

**Subject:** Out of School Care Void for Children with a Disability - additional information

Dear Belynda,

As discussed, I wondered if Mrs Bishop might be interested in the programme model for Casey Kidz Klub as well as the pre and post evaluation from the Pilot Programme and my correspondence back and forward to the Federal and State Government.

I apologise for the volume of information however, I have been trying to raised awareness on this issue for over 1 year now. The content might be a little more articulate than my verbal communication of today.

If Mrs Bishop is interested, I have listed below some disincentives, which are restricting parents/carers who have children with a disability from working:

1. Service Provider's approach to Respite/Out of School Care - children with disabilities who have challenging behaviour or complex care needs are not factored into any of these services.
2. Respite - Insufficient allocation of hours - We have been told the majority of hour allocation is going to carers of the aged
  - Local Council no longer class Respite as "Basic HACC" therefore respite hour allocation has not increased in 3 years
  - The City of Casey has a "rapid" population growth and has had for some time and is renown for it's high population of children with a disability
3. Current focus - Integration (which excludes children such as my son) and inhome respite (which keeps my child isolated from socialising) & does not allow the parent/carer any time in their home on their own
4. DHS Centre Based Overnight Respite -
  - a. Reorganisation of client attendance from mixed to 3 x Adult houses and 1 x Children's house - the children's house being in Frankston - a long way away for parents to transport - some don't have their licence. (Wresacare also has a respite house in Cranbourne however but it is not DHS)
  - b. The Department of Education no longer transport school children from their school to respite houses, hence the drop in respite usage; the demand being there but parents unable to access the house when they wish to - weekends are always very hard to access.

5. Programme Model - Both special schools have expressed a desire not to host the programme in their facilities

- Transport from both schools is not only expensive but difficult to provide & being at 2 schools at the one time (3:00pm) is not possible
- Accommodation - the children are currently attending the programme in a shop which will be totally unsuitable when summer comes - it is disappointing given that the schools would provide a safe, secure environment and one that would provide excellent outdoor play facilities and would eliminate the transport dilemma.
- State Government refusing to call the programme respite to avoid responsibility but not offering to increase inhome respite either.
- Federal Government - referred me to State and now accept some responsibility but are not seeming to address the issue.

My most recent letter to the Prime Minister (attached) should be in his office at present.

If you need me to mail the attached information, I can do this. If Mrs Bishop would like to see the local media coverage on this issue, I would be happy to post that to her also.

Many thanks once again for the opportunity to discuss this with people who too feel this is an important issue.

Amanda & Peter Stapledon

