

Submission by former ECE regarding the draft report.

The role of FOR-profit, provides spaces but at substandard level.

No accountability to justify (rising) fees.

I would suggest that most parents would expect for a daily fee of \$150 + the child in care would receive a daily food budget of at least 5-10%, (\$7.50 - \$15).

My calculations, over the three years with a FOR profit company suggest as little at \$0.86 - \$1.35 per child for the WHOLE day, morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. The *entire* budget for one of the FOR-profit services is what other centres spend on fruit and veg alone, according to a supplier.

My association with the FOR-profit company saw Fee increases for families, increased government funding with little to none trickling down to the employees and children.

The General Manager of the company I had ties with made it clear at a staff meeting that the services exist for profit. So too bad so sad, no longer would fruit bowls be provided as our 'families' (clients) exploited these fruit bowls, taking an apple for their school aged child.

Oh, so in the spirit of the EYLF and building relationships.

False representation

Families are sold the benefits of certain centres, knowing all too well those services aren't provided, due to staffing or resources.

Any complaints are shut down with statements that these are extra-curricular activities, a privilege and not a right.

So, why should families pay and premium when the extras aren't included.

Workforce (in)competence

Providing an adequate and competent workforce requires a raise in the minimum wage to attract staff to the industry. Staffing retention may be achieved through the opportunity for career progression and adequate payrates reflective of professional development.

Such an instrumental part of building the foundations for society however those in such positions are not providing the best opportunities as the industry is being abandoned by competent workers, thus the incompetent manage employment so the for-profit doors can be open so all those heart beats, no sorry, dollar signs can continue to come through the door and the lack of adequate educator to child ratios aren't as glaringly obvious.

The social benefit is not being achieved as many of those employed to meet ratios lack social skills and emotional intelligence. The blind leading the blind.

Employees need to be aware of their employment rights, much like McDonald's and KFC, all the unpaid time before and after shifts and even an expectation of unpaid weekend work.

A&R

Services run by not-for-profit providers, governments and schools have better NQS ratings, with 34% exceeding the standard, compared with 13% of services run by for-profit providers → the assessment and rating process is fascial, kinda like how NAPLAN is managed by schools attempting to maintain higher results for reputation, rather than using NAPLAN as an opportunity to identify and address where greater support is required.

Assessment and rating notice should be limited to avoid the (failing) smoke and mirrors of for-profit centres. From my experience less than satisfactory results are blamed on floor staff with management neglecting their ability to lead, provide optimum mentorship.

Regulators will point out failings and refer to the expected regulations and standards. I have not witnessed assessors providing any further assistance in a centre rectifying failure, simply highlighting deficits, and expecting rectification within a certain time frame.

Addressing access

The uncoordinated billions of dollars the government throws at early childcare → allocation of funds for not-for-profit community centres in the areas currently facing limited access.

Providing not for profit services alongside allied health services, provide greater integration of services, medical and social to provide the opportunity to establish strong foundations.

It takes a village.

ISP

The inclusion program should be mandatory across all facilities. For Profit organisations should have to provide transparent management of Inclusion Funding. Inclusion Funding should also cover educators with inclusion training.

Inclusion Funding written into the regulations for the sector in addition to the disability act 2006. Applications to access ISP funding needs to be accessible and achievable.

The complexity of inclusion provides an opportunity for professional development and career progression and income potential, through completion of certificates across inclusion, physical, social, and emotional awareness, and knowledge.

Workplace Environment

My experience with a FOR-profit ECEC was that of an incredibly unsupportive, unprofessional, and work environment plagued with a lack of consistency. The instability of the workplace and emotional burnout inherent to carers was simply unsupported by management. A cumulative result led to psychological trauma. The lack of actual wellbeing practices is at the detriment to not only educators, but there is also a trickle-down effect for the children in care. A lack of consistency and stability is counter to the ethos of providing a secure environment in which to thrive. Maintaining staff retention should be a priority if indeed the best interests of the child are to be upheld.