

## **SUBMISSION FROM THE ALICE SPRINGS STEINER SCHOOL**

I am the secretary of the Alice Springs Steiner Association, which operates the Alice Springs Steiner School, a 150 student primary school in Alice Springs. The school also runs a 50 child kindergarten (pre-school) for 3-5 year olds on the same campus.

The School's Governing Body would like to make the following email submission to the Productivity Commission's Enquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.

The Alice Springs Steiner Kindergarten receives only a couple of hundred dollars per year per student from government funding. The kindergarten is privately funded by the Alice Springs Steiner Association via fees received through the operation of the Alice Springs Steiner primary school.

The Kindergarten offers the Alice Springs community a high quality integrated early learning experience for their young children. It improves connections and transitions across early childhood services and ensures children are transitioning from kindergarten/childcare to school with a high level of school preparedness. It allows many Alice Springs women to return to the workforce.

Whilst the funding of the kindergarten is 'held' by the primary school the Alice Springs Steiner Association operates essentially on a break even basis and there is always a certain level of financial vulnerability.

More government subsidy of the kindergarten would ensure its long term sustainability. The school is always on the look out for ways to achieve this.

The kindergarten has to (and does) comply with the Commonwealth government's stringent quality control requirements for pre-schools (which have substantial overlap with the requirements for childcare centres) without receiving the benefit of child care centre funding. The cost of running the kindergarten is subsidised by the primary school to the tune of about \$130,000 per year.

Registering the preschool as a child care centre (so as to attract both substantive operational government funding and to entitle parents to rebates) has been explored but the current child care centre requirements such as operating hours etc make this option impractical.

**Submission 1: That the government's operational requirements for 'child care centres' could be changed to include private kindergartens like ours thus making us eligible for 'child care centre' funding ?**

Another aspect of this is seen from the parents' perspective. The following is a quote from one of our parents:

"I would like to see the childcare rebate extended to private preschools. My 4 year old daughter attends a private preschool in Alice Springs. The 15 hours that she attends a week allows me to return to work on a part time basis. She receives a very high quality education that follows the national early learning framework. The preschool is part of the school that she will attend and provides her with excellent school preparedness. The preschool receives very little state or federal support.

We do not receive any childcare benefit. If I was to enrol her at a local daycare centre for this time, I would receive a 50% rebate on my fees.

We live in a remote area and childcare options are limited and waiting lists are long."

**Submission 2 : that the childcare rebate be extended to cover services provided by private preschools (eg the Alice Springs Steiner School kindergarten).**

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to ring me or email me with any questions you have in relation to the above.

**Jane Hartwig  
The Alice Springs Steiner Association**