



Response to the Senate Inquiry – Jobs for Families Package

This response comes from the Nominated Supervisor of Cowra Early Childhood Services – Mobile, a traveling children's service dedicated to providing an extensive early childhood service to isolated, rural and remote families in and around the Cowra District. We currently provide a long day care model to 6 communities, 72 families and 102 children, with approximately 13 children on a waiting list. We employ 6 educators and 1 administration staff, all working part-time. Our Mobile is a licensed early childhood education & care service.

Given timeframe around submissions the easiest way for us to document our response is identifying the threats and opportunities this packages poses for our service in Cowra, New South Wales.

THREATS

- Volatile enrolment levels in communities. Making decisions to cut service to communities with low numbers. Viability vs Needs – children missing out.
- Vehicle depreciation, measures built into current budgets under BBF program. Loss in flexibility to maintain this, needing to apply for \$\$\$ in the CCCF competitive tendering process. When & how? Our service does not have the capacity for constant tender writing.
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- Affordability for families, with service fees to increase.
- Rural/farming families passing activity tests.
- If we can meet the requirements of a “mainstream” service - does this force us into a competitive market with “in town” services operating longer hours, etc. as they have no travel/set up time.
- Staffing issues – “over- stretching, burn out & turnover” if required to work longer hours/day.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expansion of service. For many years we have identified the need for growth however have been restricted under BBF Program.

We also have sincere concerns about the transition process as we anxiously await news of just what it is we are transitioning too and the timeframe for this as there has already been several delays.

Penny Smith

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CECS – Mobile
NAMS – NSW Representative