this will lead to significant fee increases and may affect the viability of our not for profit service
- Do not allow services to temporarily operate with staffing levels below required ratios (by averaging over a day or a week). This will undermine our quality program and playcentre by diverting families to lower cost, large centres – which simply cannot provide the level of care and experience offered by our staff.
- Do not simplify the National Quality Standards – quality matters for our children. Our staff has worked very hard to gain their qualifications, which is why they are so well respected in our community.
- Do not introduce funding arrangements that result in reduced access and financial support for vulnerable families and children and for families in crisis. All children deserve quality care.

Jennifer Hemer
President, Possums Playcentre Inc. Committee