

AUSTRALIAN GREENS' DISSENTING REPORT

1.1 The Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Measures) Bill 2014 seeks to continue the freeze on the Child Care Rebate at a limit of \$7500 per child per year and freeze the Child Care Benefit income thresholds for three years which will make it harder for Australian families to afford quality early childhood education and care.

1.2 Overwhelmingly the majority of submissions made to the committee were not supportive of the proposed changes and concluded that the bill should not proceed.

1.3 We know that parents are already being forced to pay more for child care, with fees skyrocketing to over \$100 a day, while waiting lists are continuing to grow across the country. Under these changes families with a household income of \$150 000 will be \$6 000 out of pocket, but evidence provided to the committee shows that these changes will hit low income families the hardest. Families with a household income of \$60 000 are set to lose \$3 000 a year if this bill proceeds.¹ The direct results of this change will be higher out of pocket costs for families, families incurring substantial debts with the child care providers, parents potentially withdrawing from work and children being withdrawn from care.²

1.4 The Australian Greens do not support the bill as it is just another step by the government to target everyday Australians who are already struggling to make ends meet. The proposed changes will have a significant impact on families by making child care less affordable and accessible. Over half a million families are already struggling to meet the rising costs of child care and these changes will only make it harder for them.

1.5 The Australian Greens depart from the recommendation of the majority report and conclude that the bill should not proceed.

Recommendation 1

1.6 The Australian Greens recommend the Senate reject the bill.

Senator Lee Rhiannon

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young

1 Early Childhood Australia, *Media Release*, 23 May 2014.

2 Goodstart Early Learning, *Submission 13*, pp 1–2.