

Media Release

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IPART publishes early childhood education and care submissions and survey results

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is currently reviewing the early childhood education and care sector to look at improvements that could be made through NSW state government initiatives and investment.

"High quality early childhood education and care is a critical issue for NSW families, linked to better long-term educational outcomes for children and increased workforce participation for parents, especially women" said IPART Chair Carmel Donnelly.

"We are looking at what people in NSW need when it comes to affordability, accessibility and consumer choice," said Ms Donnelly.

"As well as consulting with the sector, in April we published an Issues Paper seeking feedback, including a survey on the NSW Government's Have Your Say website, and today we are publishing submissions we received and the survey results. More than 1100 people completed the survey, which has provided very useful information."

"Almost 60% of parents and carers who responded to the survey said it is difficult in NSW to access services that suit their families' needs. While most reported that quality is the most important factor when choosing a service, more than 75% said the out-of-pocket costs of using services have been a barrier to them returning to work or increasing their work hours."

"In particular, we heard that access and support for families with children with diverse needs, including disability, could be improved."


"We are also looking at what is driving costs for service providers and barriers to them expanding their services to meet demand."

"Overwhelmingly, service providers told us that workforce shortages have affected their services, with most saying they have had trouble recruiting and retaining staff. Providers also raised concerns about rising operating and capital costs, as well as the complexity and viability of how services are funded."

IPART's review is focused on the NSW experience – there are also 2 national inquiries into the sector under way, being conducted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Commonwealth Productivity Commission.

IPART is currently further investigating the issues raised by the community and sector and will consider all feedback received before releasing an Interim Report in August. There will also be further opportunities to provide feedback before IPART makes final recommendations in December this year. To register to get review updates, or for more information, visit our website at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

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