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Child Care NSW responds to immunisation debate

Child Care New South Wales has welcomed the renewed interest of the community and all levels of Government in the immunisation debate but is cautioning that any reforms to the immunisation requirements of child care centres must be practical and equitable in order for them to be effective.

Child Care New South Wales President Vicki Skoulogenis today said “As carers, educators and parents, we share the community’s concerns about current immunisation rates across the state”.

“The key questions for Child Care New South Wales members are whether the proposed reforms will in fact contribute to significantly lifting immunisation rates, and whether the perceived red tape requirements associated with the proposed reforms will act as a disincentive to centres wishing to opt into the proposed scheme” Ms Skoulogenis said.

“It is also unclear at this stage what this will mean for our staff, and whether similar requirements will apply” Ms Skoulogenis said.

“We are currently surveying our members on the proposed reforms, including the likelihood of uptake, and hope to report on these results next week” Ms Skoulogenis said.

NSW Health Minister, the Hon Jillian Skinner, has announced today that she will introduce changes to the Public Health Act 2010 to give child care centres the power to refuse unimmunised children. This follows the announcement on the weekend that the NSW Opposition will move to introduce the *Public Health Amendment (Right to Refuse Unvaccinated Children Access to Child Care Facilities) Bill 2013* to give preschools and child care centres the right to refuse to enrol unvaccinated children.

Child Care New South Wales is currently reviewing the NSW Opposition Leader’s proposed Bill in detail and is working closely with both the NSW Opposition and NSW Government to ensure that the benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh the potential regulatory burden on child care providers.

“The health and safety of the children we provide care for remains the absolute priority for our members and we continue to work closely with all levels of government to deliver on our commitment to excellence in childcare” Ms Skoulogenis concluded.

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