

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: human.rights@aph.gov.au

9 July 2021

Dear Committee Members

Clarification of evidence provided at the ParentsNext inquiry hearing on 25 June 2021

During our appearance before the committee, Senator Thorpe asked how much consultation the government or the people responsible for coming up with this program has had with bodies like ours.

Our evidence states that we 'provided input on the design of the program early on'. We would like to clarify that this contribution was in response to a national consultation in relation to the program expansion rather than in response to a direct invitation from the federal government.

We commenced our advocacy in relation to ParentsNext when our members raised concerns with us about the program and informed us of a Department of Social Services consultation on the ParentsNext national expansion. We attended this consultation in Melbourne on 3 October 2017. The majority of the attendees were from jobactive providers who were interested in submitting tenders and it was clear from the discussion that there were problematic features of the program.

This consultation session triggered significant concerns for us about the design of the program and the government's intention to roll it out nationally. We therefore prepared a submission to the Department in response to the *ParentsNext national expansion discussion paper* outlining these concerns. The discussion paper stated that feedback would inform the final design, purchasing arrangements and implementation of the national program. Again, we were not directly approached to contribute.

It was clear that our feedback did not influence the national rollout of ParentsNext, and since 2017, we have continued to advocate for this program to cease.

While we have never been directly approached by the government to provide input in relation to the ParentsNext program, we have taken every opportunity provided to submit our concerns.

Your faithfully,

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