

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000850

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah provided in writing

National Association for Mobile Services media statement

Question

NAMS released a media statement on 23rd September 2016, indicating that “The funding reform proposal will no doubt ensure the closure of up to 90% of the current BBF Mobile Children Services across rural and remote communities in Australia” (Anne Bowler, the Chair of the National Association for Mobile Services). Already some In-Home Care providers have started to wind down operations in the face of uncertainty. Often the support of the IHC service can prevent children becoming part of the Child Protection system or place in Foster Care. Has the Government considered the cumulative effect of closure of multiple service types which service vulnerable children? What will be the resultant burden on the Child Protection system, a system already under enormous strain?

Answer

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that all Budget Based Funded (BBF) services, including BBF mobile services, are supported in their transition to the new child care system or in moving to alternative funding arrangements should the services not provide child care.

Because of the unique circumstances in which BBF services operate and the additional challenges and costs compared with other service types and mainstream child care services, the Government is providing the following supports:

- Individually tailored transition support provided by consultants, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), including an in depth analysis of each BBF funding recipient’s capacity to administer the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
- Under the Child Care Community Fund (CCCF) services will be able to apply for grant funding to reduce barriers to accessing child care, which will include sustainability support for services experiencing viability issues, particularly those operating in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities.
- The Department of Education and Training is currently looking at ways to introduce greater flexibility into the CCCF, so it can appropriately respond to the particular needs of services operating in disadvantaged communities, including longer term funding agreements to provide additional security to services.

In Home Care (IHC) providers will be supported to transition to the new child care system, including to access the CCS where applicable.

The *Jobs for Families* Child Care Package legislation allows for care delivered in the family home.

The current IHC program is continuing in parallel with the Nanny Pilot Programme. The evaluation of the Nanny Pilot Programme and the review of IHC are designed to provide valuable input to the future policy design for approved child care delivered in the family home.

All IHC service providers were informed of the IHC review on 3 August 2016. IHC service providers will be encouraged to participate in the review wherever possible and will be informed of any proposed changes to the program.

The Government is committed to supporting families needing care in the home

It is not anticipated that the outcome of the IHC review and any program changes that may result will have any impact on the child protection system.