

MEDIA RELEASE – 31 MARCH 2017

Childcare Oversupply across Newcastle region is very real

A packed room of over 25 private and community-based childcare service providers from across the Newcastle, Maitland and Lake Macquarie local government areas gathered to address the oversupply of childcare.

“We are addressing real concerns across New South Wales where childcare oversupply is already very real and is negatively affecting existing childcare services’ operational sustainability, and therefore putting at risk educational standards for children,” said Lyn Connolly, President of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

Reacting to the Draft State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) recently released by the NSW Government to streamline processing of childcare related development applications, ACA NSW has significant reservations that the unintended consequence of accelerating childcare supply into oversupply would become more dire.

Mrs Connolly said, “even assuming we accept the already excessive number of childcare places in the greater Newcastle region, which ACA NSW would not, there are still so many childcare places already in the pipeline for the next 3 years that will far exceed the projected need based on the three Councils’ Residential Development Strategies’ population growth over the next 14 years.”

Angry private and community-based childcare service providers at the meeting were comprehensively upset about the lack of proper planning regulations and the absence of awareness nor understanding from the NSW Parliament and Commonwealth Parliament about the plight of small business family-based owners of childcare services.

“Why is it that aged care services, pharmacies, lottery agents and schools have their respective planning regimes that regulate where they can and cannot operate, yet childcare services run by mum-and-dad type small businesses are exposed to market forces and large corporations,” demanded Mrs Connolly.

ACA NSW will be making a submission to NSW Planning in response to the Draft SEPP by 7 April 2017. They will also engage governments and the general public about the reality and consequences of childcare oversupply.

“As already occurring in other suburbs, towns and cities where there are childcare services closing, we fear that this will happen in the greater Newcastle region. The real losers are the children who will be shunted from centre to centre, small family-run childcare services will close, forcing families towards corporate childcare,” said Mrs Connolly.

***** END *****

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 support and advice, member services and professional development for members across the state.

**For further media inquiries,
please contact ACA NSW President Lyn Connolly on 0425 225 275,
or ACA CEO Chiang Lim on 0427 277 299.**