

SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

I would like to comment on the remuneration of teachers. I finished university in 1993. I have been at my current service for 29 years. During this time the real wages have diminished in relation to other teachers and professions with a similar skill set. The wages have not kept pace with similarly qualified professionals and many teachers are leaving early childhood to enter the school system where the pay is higher and the conditions in relation to leave and workload are better.

I have multiple post graduate qualifications and I have a great employer however the award wages do not recognise the skills and knowledge that I have with these years of experience.

I believe that the lower rates of pay are aligned to it being a primarily female workforce. Wage cases have been held in nursing, disability but they have not come across to an increase in wages for Early Childhood. There is no unskilled labour in our sector. The requirements for Certificate III are 18 months of training, then Diploma for an additional 18 months, teachers are undertaking 4 year degrees.

The demands on the role of Centre Director/Manager have increased dramatically over the years. The compliance, human resource management and the challenges of COVID-19 have all taken their toll on the profession. The educators are so hard working they do not do a 9-5 job they are always planning, participating in professional development, attending meetings

In our roles we have children with more complex needs who we are supporting in a mainstream environment. There is not enough training and support for us to support the children in our settings. The Inclusion Support system gives some support in the classroom with partial funding of an additional educator but when there are multiple children requiring additional support it does not meet the children or the educators needs.

In terms of the Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) the process is complex and onerous, and the funding received does not come close to the actual costs of employing an additional educator. The role needs to be filled by an experienced educator the amount paid does not include the on costs for the employee – superannuation, workers compensation, leave costs.

There are many issues in relation to the availability to placements and the provision of services.

These include the costs to establish a service, The availability of experienced staff for provision and the onerous planning and council requirements

I am upset when I hear the phrase cheaper child care- whilst I applaud the federal government and their commitment to assist families- early childhood education should be expensive – it should be of the highest quality and it shouldn't be a race the lowest cost of providing the service.

Operational costs have sky rocketed over the last few years- food, consumables, cleaning products, resources, insurance etc have all increased for us- we are subject to the same cost of living pressures that families are feeling.

It is hard from a service provision to be flexible – it is not an easy fix- we understand parents need flexible practices however in terms of the staffing, hours of operation and how the service day to day operations need to occur it is impossible for us to provide the flexibility that families want.

The system as it is – is broken. We should be advocating for the highest standards. I hope that this investigation will find some answers and that we can continue to build a an early childhood system that is world standard and supports children and families in their formative years.