

Senate Inquiry into the Provision of Childcare

Following the roundtable discussion held at Parliament House in Hobart on Monday 20 July, 2009 I would like to present a summary of points, addressing the Terms of Reference, which I had identified but was not able to read verbatim during the discussions.

Due to the overlaps within the individual points of the terms of reference it is possible to consider identified Key Issues: Provision of Services, Professionalism & Staffing, Regulations & Finance

A Provision of Services

The need for a regulatory body to ensure that children's early learning and care is provided:

In the areas that it is needed

By a diverse range of providers

Without any single provider being allowed to dominate the market

B Professionalism & Staffing

Any models for the provision of child care need to address certain fundamental issues:

The public perception of Children's Services

The wages and conditions of Child Care Workers

The qualifications and standard of training for Children's Services Workers

The importance of the provision of education and care for children from birth upwards

C Regulations

The need for all states and territories to have consistent regulations:

Of a high standard and not meeting the lowest common denominator

Encompassing current Licensing and Accreditation standards

Compliance by all services providing care and education to pre-school children
(i.e. kindergartens, preschools, gym centres etc.)

D Finance

To be reassessed in light of the identified goal of providing child care which is affordable, offers choices, is accessible and is regulated to ensure a consistent exceptionally high standard!

Services need to be receiving far more revenue than currently in order to raise the profile and provision of Children's Services through higher qualifications, better staff:child ratios and well-maintained infrastructure.

Parents cannot meet the total cost of this care so Government assistance needs not only to continue but to increase.

Irrespective of whether the financial assistance goes via the parents or directly to the services, it is imperative that all service types are included equally so as to ensure diverse provision of education and care – providing that regulated standards are maintained by all services.

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