

Standing Committee on Education and Employment

I am writing this submission as an Approved Provider of one 60 place private centre.

The \$300 million grant has been promoted as a way to value the hard work that Educators do and in doing this retain them and attract them to the industry. It also is designed to do this without families having to pay extra for it. This sounds so positive and constructive for the industry but because of the way it is being delivered it is becoming very destructive to an industry already under so much pressure.

How can the government provide a grant of taxpayers money to show Educators they are valued, in the hope that they remain in the industry when a third of Educators will have bonuses amounting to approximately \$6,000 to \$12,000 a year for 2 years when other Educators get nothing? When this grant is not given as a recognition of the standards that Educators achieve but on whether their Centre applies for an EBA? Won't this make many Educators feel undervalued and maybe be the last straw for them in deciding if they stay in the industry.

How is this going to keep the costs down for parents when centres that do not receive the grant will need to attract staff and will probably have to match the rates paid to the staff of centres who have received the grant. The money will have to come from somewhere to do this and the parents will have to foot the bill. Parents may then start leaving childcare and Centres that were not successful in obtaining the grant will become unviable and close. In our centre alone we would need to find well in excess of \$125,000 plus employment on costs to match the rates.

This is just so divisive. Since this grant was announced I've seen disillusionment, anger, talk of inequality, talk of this been staged for union members and certain corporate centres, stories of bullying tactics by union members, personal attacks and pure self righteous nastiness on social media by Educators. This goes against the grain of all that we teach and model in the NQF. If this was meant to help Educators feel good about what they do and the industry they are in then this has seriously failed!!! I only hope that the damage done can be rectified or I seriously fear for the industry.

Sadly a lot of the above concerns were confirmed when the EYQF selection panel was announced, 7 members with the CEO's of Goodstart and Guardian and a Union Representative???? But yet Peter Garrett said the interest of all centres were represented, including the small private centre.

Who is representing the small private centre?

Isn't this board a conflict of interest?

Won't Goodstart and Guardian be wanting their staff to receive this grant to assist in retaining their staff at no further cost to parents. They will automatically become employers of choice!!

In childcare already there is such an uneven playing field with some centres not having to pay payroll tax, others being heavily subsidised by councils and community groups. Funnily enough even though small private centres are often painted as being greedy they do not get this financial support nor do they have the support of a head office. They need to be represented by people who know the way they have to operate.

We are proud of the Educators we employ, their commitment and dedication to the NQF and the families at our centre. We want to reward and retain them. Our families don't like change of staff either. We recognise that our Educators should be paid a lot more for what they do but where does this money come from? Families – this would make care unaffordable. The owners, we don't have it.

As the owners of this centre we work so hard to support our community, we absorb so many costs, we take on so much risk but there's only so much we can financially do. I fear for the viability of many centres like ours if this grant is distributed as planned. I fear for the families who will no longer be able to obtain care. I fear for the confidence and future of the Educators who realise what an unfair world this has become.

The decision on how this grant is to be distributed needs to be reconsidered if the government wants the outcome it set out to achieve and hopefully to fix the damage that has already been done by this ill thought out delivery.

ALL Educators should be valued

ALL Families should be supported equally

ALL centres are needed to provide the care that is required for the families of Australia.

WE all need to work together

PLEASE, PLEASE reconsider this, I firmly believe the future direction of the childcare industry relies upon it.

Steve Creelman