

MEDIA RELEASE – 6 February 2017

New NSW Planning Law can create oversupply of childcare

After almost 3 years of engaging with the NSW Department of Planning, the Draft Education and Childcare State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) was finally released on Saturday, 4 February 2017.

With currently woeful delays in processing childcare-related Development Applications (DAs) estimated at a median range of between 204 and 265 business days (ie 40-53 calendar weeks), this proposed SEPP is intended to reduce such unacceptable times to address the growing childcare demands and costs owing to the business cost of delays and constrained supply.

“We are very pleased that new NSW Planning Minister’s first act is the release of this SEPP. Among its many improvements, it imposes on the remaining 6 local councils out of 152 to allow childcare centres to be built and operated in R2 Low-Density Residential Zones, as well as compelling about 100 local government areas to allow childcare centres to be built and operated in IN2 Light Industrial Zones,” said Chiang Lim, CEO of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

The draft SEPP also obliges all planning authorities to become consistent with the childcare sector’s *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)*, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and the *National Quality Standards*. Moreover, it also imposes a 28-day consultation period on all new childcare development applications (DAs) on the NSW Department of Education.

“Although I am excited for childcare operators, parents and children of these proposed regulatory improvements, I am concerned that this SEPP also proposes to abolish all proximity requirements of new childcare facilities to existing early childhood education and care facilities, which can lead to oversupply in high demand areas, thereby putting at risk existing childcare service standards and local residents’ amenities,” said Mr Lim.

ACA NSW will be consulting with its members about the proposed SEPP, make a formal submission to the NSW Department of Planning by 24 March 2017 and engage further with the NSW Department of Planning. It will also be examining the SEPP if it has created sufficient incentives to encourage new childcare centres in new residential and commercial areas (including greenfield sites) where demand is low but are determined for population expansion.

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Australian Childcare Alliance New South Wales is the peak body for privately owned early childhood education and care services in NSW, numbering approximately 1,000 long daycare services and supporting over 100,000 families. ACA NSW provides advocacy, policy and regulatory and business support and advice, member services and professional development for members and their staff across the state.

**For further media inquiries,
ACA CEO Chiang Lim on 0427 277 299.**