

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 20 May 2025

Partially
Confidential

I have worked in the sector for a total of 10 years. Prior to this I was engaged in study for 5 years. I have worked in numerous private services, local government run services, and community run services and I can tell you that, despite all operators being subject to the same standards and regulation, NOT all of these are created equal. Across the board, not-for profit services massively out-perform privately operated centres.

When I was a TAFE student I visited numerous ECEC services in a low socio economic area of Sydney. All of them were soul-sucking, profit-making, cookie-cutter pits of despair that served their owners. The children's spaces lacked sufficient play resources. Staff weren't given adequate WHS supplies. Staff used yelling, bribes and manipulation to tame the children. Leadership showed favouritism and rewarded those that maintained the toxic 'fear' culture. Families were happy with the service because children were 'fed and kept warm'. Unfortunately, their refugee backgrounds made it difficult to see the deplorable conditions. It is why I am making this submission. Poor children are grossly more affected by for-profit services functioning at a lower quality.

I understand that simply relinquishing all private services is not possible. I ask that private equity and publically listed corporations be barred from acquiring or creating any more services. Many of the large for profit providers pay no tax and are funded by the federal government. Public money is funding profit. This money could be spent on investing in more government-run services. There are also some gorgeous owner-run services that run as not for profit and ethically.

Early childhood services can be hubs for children and families. They can ameliorate adverse affects experienced by families and communities. Higher quality services (and this is very measurable!!) improve outcomes for children, families and community. They are truly gems. Unfortunately for some families, the services have been the cause of adverse experiences for children as seen in four corners and 7.30 report. It was distressing hearing about families not being told. Families need to know and the services that grossly mishandled abuse allegations need to close and be barred from running services. I think information needs to be shared with the sector. I am unsure of how much needs to be made public.

There are a bunch of public Facebook groups i.e. NSW Early childhood teachers, Early Educators United, Early Childhood Education and Care. Educators post anonymously, sometimes these posts disclose abusive behaviour and responders urge to report. These groups show the deplorable conditions so many are exposed to and the lack of knowledgeable educators.

I am masters-qualified and frankly, the pay is shit if working under the Teachers Award. I once had a private provider try and convince me the \$32 an hour, that they were offering me, was generous; knowing full well I earned \$35 an hour as a diploma educator 5 years before that. I earn about 40% more than the teachers award because my employer is a community-based preschool that cares about its staff.

Free TAFE only. Even for international students. Private providers do not adequately train. How does someone complete their diploma in a matter of 3 months when at TAFE it is 2 years of full-time study? I am responsible for many prac students and because of the deplorable standards from private RTOs we only accept TAFE and university students. T

I believe that members (local, state and federal) that represent us should disclose who cares for their children when aged 0-5 years. Why should they make decisions about the education and care of young children if they hire a private nanny?