

Media Release

For immediate Release

Survey sounds warning bells of financial hardship for Australian families

10 April 2015

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) today released the results of its most recent member survey highlighting the struggle faced by Australian families in affording childcare and getting back into the workforce.

The survey, which sampled 543 childcare centres across Australia, reports that the average occupancy rate as at the week beginning 17 March 2015 was just 76 per cent.

Ms Gwynn Bridge, National President of ACA is warning the Abbot Government that this result sends a clear message that working families are facing an ever-increasing affordability crisis that will ultimately impact their ability to work.

"We know that approximately 85 per cent of families subsidised by the Australian Government to access childcare earn less than a combined family income of \$160,000 per annum.

"These families are not welfare cheats. They contribute to the economy, pay their taxes and drive our economy. Australia needs more of them to work, not less" said Ms Bridge.

89 per cent of ACA members surveyed also supported a coordinated nationally consistent approach to planning to ensure services are built in areas of high demand.

"These occupancy results also strengthen the need for government to rethink the existing approach to planning and development in the early childhood sector to ensure we are delivering the social infrastructure needed by Communities.

"Instead, we are allowing property developers to build new centres where land is cheap and then complain when there are no places for babies in inner Sydney", Ms Bridge said.

The Productivity Commission Report into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning proposed reform that would deliver limited improvements to workforce participation and increase costs for government.

"Australian families are tired of reform for reforms sake. This should not be an exercise of simply moving the money around but giving families opportunity and confidence in the workforce" Ms Bridge concluded.

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