

**INQUIRY INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND
CARE SECTOR IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Serious problems always arise from the privatisation of, and profiteering on social services, and this is what we are now seeing the full effect of in the early childhood sector. I am a university qualified early childhood teacher who currently works as an office administrator at a not for profit, community based long day care centre. Previously, I have worked at for profit services. The differences are astounding. In my experience, for profit services only care about making money. They use skeleton staff (on the absolute minimum of wages) and often even break ratios to make money. There is no care for the families or children enrolled either, their sole focus is on making as much profit as possible. It is not uncommon for for profit services to hire consultants to come in and make everything look perfect before an Assessment and Rating visit, resulting in an Exceeding rating. The A&R process does not come close to capturing the actual quality of a service. After having experienced working for a not for profit service, I will never return to the dire conditions that permeates the for profit part of the sector. The way early childhood education is managed by the government leaves a lot to desire, but a long hard look needs to be taken at what has allowed the sector to get to the point of having 95% of new centres opening each year being run for profit. The government should focus their funding on not for profit services, to bring up the number of these. For profit services should be footing their own bills. One good thing the government does, is their funding of community preschools. However, this level of funding must be extended to community based, not for profit long day care centres as well. They offer the same services, but they also offer more flexibility for families (longer opening hours and open during school holidays). Community preschools received double the Start Strong funding that long day care centres do (whether they are not for profit or for profit). Community based, not for profit long day care services should be receiving the same as community preschools. This would be a start to strengthening their survivability and also offer better options for families in terms of their work arrangements. I could go on for ages about this, but i will finish with strongly encouraging the government to look at the Nordic countries and how they fund early childhood education. Making the change to a Nordic model, would not only ensure that fees are fair and manageable across the sector, but that wages for educators and teachers are too. All staff who work in the early childhood sector should be entitled to a wage that reflects their skills and expertise.