



**Australian Childcare Alliance**

**Member Survey 2015**

[www.childcarealliance.org.au](http://www.childcarealliance.org.au)

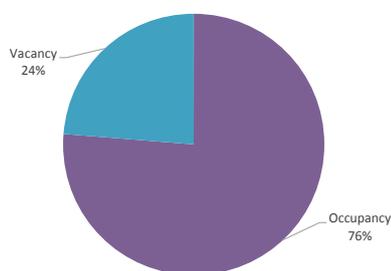
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# Australian Childcare Alliance Member Survey 2015

Dear members,

I am pleased to present a summary of findings from the 2015 Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) Member Survey.

ACA conducted this survey of long day care services across Australia from 17 to 27 March 2015 with the reference period for occupancy information being the week beginning 16 March 2015. As at the week beginning 16 March 2014, more than 24 per cent of available places in long day care were considered vacant by respondents to this survey.



This result indicates that planning is necessary as is the urgency to address affordability for families. Whilst services in some demographic areas are reporting 100 per cent occupancy, each state has services reporting occupancy rates as low as 20 per cent.

Developers must be required to build where there is a high demand for places to ensure that workforce participation for families is addressed.

The survey sampled 543 long day care services on a range of issues, including:

- demand for baby places
- issues impacting accessibility for families to long day care
- requests for flexible care options by families
- changes for the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations scheduled for 1 January 2016
- affordability pressure facing families, and

- key recommendation from the Productivity Commission's Report into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.

Importantly, this survey highlights the underlying affordability pressures facing families. The volume of change and speed of implementation of regulatory change since 1 January 2012 has placed substantial pressure on long day care services and the ongoing debate about the future of funding for the sector continues to cause uncertainty for providers.

There is clear support for measures from ACA members for the introduction of a nationally consistent approach to planning of early childhood facilities to ensure that our communities receive the social infrastructure they need. In addition to the important developmental objectives of children attending long day care, there is a critical workforce participation imperative that our sector supports.

The results of this survey will inform our advocacy efforts with the Australian Government as they consider their response to the Productivity Commission Report and the development of their much anticipated 'Families Package'.

I urge all members to consider the findings of this survey and provide any additional information that you feel may assist us to represent your views during the coming months.

Regards,

Gwynn Bridge  
National President

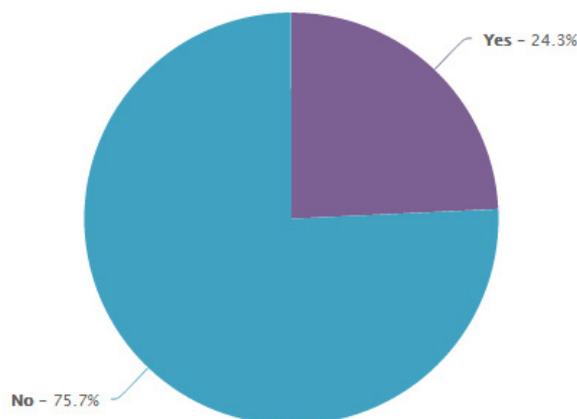
## 2016 changes

- In response to changes to child to educator ratios scheduled on 1 January 2016, respondents indicated that on average, they would increase their fees per child per day by \$10 (NSW, SA, QLD and VIC only).
- With the removal of the lunch cover position, respondents indicated that, on average, they will increase their fees per child per day by \$8.91 (WA only)

## Accessibility for families

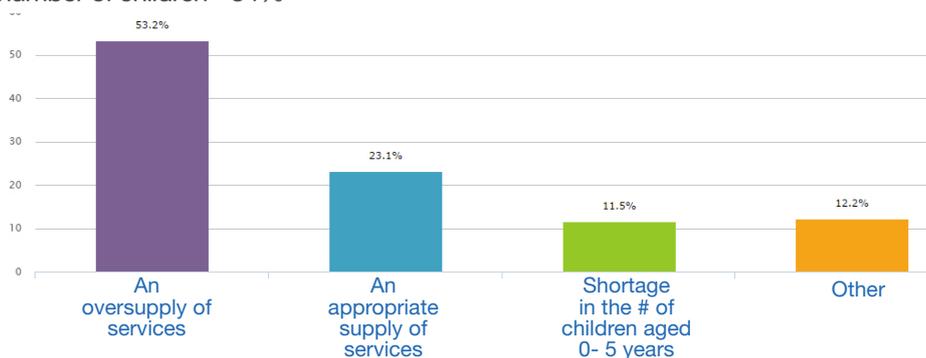
76% indicated that accessibility is not an issue in their area.

24% indicated that accessibility for families is an issue in their area while



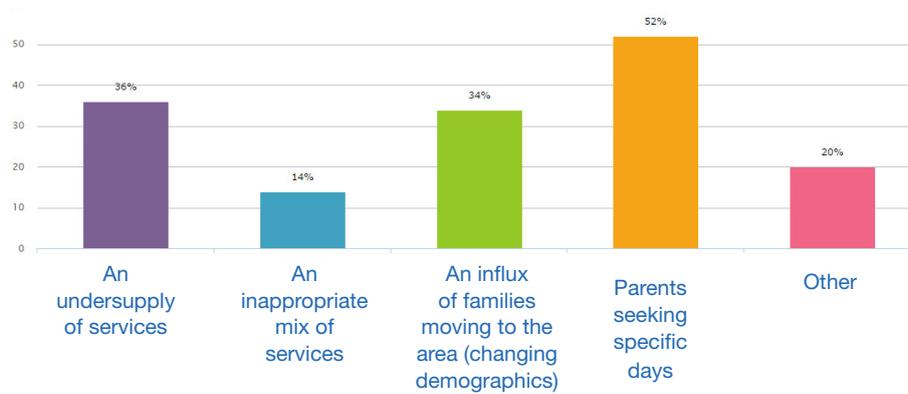
For those services who indicated that accessibility was NOT an issue for families in their area, it was due to the following reasons:

- Oversupply of services - 53%
- Appropriate supply of services - 36%
- Shortage in the number of children - 34%



For those services who indicated that accessibility was an issue for families in their area, it was due to the following reasons:

- Parents seeking specific days - 52%
- Undersupply of services - 36%
- Influx of families - 34%
- Inappropriate mix of services - 14%



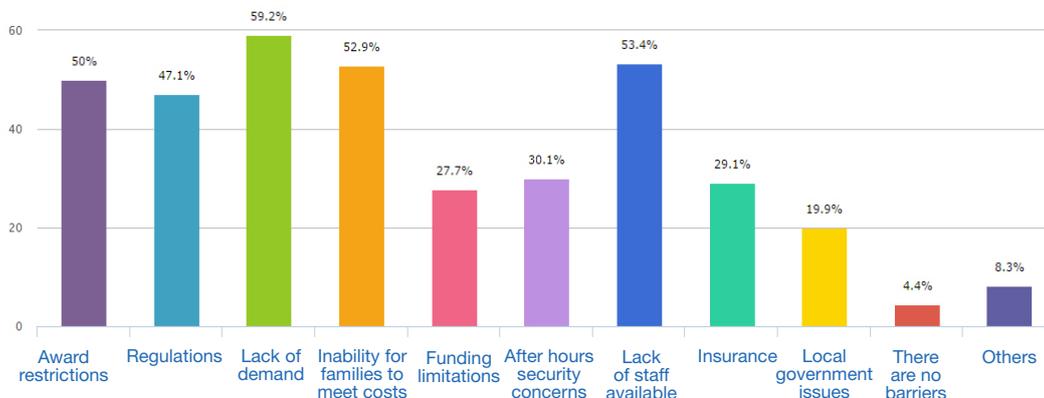
## Flexibility

Services reported on the frequency of requests they receive from families for flexibility in hours of operation

|                                      | Very often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| <b>Before standard opening hours</b> | 3%         | 6%    | 20%       | 33%    | 38%   |
| <b>After standard opening hours</b>  | 2%         | 9%    | 17%       | 33%    | 39%   |
| <b>Weekend</b>                       | 1%         | 3%    | 6%        | 18%    | 72%   |
| <b>Overnight</b>                     | 0%         | 1%    | 5%        | 10%    | 84%   |
| <b>Part-days</b>                     | 5%         | 18%   | 37%       | 27%    | 13%   |
| <b>Add/swap/change days</b>          | 27%        | 35%   | 32%       | 5%     | 1%    |
| <b>Hourly care</b>                   | 2%         | 5%    | 21%       | 25%    | 47%   |

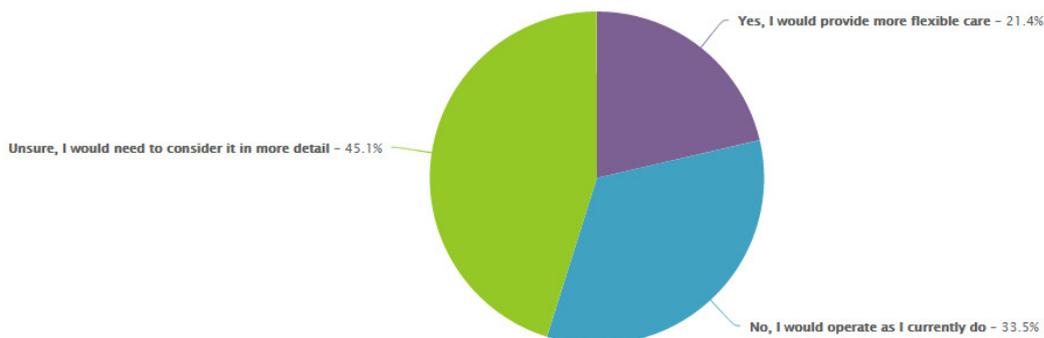
The top 3 barriers preventing services from offering more flexible care include:

1. Lack of demand
2. Lack of staff available
3. Inability for families to meet costs



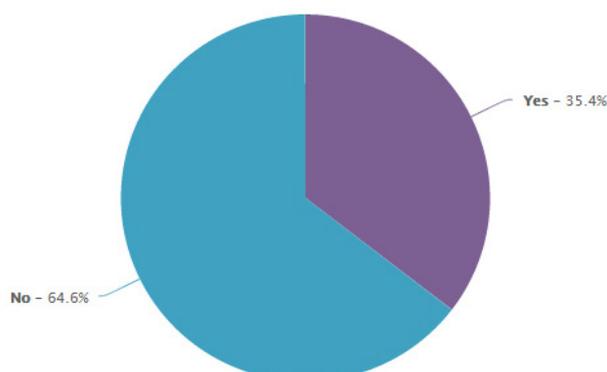
If the barriers to providing more flexible care arrangements were overcome:

- 21% would provide more flexible care
- 34% would not alter their current operational hours
- 45% are unsure but would consider it in more detail



## Demand for babies

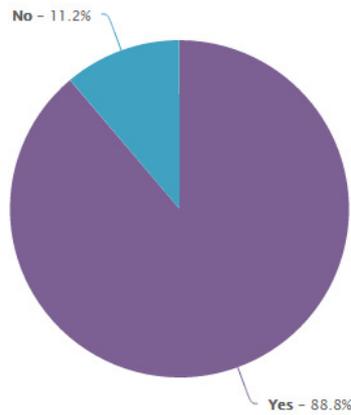
Services were asked if they were experiencing a lower than normal request for baby places (0 - 1 years) at their service. 35% responded Yes and 65% responded No.



## Planning

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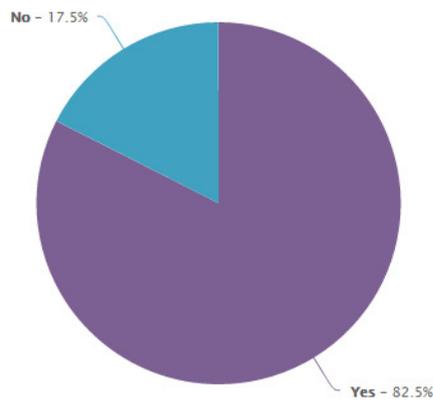
89% of respondents indicated that they support a coordinated, nationally consistent approach to planning to ensure services are built in areas of high demand.



## Affordability

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83% of respondents indicated that they are experiencing families reducing days of early childhood education and care for their children due to affordability issues.

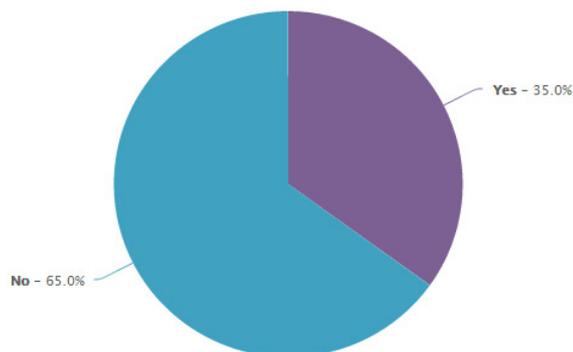


## Productivity Commission report

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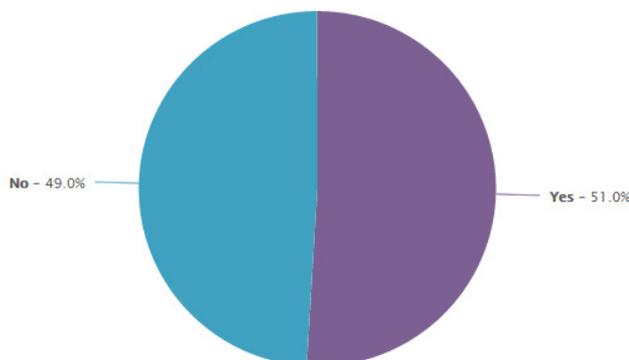
The Productivity Commission proposed a Benchmark Prices of 100 hours per fortnight of \$7.41/hour for 0-3 year olds in long day care, \$7.20/hour for children older than 3 years in long day care and \$6.94/hour for all children in family day care or with nannies.

- 65% did not support this recommendation
- 35% supported this recommendation



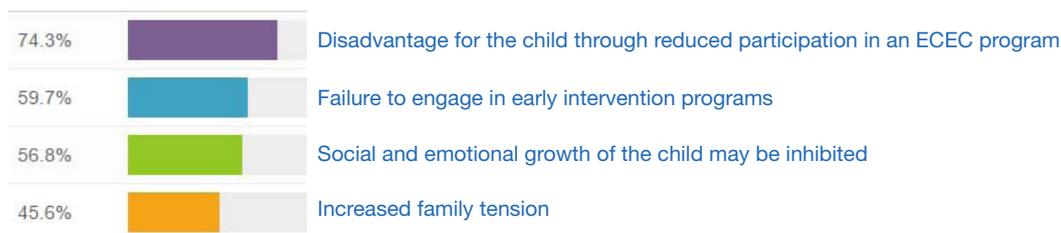
The Productivity Commission proposed a model that will provide a subsidy of 85% for families receiving an income of \$60,000 or less and reducing to 20%, dependent on income, for families with an income of \$250,000 and above.

- 56% supported the proposed model
- 49% did not support the proposed model



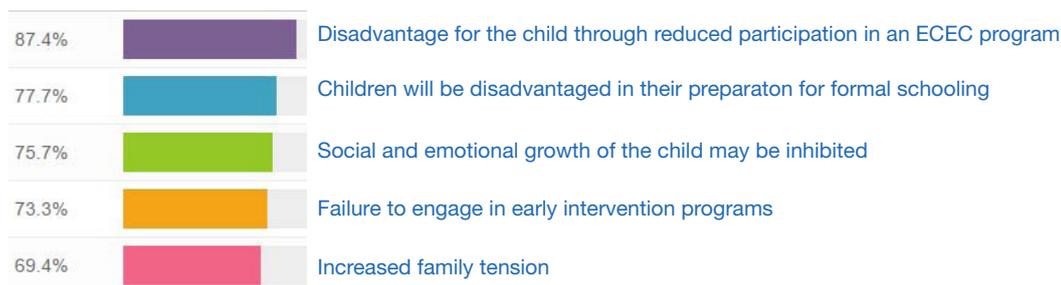
The Productivity Commission has proposed that children will receive 10 hours per week of subsidised care (or 15 hours per week if enrolled in an approved preschool/kindergarten program for 40 weeks of the year) when their parents earn less than \$55,000 per year and one or both parents do not meet the activity test.

The survey participants were asked how this proposal would effect the children. The top 4 responses include:



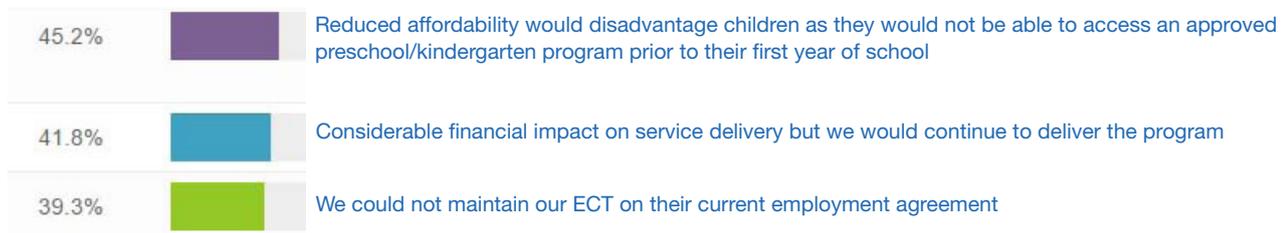
The Productivity Commission has proposed that parents receive NO subsidised care if their income is greater than \$55,000 per year and one parent does not meet the activity work test.

The survey participants were asked how this proposal would effect the children. The top 5 responses include:



The Productivity Commission recommends that long day care services receiving additional State Government funding through the Universal Access funding scheme for their preschool/kindergarten program have their benchmark price for families reduced by the amount of funding received from the state government to avoid “double dipping”.

The survey participants were asked how this would impact the delivery of the Approved Preschool/Kindergarten program delivered by an Early Childhood Teacher. The top 3 responses include:



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The Productivity Commission recommends that nannies, meeting requirements (yet to be determined) of the NQF, are funded at 26 cents per hour less than LDC under the same Benchmark price system.

- 85% of respondents are not supportive of nannies being included in the subsidy model
- 82% of respondents would not consider employing nannies to work under the approval certification of your long day care service
- 82% of Australian Childcare Alliance members indicated that the 0.26 cents per hour lesser subsidy for families engaging nannies than that for families choosing long day care is by far too generous as long day care has higher regulatory requirements, higher qualified educators and substantially higher overheads than the nanny carer.



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