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Childcare Enquiry
Productivity Commission
Submission Via email

To Whom It May Concern

I am a married mother of three children aged 6, 4 and 2. I have had the opportunity to experience childcare services since 2007. I am a qualified professional who has worked in government and private sectors. I am now heavily involved in the operations of our farming enterprise. During the last 6 years my children have attended a not for profit service provider, that has also provided a kindergarten program within a long day care setting.

Our service provider has been extremely accommodating, especially when seasonal factors dictate longer or different working hours. Without a close family support network we have had to rely heavily on our childcare provider to fill the gap. This was even more critical when health complications during the latter stages of my third pregnancy, and also when affected by multiple natural disasters over the years.

Rural Area Self-employed – Child Care Challenges

- an on-farm environment is not always conducive to having children in the workplace. Once the child progresses to toddler age it is extremely difficult to accommodate their needs unless they have a dedicated carer. Once they reach school age it is much more manageable.
- Due to our geographical dislocation transporting children to daycare requires driving 2 hours everyday. We currently employ 3.5 FTE. I am currently trying to drive growth in our business through a range of strategies. When at least 6 hours every week are taken up driving we really question our productivity but can see no other choice available. Whilst we could employ a person they may not have qualifications and such costs are not eligible. Home Daycare providers that I have interviewed do not meet my needs.
- We would not be able to utilise services without access to CCB, and CCR.

Suggested Improvements for extending support

- An on-farm nanny would be a preferred option but beyond our financial capabilities.
- The same would be said of any of our female or male workers who are also carers – farm labourers are not high income earners. We have parents who have sole care of children during school holidays only. Occasional on farm care would be preferable.

It would be preferable for these carers to be aligned or under the auspice of an existing registered daycare provider (eg my not for profit service provider).

- This model could be quite useful for larger employers who can allocate space within or around the workplace, or on-farm home for these nannies to utilise.
- Alternatively within the grounds of the closest state primary school.
- My closest parallel would be a crèche or vacation care set up but underpinned by qualified workers on-farm.
- Extending care to include 'odd hours' would be very helpful. For agricultural workers starting hours could be anyway from 4am in the morning.

Yours faithfully

Jacinta Jowett