



Senate Committee Inquiry in to the Provision of Childcare

Submission by the City of Port Phillip

The City of Port Phillip has long been committed to supporting services for family and children, including the provision of high quality, accessible and affordable childcare.

Council's view is that the provision of childcare in Australia requires major structural reform within the context of integrated care, education and health of children from birth.

Council believes provision of high quality, accessible, affordable care is a responsibility of all three levels of government, and is best achieved by integrated family and children's services.

The failure of ABC Learning provides the opportunity to engage in true reform that will benefit families.

Council at its meeting of Monday 8 December adopted the following resolution to support families in Port Phillip, both now and into the future.

- 1. That Council re-affirms its goal of support for childcare which is:**
 - 1.1.1 A joint responsibility of the three levels of government together with families**
 - 1.1.2 Affordable and of high quality**
 - 1.1.3 Available to families in Port Phillip when they need it**
 - 1.1.4 Part of integrated family and children's services which provide quality care, health and educational outcomes for children and families.**
- 2. That the City of Port Phillip calls on the federal government to:**
 - 2.1.1 Lead a revitalised national early years' reform agenda which is based on research that clearly demonstrates the importance of the early years (particularly 0 to 3 years old) on health and educational outcomes for children**
 - 2.1.2 Recognise and support the role of Local Government in the roll-out of integrated service delivery in co-located child and family services hubs**
 - 2.1.3 Provide funding to local government authorities who are prepared to operate failed ABC childcare centres**

The City of Port Phillip calls on the federal government to establish a comprehensive review as part of a partnership involving the three levels of government working towards major


structural reform of the early years to create an integrated, sustainable early years sector 0-8 years.

This review will need to include the care, education and health sectors and should consider the following issues:

- The integration of kindergarten and childcare (funding, infrastructure, and service delivery)
- Creation of an integrated early childhood education sector 0-8, recognising the importance of the 0-3 years and that early learning/education starts at birth
- Common funding model based on education system
- Integrated award structure
- Integrated early childhood education training and qualification structure
- A common play based early years curriculum 0-8 years (in line with Victorian state government's Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development)
- Integrated infrastructure offering a range of services to families that are flexible, provide choice and well coordinated
- A model that still offers families choice of long day, sessional and part time early learning programs; with a common play based early years curriculum (0-8 years) regardless of what 'setting' they are in
- Children should have access to suitably qualified early childhood educators irrespective of age i.e. children 0-3 years require the same access to well qualified educators as 4-5 year olds.
- The federal and state government's funding and policy of universal access for children in the year before school (kindergarten) should be extended to children 0-6 years.
- Abolition of Child Care Tax Rebate (which benefits high income earners the most) and reallocate funding to a universal access model for 0-6 years.
- Active encouragement through funding, training and other support for community management of children's services.
- Federal government subsidies being used to support commercial profit
- Provision of funds already provided to companies in receivership being used to place conditions on the future management of the relevant centres.

We would welcome opportunities to work in partnership with the Federal and State Governments to deliver high quality outcomes for families.

Greg Wood, Manager Community Services would be happy to provide further information as required. He can be contacted on 03 9209 6250 or email gwood@portphillip.vic.gov.au



Frank O'Connor
Mayor
City of Port Phillip