



# Australian Childcare Alliance

Representing the future of Australia's children



## **“WHAT PARENTS WANT” SURVEY 2013**



# **Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA)**



**The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) represents 70% of all 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:

- Awareness of the Federal Government's National Quality Agenda Reforms- Early Childhood Education and Care
- The relative cost of long day care
- The need for extended hours care
- Awareness of the Early Years Quality Fund (EYQF)
- Possible impact to families if childcare fee increases as a result of EYQF
- Financial impact of the decrease in Child Care Rebate
- Impact on vote if Child Care Rebate is means tested
- Impact on workforce participation without increased funding or government intervention
- How affordability of child care impacts on voter intent



# Research Methodology



- n= 1,430 online survey across Australia of parents whose child/children attend a long day care centre (private or community)
- Survey conducted between 18 April 2013 - 1 May 2013
- Variations of +/-1% in reported percentages are due to rounding
- Unless otherwise stated, all charts based on total sample of parents with children in long day care



# Summary



If parents found that they could not afford any increased cost in childcare as a result of new reforms, they would:

Reduce the hours their child attend early learning centres	76% (906)
Withdraw their child altogether from the centre	63% (687)
Seek out alternative arrangements from within the family	72% (836)
Reduce other essential household expenditure	75% (844)
<b>Delay having more children</b>	<b>61% (612)</b>
Leave the paid workforce entirely	60% (673)
Place their child in unregulated care	26% (248)



# Summary



This survey found that...

In regards to the Federal Government's National Quality Agenda Reforms- Early Childhood Education and Care:

- 74% (1,052) of parents responded *no or unsure* that these changes have made a difference to the education and care of their child/children
- 81% (1,153) have experienced fee increases
- 62% (855) of respondents stated that it has challenged their ability to remain within their budgets and as a result, had to reduce other family expenditures



# Summary



This survey found that...

In regards to the Early Years Quality Fund introduced by the Federal Government:

- 82% (1,170) were unaware of the grant
- 77% (1,093) do not think that the grant is fair and equitable
- 85% (1,206) are *unsupportive or unsure* of any increase in childcare fees to cover the wages if the educators in their service are not approved to receive the funding



# Summary



**This survey found that...**

**In regards to a need for extended hours work related care:**

- **31% (440) responded that that they have a need for extended hours care**
- **63% (277) of which, would need up to two hours per day of additional hours**
- **Of the 31% needing extended hours care, 74% (326) would prefer centre based care**





# Summary



**This survey found that...**

**In regards to the Child Care Rebate:**

- **47% (666) have felt the financial impact as a result of the Federal Government's decision to decrease and restrict the Child Care Rebate to \$7,500 p.a. with a year freeze on indexation for the past three years**
- **65% (842) do not think that the subsidy is adequate to help them afford access to quality early learning program**



# Summary



Parents are ***prepared to change their vote*** on the issue of childcare affordability with:

- 78% (1,111) responded that it would influence their votes at the next election if either party moved to means test the Child Care Rebate
- 87% (1,222) would like all parties to commit to increasing the Childcare Benefit
- **87% (1,238) would vote for the party that commits to making child care more affordable and accessible**

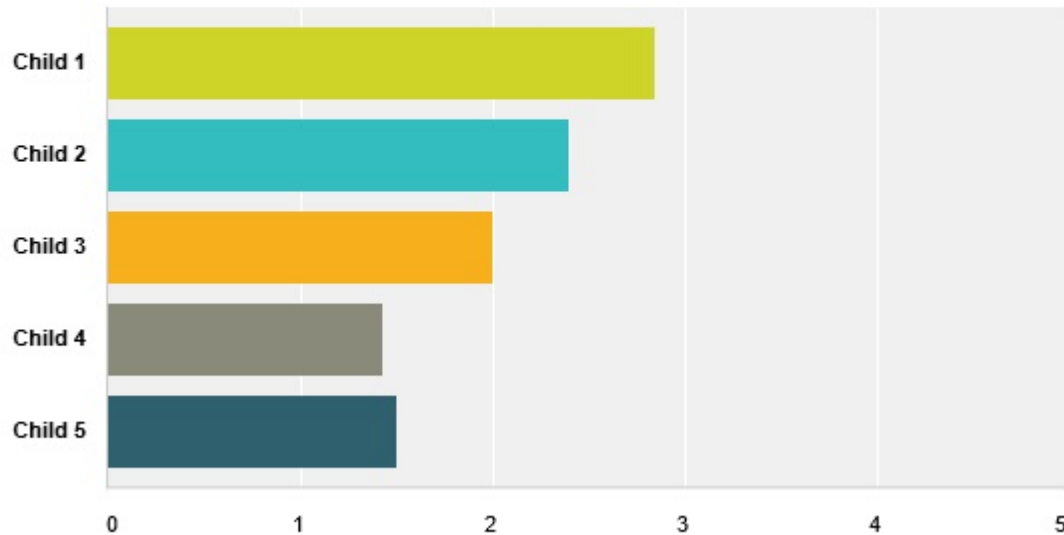


# Survey Results



What are the ages of your children attending long day care?

Answered: 1,426 Skipped: 4



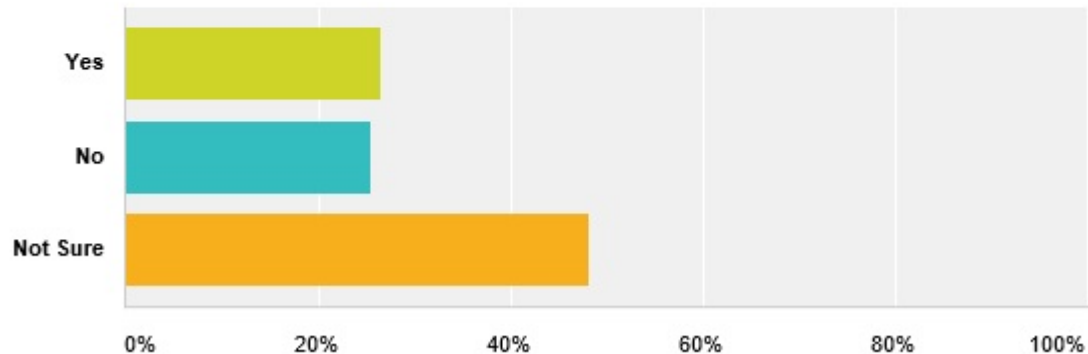


# Survey Results



**Federal Government's National Quality  
Agenda Reforms- Early Childhood  
Education and Care has been in place for  
12 months. Do you feel that these changes  
have made a difference to the education  
and care your child is receiving?**

Answered: 1,421 Skipped: 9



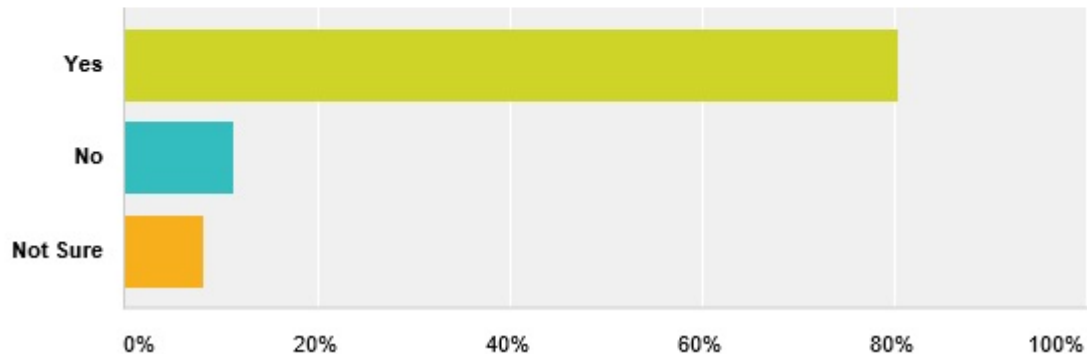


# Survey Results



**These reforms are intended to improve quality in long day child care by increasing the ratio of carer to child (this applies to all states other than WA) and increasing the formal qualifications required by some staff. Have you experienced fee increases?**

Answered: 1,423 Skipped: 7



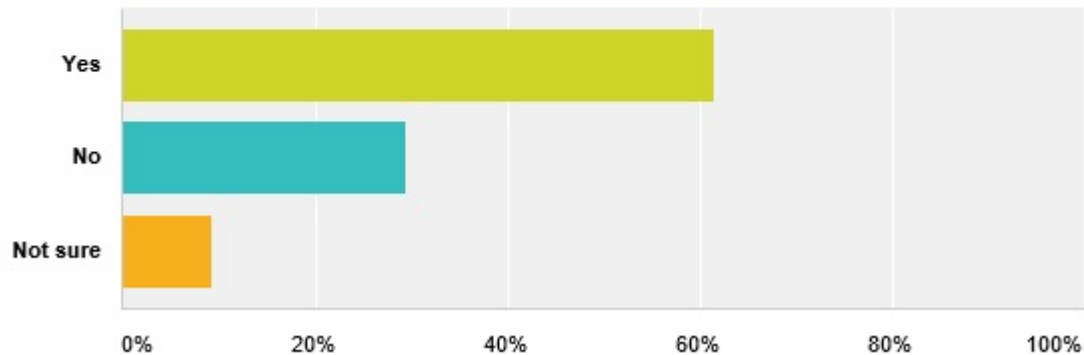


# Survey Results



**If increases have occurred, has this challenged your ability to remain within your budget without having to reduce other family expenditure?**

Answered: 1,378 Skipped: 52



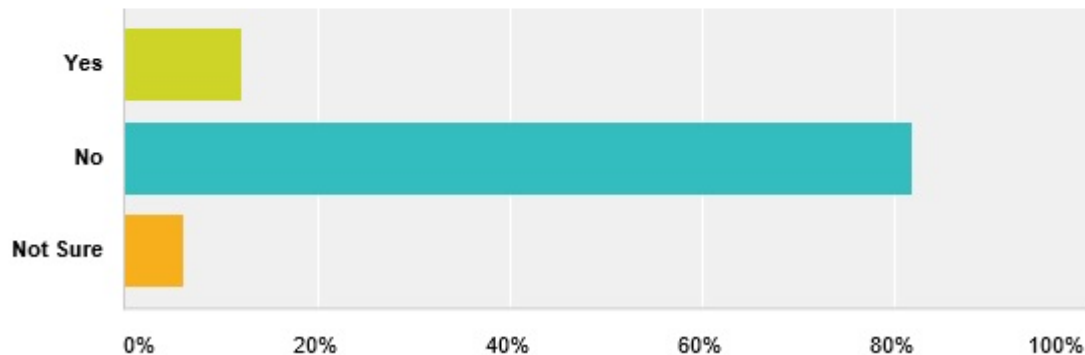


# Survey Results



**Are you aware of the two tier wage system that is being introduced by the Australian Government wherein fewer than 40% of staff will receive up to \$10,000 p.a. increase in wages totally paid through a government grant, leaving more than 60% of educators working in long day care excluded and to receive no increase?**

Answered: 1,427 Skipped: 3



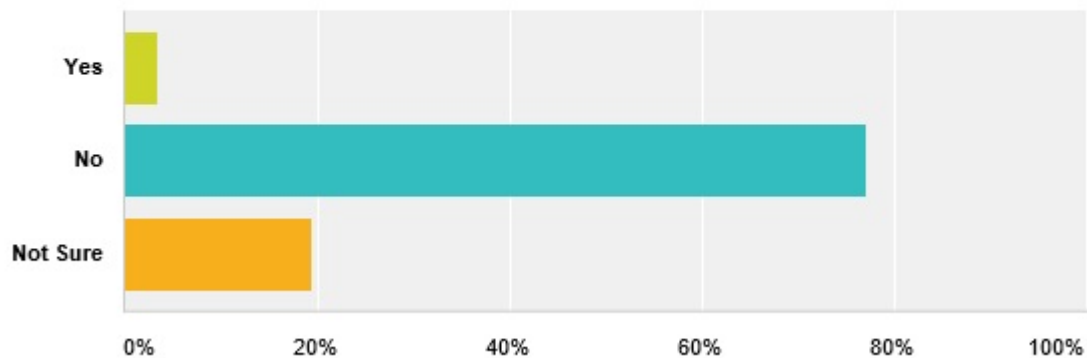


# Survey Results



**Do you believe that the above grant to fewer than 40% is fair and equitable**

Answered: 1,420 Skipped: 10





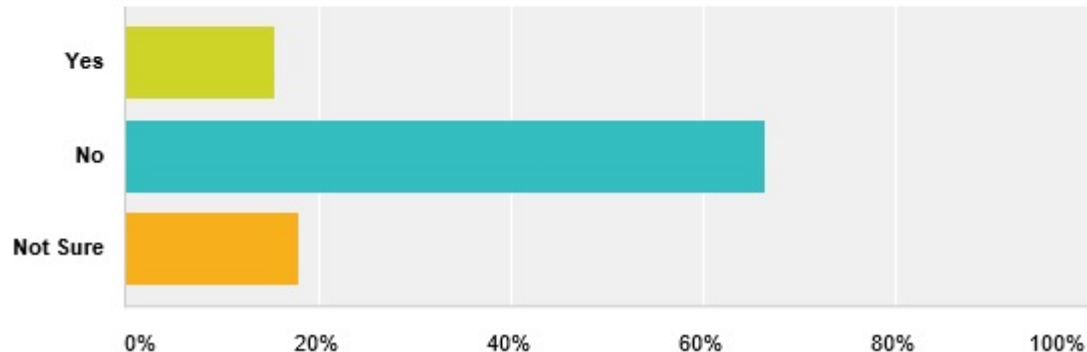


# Survey Results



**If the educators in your service are not approved to receive the government grant funding for this wage increase would you be supportive of an increase of \$8 - \$10 per day in fees to cover the increase?**

Answered: 1,419 Skipped: 11



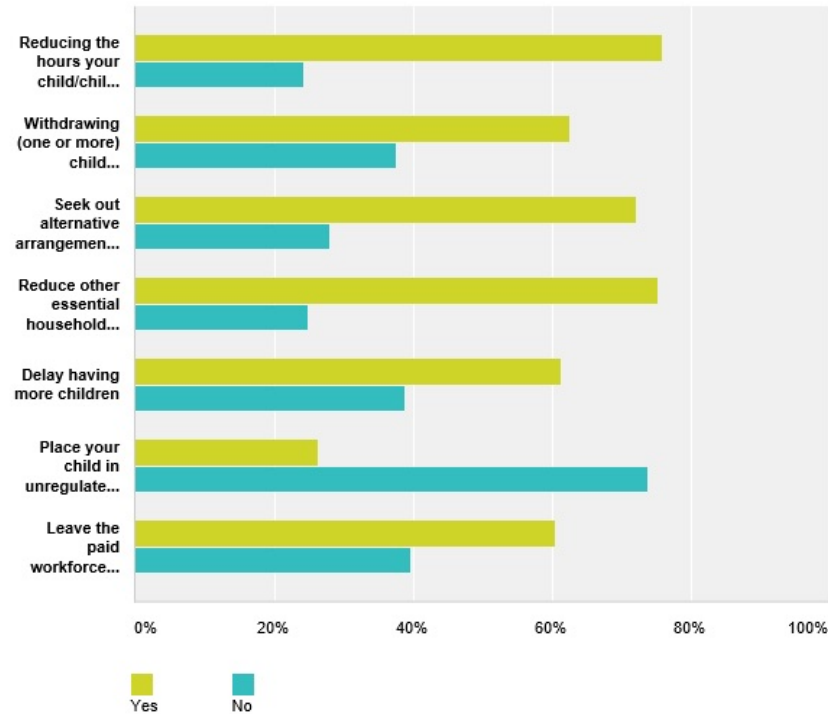


# Survey Results



**What would you do if you find you could not afford to carry the increased costs caused by these reforms? (You can answer yes to more than one option). Would you consider?**

Answered: 1,420 Skipped: 10



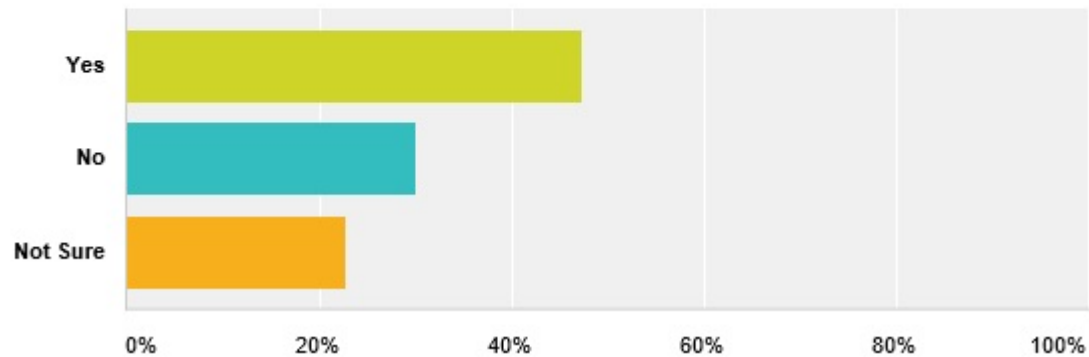


# Survey Results



**Have you felt the financial impact of the Government's action to decrease and restrict the Child Care Rebate to \$7,500 p.a. with a year freeze on indexation for the past three years?**

Answered: 1,418 Skipped: 12



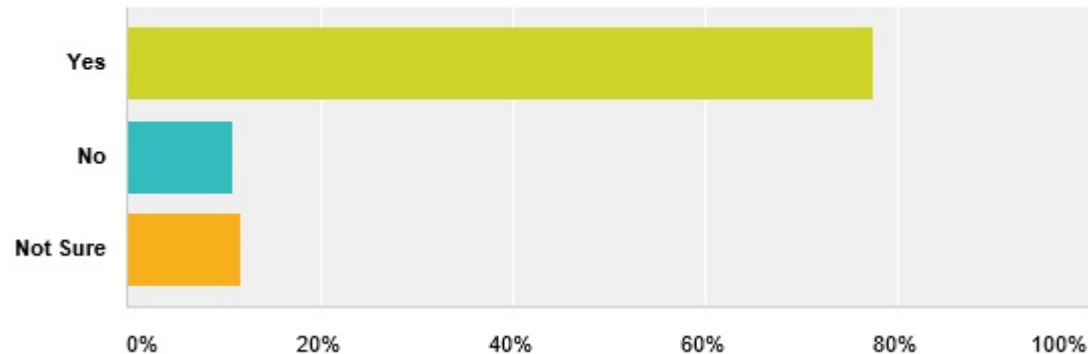


# Survey Results



**If either party moved to means test the  
Child Care Rebate, would this influence  
your vote at the next election?**

Answered: 1,424 Skipped: 6



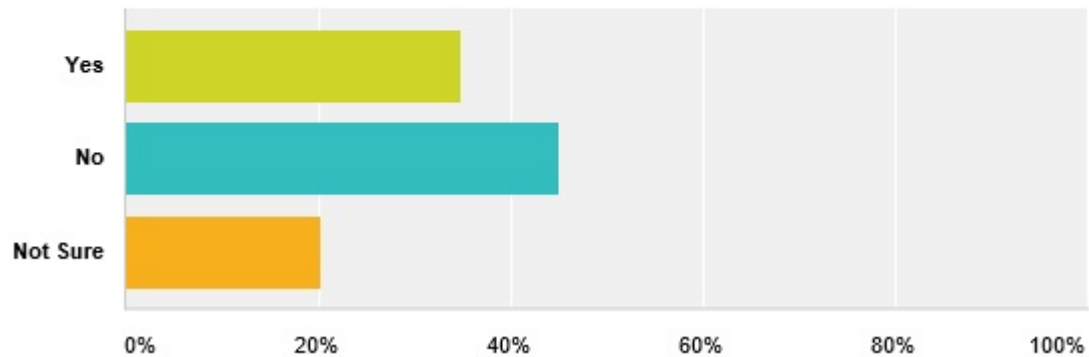


# Survey Results



**If you receive the Child Care Benefit; do you consider this subsidy is adequate to help you afford access to a quality early learning program for your child/children?**

Answered: 1,295 Skipped: 135



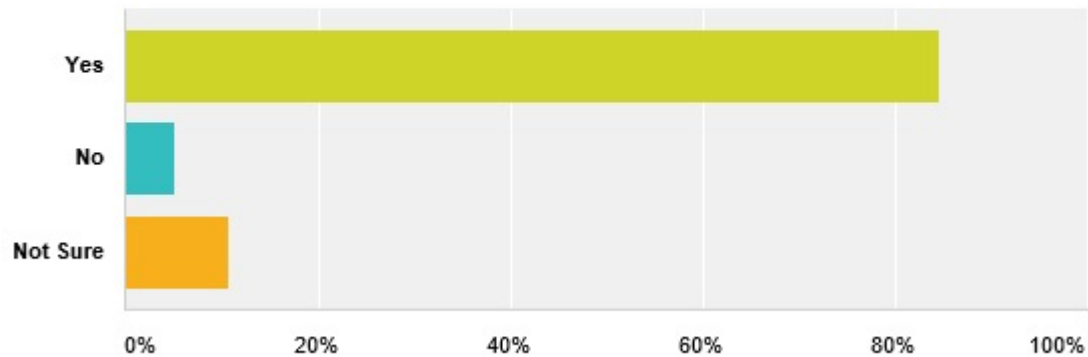


# Survey Results



**Do you want to see all parties commit to increasing the Child Care Benefit?**

Answered: 1,405 Skipped: 25



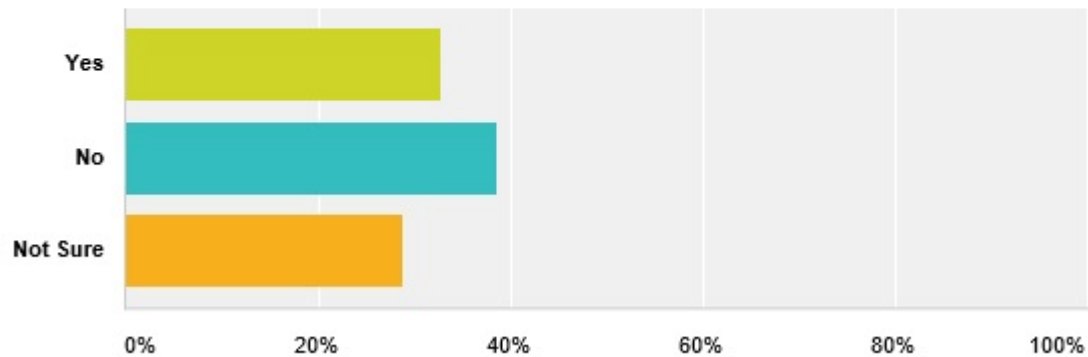


# Survey Results



**Without increased funding or government intervention over the next 2 years will you be able to maintain your current level of workforce participation?**

Answered: 1,423 Skipped: 7



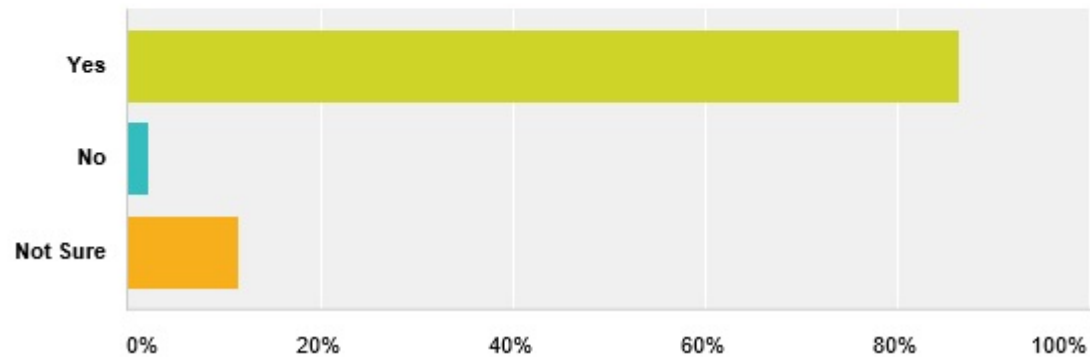


# Survey Results



**Would you vote to support the party that  
commits to making child care more  
affordable and accessible for you and your  
child/children?**

Answered: 1,423 Skipped: 7





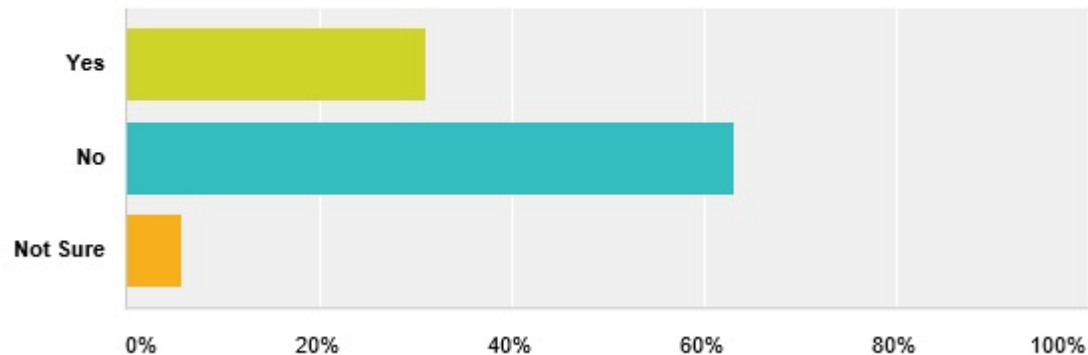


# Survey Results



## Do you have a need for extended hours work related care?

Answered: 1,420 Skipped: 10



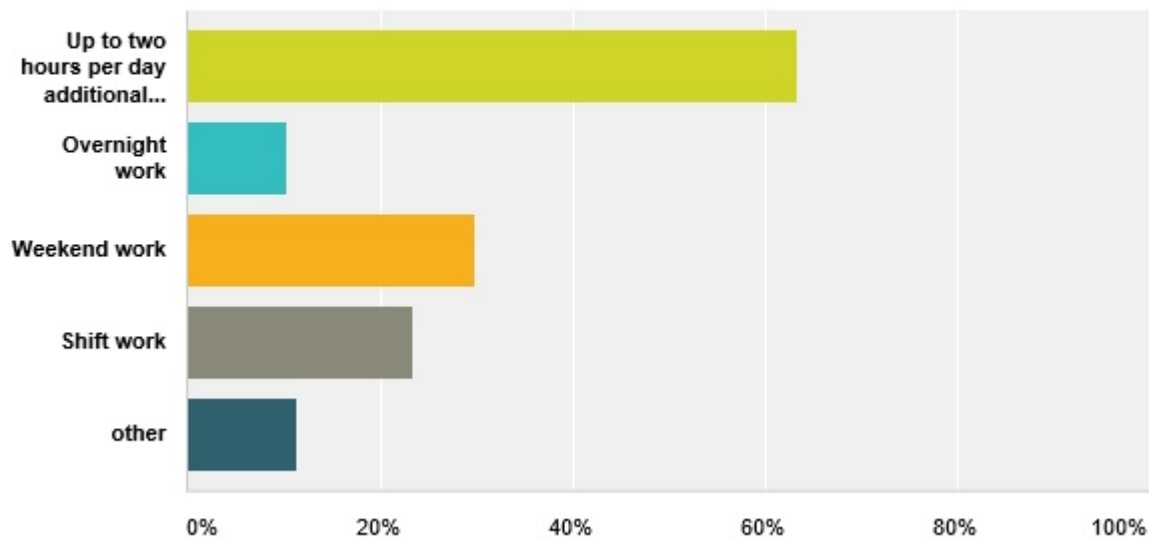


# Survey Results



If Yes would your need relate to:

Answered: 495 Skipped: 935



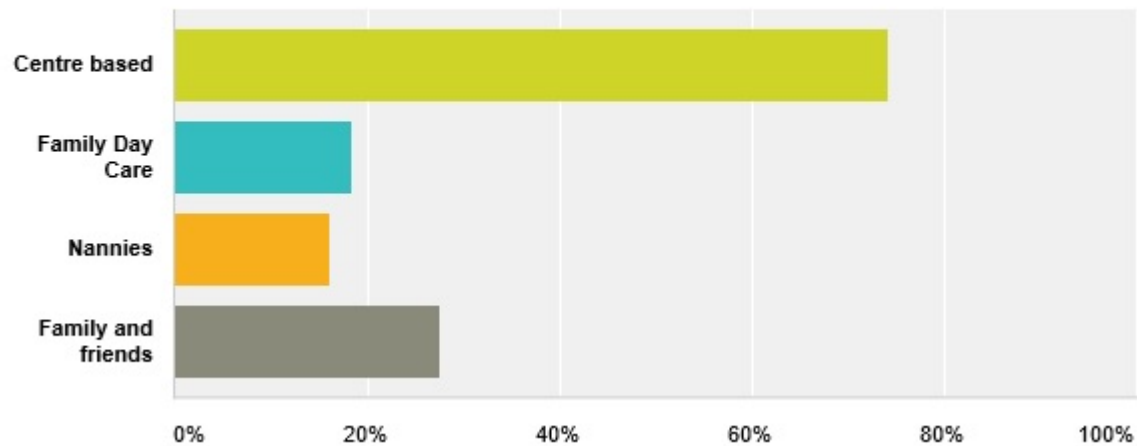


# Survey Results



## If yes, what preference would you have?

Answered: 540 Skipped: 890





# Survey Results



The survey ask the question:

**“If there was one message you would wish both parties to listen to, what would it be?”**

Out of 1,430 people who participated in the survey, 754 responded by stating their opinions on the current system. A sample of these responses follows:



# Survey Results



As a single parent child care is a necessity as without I would not be able to work. I am lucky to have my children in a subsidised centre as I could have never afforded to place them in a full fee paid service. My alternative would have been single parent payment and a Homeswest house now thats a real burden to taxpaying dollars. Structured child care hs assisted me with the early years development of my children and this is very noticable compared to children that have not attended child care.

Child Care

Increase wages to keep quality staff in centres. Make it affordable for parents to encourage them back to work and keep numbers full in centres. Centres that are full can financially provide better equipment, and experiences for children and professional development for staff.

Child care provides a wonderful learning experience for our children. The importance of early learning should be considered highly and funds provided to adequately support the child care workers who work long hours and educate our children while we are at work paying taxes.

Families are struggling already, we need to work to support the economy (to better the country) we are the tax payers we are helping the govt so help us in return!

Please give serious thought and consideration to the Child Care industry and their carers. They look after and teach our children in our absence and should be rewarded financially for this important community service.

Child Care

Day care is not a luxury, it is a necessity and should not be means tested. In addition to this the cost is not tax deductible even though it is a work related expense. The rebate makes it a viable option for our family but for that to decrease would put severe stress on us financially. I currently work 20 hours a week, study 20 hours a week and could not even attempt this if child care became unaffordable - we are in a higher income bracket but with the cost of living, 2 kids and the costs of studying it is still a struggle. Should you make the rebate means tested or out of reach for some people, I don't doubt the number of people who make the choice to work and stay off government support will decrease should it become harder to afford the child care.

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# Survey Results



Do not means test the Child Care Rebate. This is not a welfare issue, it is a workforce participation issue and greater participation benefits the whole economy.

I would feel very sad and upset if I was forced to stop working due to the increase in child care costs, by way of means testing the CCR.

I am in the privileged position to earn a very good wage (which is pro rated for my part time hours). Should the child care rebate be means tested this would severely impact my ability to justify working. If this is the case for me, I hate to think how this would affect those on a lower wage (and often those working mothers who provide the community essential services such as teachers, nurses).

Pay the employees working in child care decent wages and make it more affordable for families to send their children to daycare.

Childcare is essential, just like resources for public education. Don't penalise families for wanting to balance a home and work life by making them choose between the two. Ensure our carers are paid what they truly deserve and not throw our tax money at all the other wasteful projects too numerous to mention here.

Caring for and educating our children is one of the most important roles in our community / nation - working in this sector AND stay-at-home primary care givers have to be given much greater financial incentives.

Don't means test the Child Care Rebate. It is a myth that people earning above the average wage are 'well off' in today's world

Don't means test the child care rebate - child care benefits are already means tested. Just because some families earn more it doesn't always mean they can afford childcare without some assistance. Maybe they can take the higher paying job because they can afford childcare with the rebate currently available.



# Survey Results



Childcare fees are already expensive enough. I would be extremely disappointed if fees rise again. I am a working mother who enjoys going to work and my two children who are currently in childcare 2 days a week also enjoy childcare. I feel it is good for their development, both mentally and physically and believe it would be a shame if I needed to look for alternate arrangements if fees were to increase.

If child care fees increase and they means test the child care rebate I would have to either reduce my hours of work or stop altogether as child care will be too expensive. It is scary! Especially as we will soon have a second child in day care. My whole pay would go on child care fees if we couldn't claim the child care rebate and that is no exaggeration!

My child is learning right now, he is not even 3 years old but the things he learns in Childcare are setting him up for a brighter future as a student. For this reason alone childcare should be viewed as pre-kinder and funded in the same fashion.

Keep child care affordable. Increase family benefits. Show that you actually care about the vote from families.

Please commit to quality child care by ensuring educators are paid fairly. The current wage is far too low given the very important job that they do with our children!

Our government/s has/have their priorities so very wrong. The most important issues facing families these days are childcare/schooling and health care. The only other issue I would consider to be important is transport and the ever growing traffic and grid lock - yet I would still sacrifice this to know that our children - our future - are being put first in any and all decisions. Stop penalising hard working families who are trying to provide for a decent future for our children!!!

Make childcare more affordable and fair wages for childcare workers to elevate the quality of care.

We are an average family on a reasonable income however the increased cost in living, mortgage and childcare costs leave us literally living week to week. If we were to be means tested I would simply have to reduce my work hours. we could not sustain a increase in child care fees.



# For further information



Please contact the following:

<b>ACA President</b>	Gwynn Bridge	0418 764 779
<b>QLD/ACT</b>	Peter Price	0418 788 889
<b>NSW</b>	Vicki Skoulogenis	0418 698 275
<b>VIC</b>	Paul Mondo	0411 587 170
<b>WA</b>	Rachelle Tucker	0433 498 147
<b>SA</b>	Kerry Mahony	0419 819 754
<b>NT</b>	Sandra Hill	0419 350 992