



To whom it may concern

I am extremely concerned about this fund and how it will impact my business. I have been running my own business in childcare since 1998 and have spent many of these years ensuring that I do my best for the children I care for. I am a small employer with some wonderful staff members. We have recently struggled with a larger private school opening their own childcare centre very close to us and some of my staff have left my centre because the school offered them more money. This was approx 12 months ago and it has taken a great deal of time to replace these staff. Now the government is proposing allocating more money for staff wages but only for a small select few.

I agree staff need to be paid more as they are important, but there is very little chance of any of this money reaching my staff whilst they are employed with me. I have already had one staff advise that it would be crazy to stay with me if they were being offered significantly more money down the road. The only way I can increase their wages is by increasing fees. Ballarat industry is struggling at the moment and several of my parents are "just" holding onto their jobs. If I raise fees significantly, they will be unable to afford childcare as we are one of the lowest price centres in Ballarat.

I have been indirectly advised that if I have 50% of my staff join the union, then there is a much greater chance of getting this funding. I will be locked into an enterprise bargaining agreement and many of my staff do not want to join the union.

With the advisory board stacked with large childcare corporations and the union, the only outcome for my centre is poor. This money was to ensure stability in the sector not encourage staff to chase this money. I cannot provide quality service to our children when they are continually forming new attachments with new staff.

Perhaps if all staff wages were raised, this money could be shared equally to all centres to help with this increase.

It makes me wonder if I should remain in this industry and not sell out to the large corporations as it is too hard to provide a quality service.

Thanks
Kathy Lloyd
Lake Gardens Children's Centre