

The contribution of childcare to workforce participation and child development

There is absolutely no doubt that accessing quality childcare as a working mum (or dad) is imperative to ensuring a buoyant economy.

In Tasmania, roughly one third of the population is over 55 and one third is on welfare. The remaining 160,000 of us are carrying the can for those who can't or won't work. Take one parent out of the workforce is car is unaffordable or not viable and you potentially have one fifth of Tasmania's population supporting four fifths. And this is only taking into account a two parent family.

In many cases, the parent that sacrifices their work/career for to offset childcare will do so at minimal gain. In terms of costs, around one quarter to one third of my wage goes to childcare costs. The flow on effect for most families, and indeed most women would be reduction in spending, sacrifice career opportunities, reduction in super for an average of five years. Women (or men) who are forced to stay at home because childcare spots are unavailable or because they are too costly, also face the possibility of isolation and the issues this can bring.

The unseen affects should be considered as part of the broader picture.

Current and future need for childcare in Australia, particularly given changes in work patterns, early learning needs, childcare affordability and government assistance

This for me speaks directly to the quality of childcare. It's a difficult choice to put your child into childcare and when you do, because you either have to or choose to work, you want the knowledge that your child will: 1. Be safe, 2. Be well looked after and 3. Be taught skills commensurate with the investment in that care (including preparation for school)

There is no doubt that choosing to put our son into daycare has accelerated his learning. His daycare is exceptional and prepared him for learning, school and life. For three months we were looking at home daycare as the only option and by either 1. Limited daycare spots or 2. Reducing funding that reduces quality, you risk a significant flow on effect for that child. The current provider at current cost is just doable – I access a rebate from the government. Change this balance and you dramatically affect, particularly women's, opportunity within the workforce.

The capacity of the childcare system to ensure a satisfactory transition to schools, in particular for vulnerable or at risk children

I have no comment save for the above.

Alternative models of care, including those overseas, which could be considered for trial in Australia

I have no comment

Options - within existing funding parameters - for improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability of childcare for families with diverse circumstances

I have no comment

the impacts of regulatory changes, including the implementation of the National Quality Framework, on the childcare sector over the past decade.

I have no comment