

**PRESENTATION TO CUMBERLAND COUNCIL**  
**19 DECEMBER 2018**

Good evening Mayor Cummings, Deputy Mayor Elmore, Councillors, General Manager, senior staff, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Chiang Lim, I am the CEO of the Australian Childcare Alliance NSW.

Firstly, thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of a peak body for 1,600 childcare services across NSW owned and run overwhelmingly by family-owned small businesses.

Some of you would know me as a former Parramatta councillor. It is from my local government experience that I share with you concerns about the loss of council powers to effectively regulate where and what kind of childcare services there ought to be within your local government area, primarily as a result of the introduction of a particular State Environmental Planning Policy, for the safety of children and local amenity of your residents.

To best illustrate this, I refer to a new childcare centre your Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) approved at 49 Bombay Street (cnr of Nicholas Street), Lidcombe. This new centre will have a maximum capacity of 56 children. Yet IHAP did not take adequate consideration as to how 56 children, plus at least 12 staff would quickly and safely evacuate in the event of an emergency. The nearest suitable Assembly Area is Phillips Park almost 3 blocks away. And while emergencies may be rare, this childcare centre must legally practice mass evacuation every three months. And given the increased traffic in the area, how will this be done safely and without incident with 56 children as young as 0-5 years old in tow in possible chaotic circumstances?

Compounding this problem is that there exists no national or NSW requirement as to how quickly such a number of children must be evacuated to a safe place. The law and regulation only say that there must be a plan. Not how quickly it must be completed.

Ever since national and NSW laws and regulations removed all limits on the sizes of childcare services 6 years ago, the biggest childcare centre ever proposed since for Australia is for 556 children. In New South Wales, the largest so far are in Warrawee (250 children), Brookvale (212 children), Artarmon (210 children), Parramatta (208 children) and Epping (200 children), just to name a few. How quickly do you think they can evacuate all those children?

Whether it is 56 children or a few hundred, it is no longer a question of if, but when it will happen in this LGA.

If this Notice of Motion were to pass, I look forward to joining my colleagues from the community/not-for-profit segment, as well as family daycare, to engage with you more comprehensively. But I think it is safe to say that the entire sector, including even the unions, are united on our concerns about the future of early childhood education and care across in particular NSW, for all our children's sakes.

Thank you for listening to me.