



# Australian Childcare Alliance

Representing the future of Australia's children



## **ACA PARENT SURVEY 2014**

***Have your say on the Productivity  
Commission Inquiry into Childcare and Early  
Childhood***



# Australian Childcare Alliance



The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) represents 70% of all private long day care centres across Australia and its staff who care for more than 400,000 children.



# Survey Aims



To determine the attitudes of parents whose child/children attend long day care centres by measuring:

- The importance of quality in childcare
- The impact of childcare cost on usage of childcare
- The impact of childcare cost in relation to workforce participation
- Preferred financial support from the government



# Research Methodology



- n= 2,499 respondents across Australia of parents whose child/children attend a long day care centre (private or community)
- 70% of respondents had 1 child currently attending childcare
- Survey conducted between 9 December 2013 - 6 January 2014
- Variations of +/-1% in reported percentages are due to rounding



# Key Findings



## *Factors that influenced use of childcare centre*

The following factors were reported by respondents as influencing parents' choice to use childcare over other care options, ranked according to significance:

| Rank | Factor   | Weighted Average* |
|------|--|-------------------|
| 1    | Childcare is an opportunity for children to interact with other children | 4.56              |
| 2    | Childcare is a safe and regulated environment                            | 3.96              |
| 2    | No family options were available when care was needed                    | 3.96              |
| 3    | Childcare provides a quality education and care experience               | 3.90              |
| 4    | Concerns about lesser or non-regulated care                              | 2.46              |
| 5    | Other education and care options do not provide the needed hours         | 2.15              |

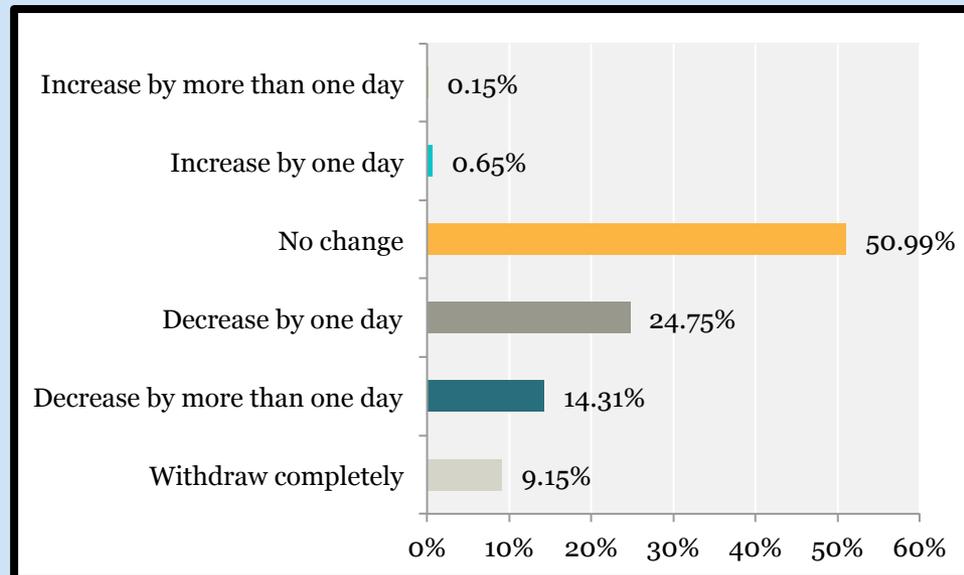
\*The average value of each factor in relation to its assigned rank as indicated by respondents, with the highest weighted average being the most important



# Key Findings



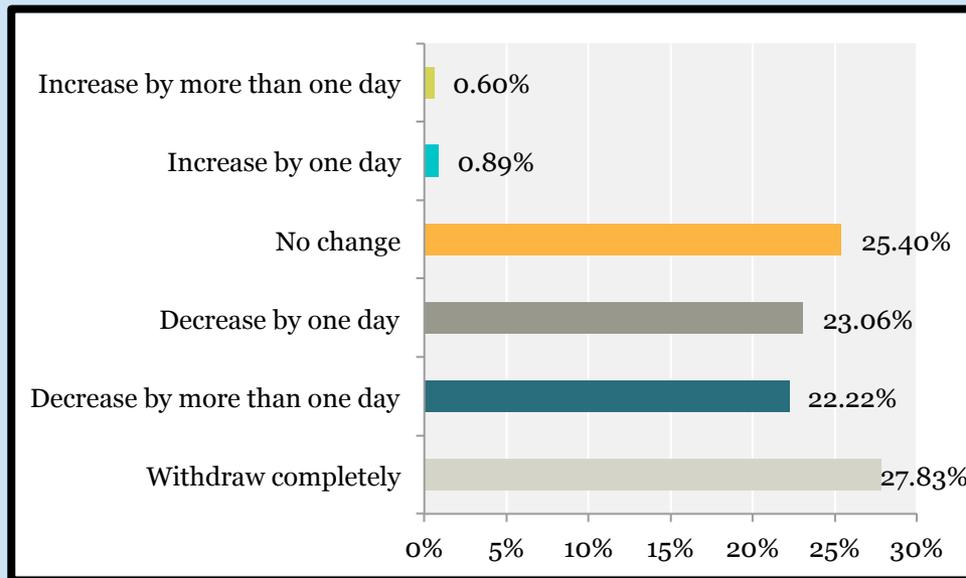
- 48% of respondents indicated that they would decrease their usage of childcare or withdraw their child completely if out-of-pocket childcare fees *increased by 10%*



# Key Findings



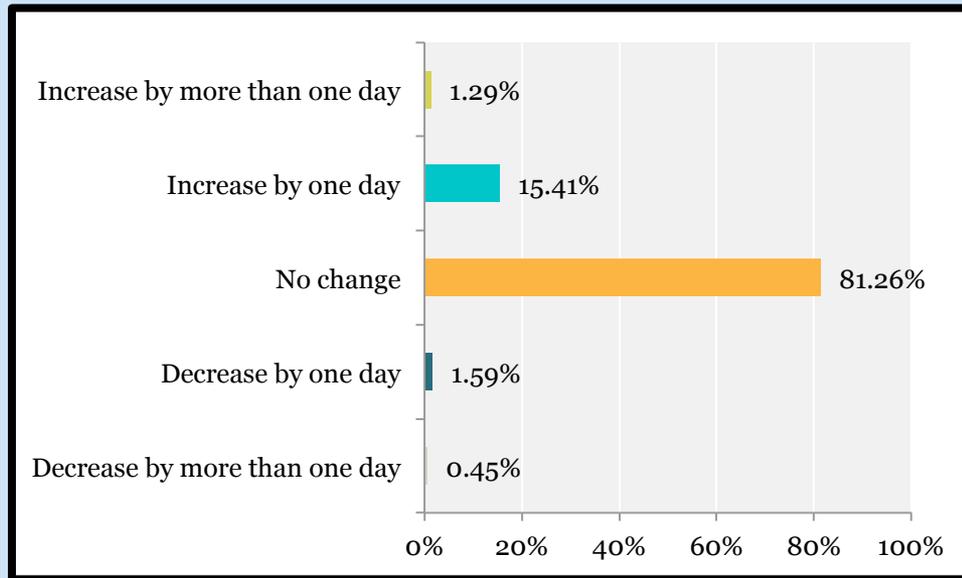
- 73% of respondents indicated that they would decrease their childcare usage or withdraw their child completely if out-of-pocket childcare fees *increased by 20%*



# Key Findings



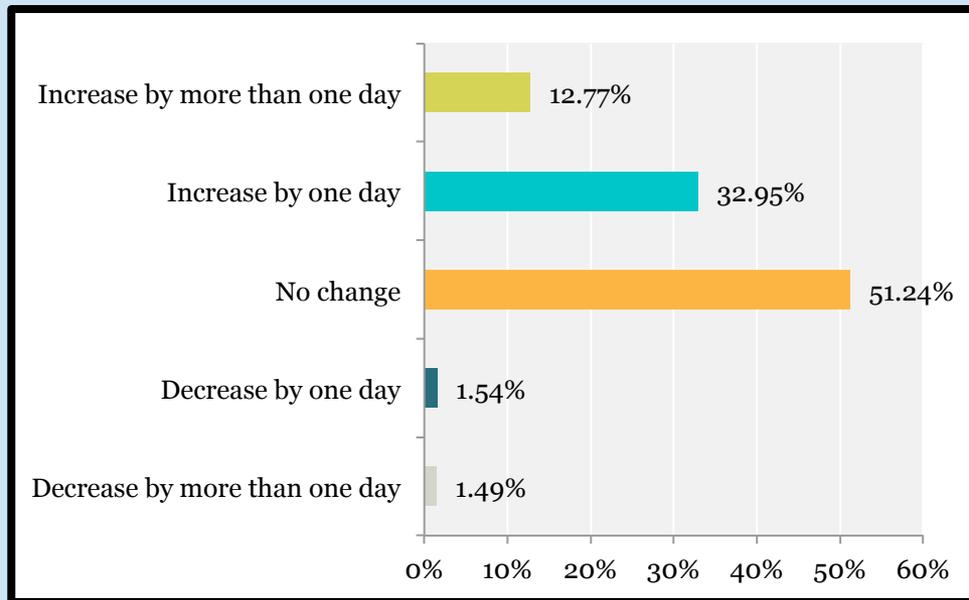
- 81% of respondents indicated that they would not change their childcare usage if the out-of-pocket childcare fees *decreased by 10%* while 16% indicated that they would increase their childcare usage



# Key Findings



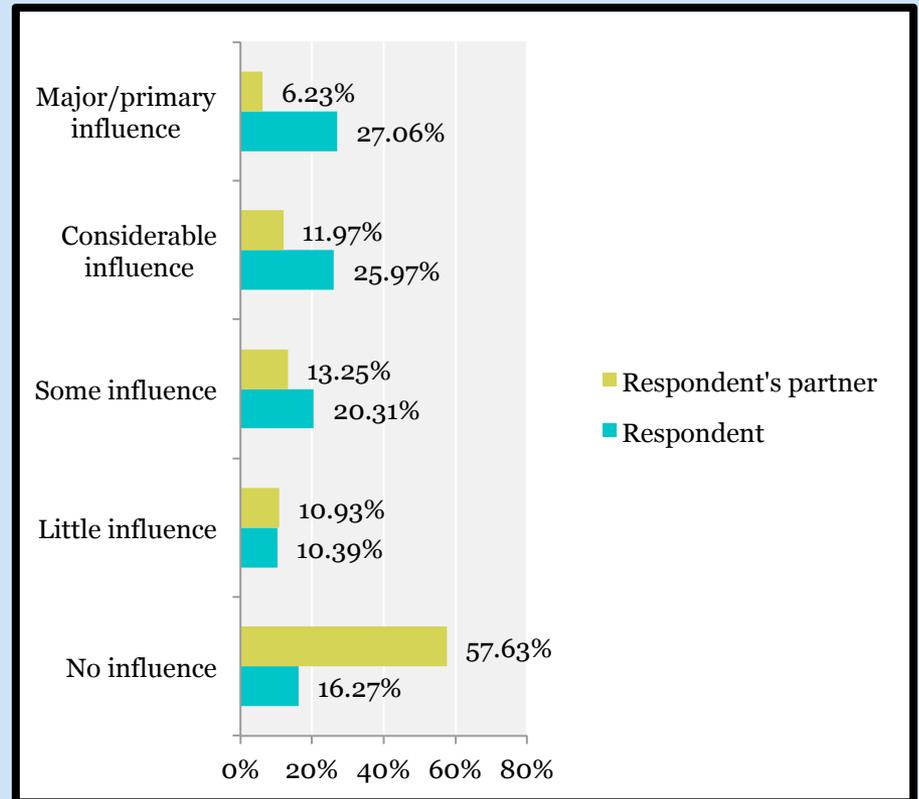
- 46% of respondents indicated that they would increase their childcare usage if the out-of-pocket childcare fees *decreased by 20%*



# Key Findings



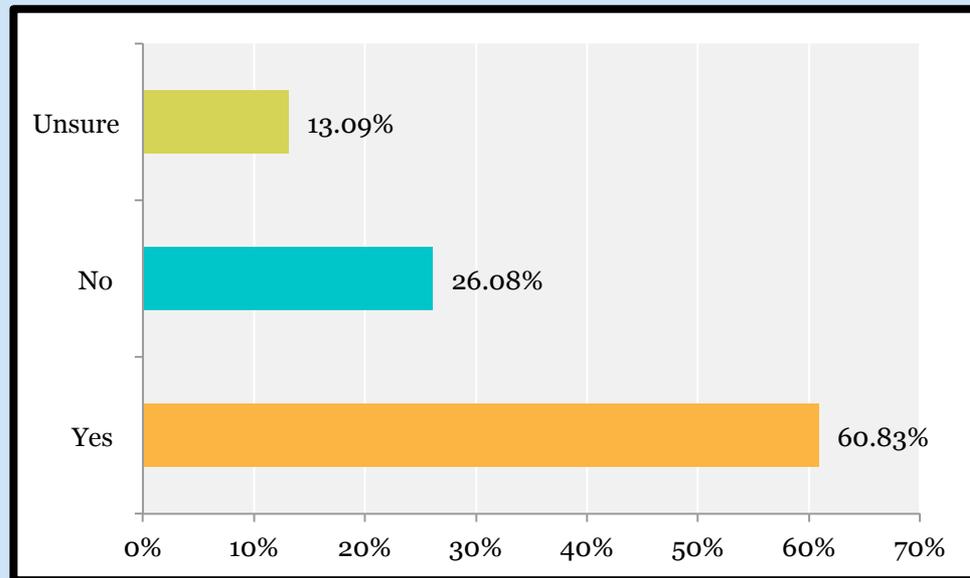
- 53% of respondents indicated that the cost of childcare was either the major influence or has a considerable influence on their participation in the workforce.
- 31% of the respondents indicated that the cost of childcare had some influence, had some influence, considerable influence or was the major/primary influence on their partner's workforce participation



# Key Findings



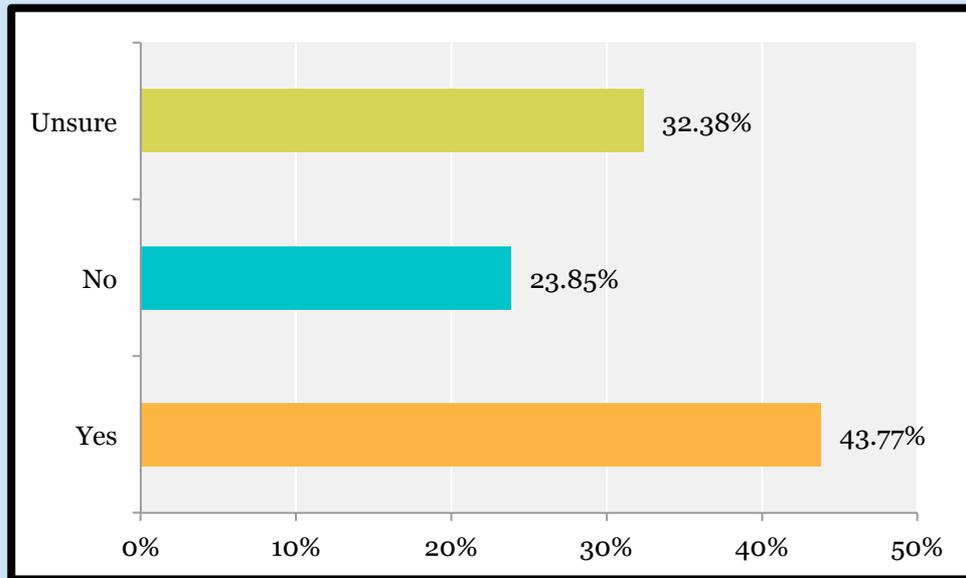
- 61% of respondents indicated that they would use more childcare if cost were not a limiting issue



# Key Findings



- 44% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay more for higher quality education and care at their childcare service



# Key Findings



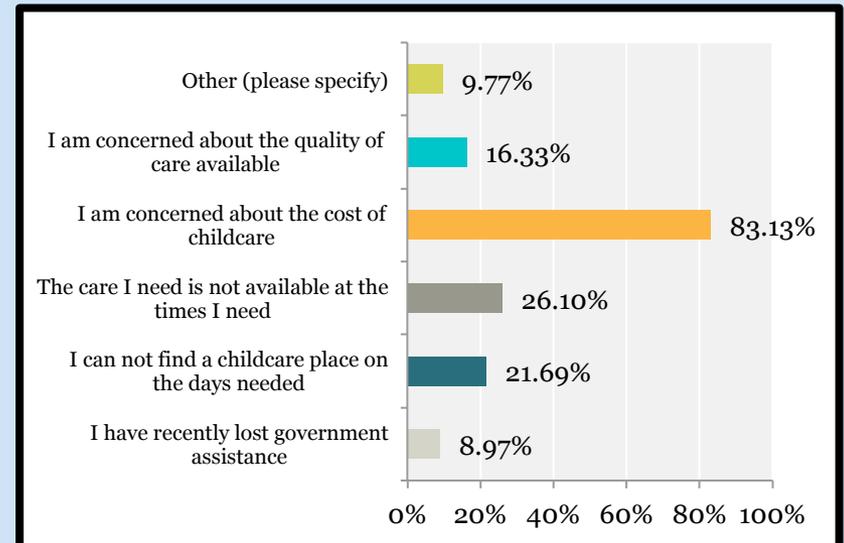
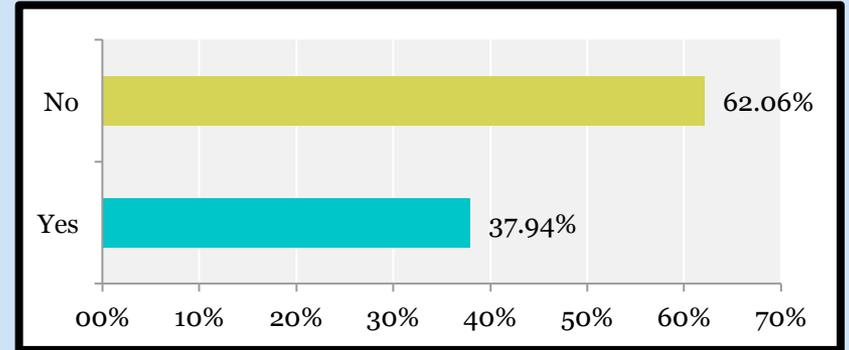
## *Quality*

- 32% of respondents indicated that they are unaware that childcare services were rated on quality
- When asked about the trade-offs that can be made in relation to childcare, parents indicated that:
  - 71% would NOT consider a lower quality service for any reason
  - 18% would for preferred days and times of care
  - 15% would for lower cost per child per day
  - 13% for a specific program, approach or philosophy
  - 12% for a location more convenient to home
  - 7% for a location convenient to work

# Key Findings

## *Workforce participation and further education*

- 38% of respondents indicated issues associated with childcare prevented them from participating in the workforce or undertaking further studies
- Of the 38% mentioned, 83% indicated that the cost of childcare was a barrier to work or study

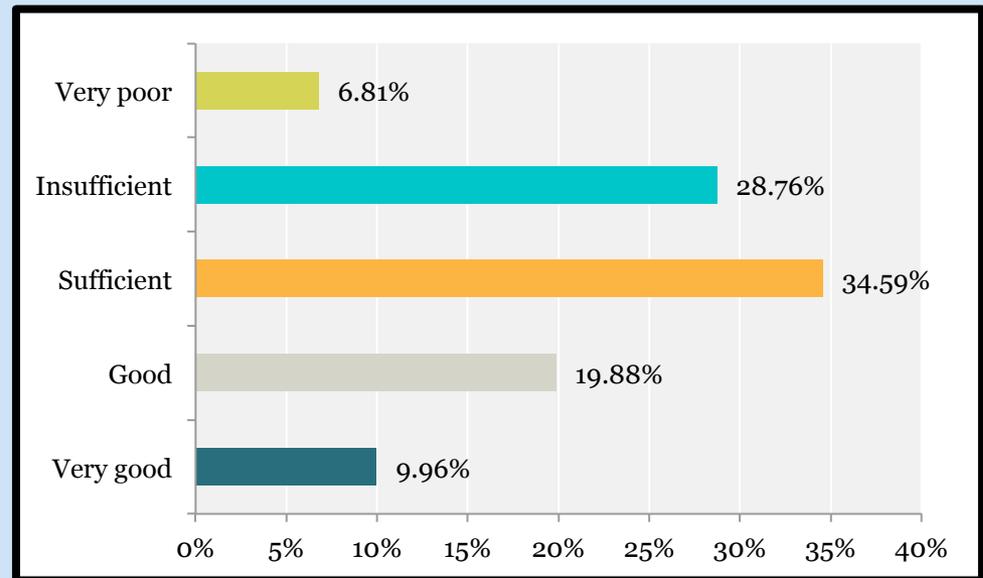


# Key Findings



## *Support families*

- 36% thinks that the level of financial support they receive from the government is *insufficient or very poor*
- 93% of respondents deem the role of the government to be very significant/significant in making quality childcare affordable in Australia



# Key Findings



When respondents applied for financial support for childcare, they found that:

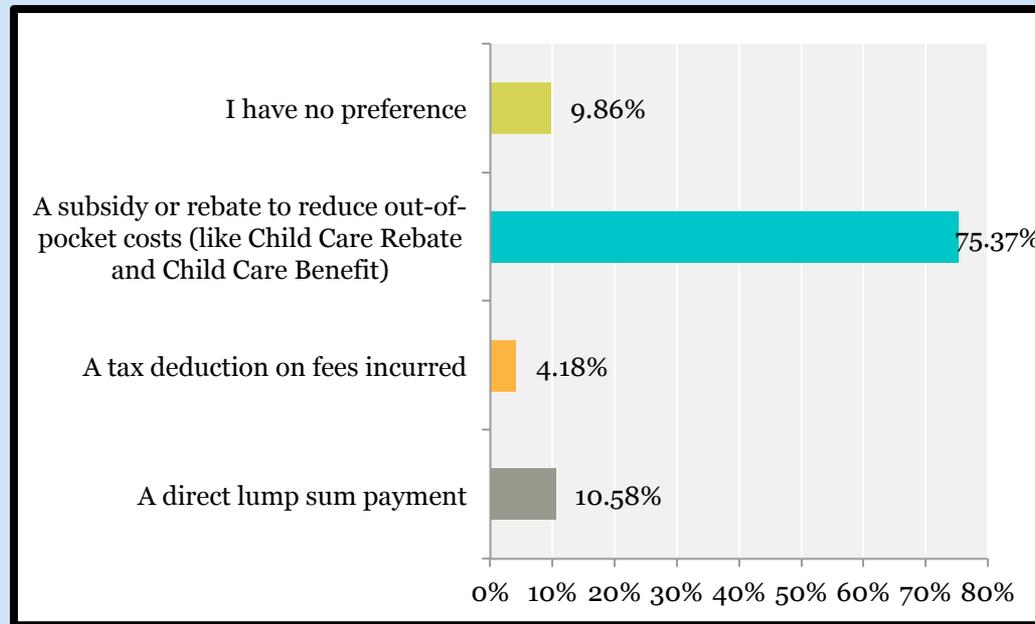
- The eligibility criteria was unclear and confusing or complex and frustrating – **32%**
- The application process was unclear and confusing or complex and frustrating – **33%**
- The support tools available to assist were unclear and confusing or complex and frustrating – **40%**

*84% understood that they receive the Child Care Rebate (CCR)*

# Key Findings



- 75% of respondents indicated that their preferred method of receiving government assistance for childcare is a subsidy or rebate to reduce out-of-pocket costs (like CCR and CCB)



# Key Findings



## *Support for children with additional needs*

- 5% of respondents have a child with additional needs with **40%** not receiving additional support
- Of the respondents indicating that their child receives additional support, the following is how they rate the additional support provided to their child/children:
  - 83% indicated that the staffing in the service is very good/good
  - 71% indicated that the resources available to the service is very good/good
  - 68% indicated that the equipment available is very good/good
  - 55% indicated that advice from experts available is very good/good

# Key Findings



## *Flexibility*

Respondents were asked to indicate which statements they agreed with respect to the proposal to extend financial support to other types of care (e.g., nannies):

| Statement   | Level of Agreement |
|---|--------------------|
| I want the quality of care to be the same, regardless of where it occurs                  | 71%                |
| I want reassurance that my financial support will not be reduced                          | 63%                |
| I want reassurance that other types of care are safe and reliable like approved childcare | 60%                |
| I want the same regulation of the childcare industry, regardless of how it is provided    | 56%                |
| Higher qualifications of educators are important to me                                    | 38%                |



# For further information



Please contact the following:

|               |                 |              |
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