The NSW Children’s Services Forum held an Early Education and Care Election Forum attended by Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli, Shadow Early Education Minister Linda Burney, Green’s Education spokesperson John Kaye, and around 200 people from the education and care sector.

Two of the most important things said that evening came from Adrian Piccoli.

He said: “There has not been a budget where I have not submitted to NSW Treasury and the Treasurer for more funds in early childhood and I will continue to do precisely that if we are re-elected.

Also: “The very lobbying that you do – lobbying me, lobbying others, the government, the opposition – is an effective way to get the message out to all elected representatives.”

The sector certainly answered this call via the NSW Children’s Services Forum “Bigger Slice Campaign”. The campaign, held in the lead up to the election had services across NSW inviting their local MPs and candidates to a ‘Pollies in the Sandpit’ day to visit their service and talk about the underfunding of early education in NSW. The campaign also held a cake stall at Parliament House to further spread the message.

The Children’s Services Forum campaign generated a massive amount of media at the regional level. Some of this can be viewed on the campaign website at: www.earlyeducation.org.au/media

Community Child Care calls on all services to lobby

Continued. p.2
the Minister, the Government and all local members about early education funding and to participate in campaigns like A Bigger Slice. Your service may not receive funding from the NSW Government (most for-profit long day care services don’t and only a proportion of community based services do; family day care services don’t either). But regardless of the situation of your service, the fact that fewer children in NSW receive access to an early education in the year before school than children in other states and territories should alarm you.

What can you do? First, check out the website www.earlyeducation.org.au

Second, join with Community Child Care (NSW) in doing what the Minister wants: lobby him and every state MP so they all know that early education in NSW needs a bigger slice of the cake.

New promises made

At the Election Forum, Minister Piccoli made the following new funding commitments:

- A further $4 million in rural and remote communities to help services connect with families who aren’t sending their children to preschool. Preschools in areas classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to be outer regional, remote and very remote, will receive one off grants of $7,000 each for this purpose.
- Introduction of a biannual top-up census starting from February 2016. According to the Minister, “This means you will continue to get your data in August and get paid at the end of that year. Then you will submit a smaller subset of data to capture what has changed in March after enrolments have settled, and for which you will be paid around July. You will be funded for the first time for the actual children you have in your services.”
- More scholarships to educators in rural and regional areas to help them become qualified early childhood teachers.

Community Child Care (NSW) congratulates the Minister on all three initiatives.

RATINGS

ACECQA has released its NQF Snapshot for the last quarter of 2014.

- 59% of NSW services have now been rated. How are NSW services going? 44% have been rated as ‘Working Towards’, 35% at ‘Meeting’ and 21% at ‘Exceeding’.
- The Snapshot showed that again, services are less likely to achieve Exceeding or Meeting NQS in Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice, only 67% of rated NSW services met or exceeded the standard for QA1.
- Interestingly, the Snapshot shows that 63% of services that received a Working Towards rating, received this in 3–7 quality areas.

Community Child Care (NSW) has analysed the assessment and ratings results as always.

- Six of the seven services assessed as Excellent are community-based not-for profit services.
- 67% of the services rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard are community-based not-for profit services.
- Only 30% of the services rated as Working Towards the National Quality Standard (i.e. they are not yet meeting the standard) are community-based not-for profit services.
- Of the five services rated as needing Significant Improvement, none are community-based not-for profit services.

Community Child Care (NSW) believes the community-based not-for-profit services should take a bow.
Thank you, members!

Each year, Community Child Care (NSW) surveys our members to see what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Here is a snapshot of the findings from this year’s survey.

Why people joined Community Child Care (NSW):
- Information 93%
- Publications 80%
- Resources 81%
- Professional development 82%
- Advocacy 60%

Value of membership:
- 98% of respondents thought membership of Community Child Care (NSW) is highly valuable (78%) or valuable (20%);
- 98% think we offer a wide enough variety of membership benefits;
- Other benefits people would like – more regional professional development, cheaper professional development, more policies.

Rating of our work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Exceeding</th>
<th>Total Excellent or Exceeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Support</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited training</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customised PD</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other issues:
- 98% think that Community Child Care (NSW) is a strong effective advocate for education and care services (strongly agree or agree);
- 94% think that Community Child Care (NSW) understand their service’s requirements (strongly agree or agree);
- 96% Community Child Care (NSW) keeps me informed on all issues that affect my service (strongly agree or agree);
- 97% of respondents think that the quality of services provided by Community Child Care (NSW) is excellent or good.

Some of the thoughts of our members:
“CCCC helps me to do my job to the best of my ability.”

“Any preschool would be crazy not to be a member of CCCC. The membership is invaluable for support and member benefits.”

“You are part of the backbone of our sector. I look straight to CCCC when there is change approaching. I feel inspired by Rattler articles, particularly those about real educators and real settings. You seem to have your finger on the pulse and we need that – sometimes, I think of you like the training team and cheer squad for our sector. You are very much appreciated.”

Community Child Care (NSW) is already responding to feedback from members. Our policies are currently being reviewed and revised. There will be more regional professional development from June.

We’re making a change...

Broadsie now bi-monthly

We will be publishing Broadsie bi-monthly but it will be 8 pages. So that’s more news and information for you. Just another way we are serving you better!
NSW’s first preschool TO BE SOLD!

The first preschool in NSW, built around 1914 as a purpose-built preschool, is being sold by its owners, Hornsby Council. The property is heritage listed and is leased to the Hornsby Kuringai Montessori Society, who operate an education and care service from the building.

A report to Council said that ‘the cottage was built on the site in circa 1914 and is historically and socially rare as being the earliest and only example in NSW of a private, purpose-built kindergarten constructed prior to circa 1930s’.

The report to Council recommending the sale, notes that the current rent of $29,000 per annum is ‘significantly below market rates’. It also stated that ‘it is considered that there is no strategic or operational requirement for Council to retain the property’ and that ‘the cottage was built on the site in circa 1914 and is historically and socially rare as being the earliest and only example in NSW of a private purpose-built kindergarten constructed prior to circa 1930s. The building is substantially intact and has strong connections with the early prominent families in Hornsby.’

The Montessori Society has been granted a temporary lease until 1 March 2016.

The decision to sell the property came after a previous decision by Council to sell one of its childcare centre buildings and lease its three childcare services to private operators. The Mayor of Hornsby was quoted in a local paper as saying: ‘it’s a matter of why would we want to have a building there used by one private operator, when we can put the money into better facilities that will be used by a higher proportion of the population.’

As more Councils in NSW face increasing financial constraints and increased demand for service provision, this type of action may become more common. Read Community Child Care (NSW)’s research about why local government should be involved in childcare provision at www.ccccnsw.org.au/publications/other
What will the Government deliver for Aboriginal children and families?

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) – the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families – is calling on the Government to fund a new Community Early Learning Program (CELP), as recommended by the Productivity Commission, to deliver increased, affordable and culturally-centred early years services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC has called on the Government to include:

- a 10-year commitment to adequately resource the Community Early Learning Program, starting with $250 million per annum;
- the creation of 20 new services annually to start to redress the 15,000 place gap;
- Indigenous Professional Support Agencies to assist the establishment and ongoing quality improvement of Indigenous services; and
- a funded role to co-ordinate integrated services such as health assessments, speech and occupational therapy, transition to school, family violence counselling, parenting programs, nutrition, psychology, maternal health, cultural arts and child development.’

SNAICC says that ‘Aboriginal integrated early years services, where they exist, are a bedrock of their community: they not only nurture and educate children, but also support families to raise healthy children, provide integrated support to families, generate employment opportunities and enable parents to get work-ready and secure employment.’

‘They believe that ‘an effective Community Early Learning Program will make the difference between the Families Package being a crucial turning point to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and families or putting our children most in need further behind.’

Community Child Care (NSW) supports these calls.

NEWS

PRESCHOOL SYMPOSIUM VIDEOS

Community Child Care (NSW) hosted a Preschool Symposium in March. For preschools that couldn’t attend, and for those that wanted to revisit the sessions, we have produced videos of all the sessions. Although some are clearly preschool specific, some of the sessions, such as the marketing, pathways and community sessions, would be relevant to all service types.

To view the videos, please go to: www.ccccnsw.org.au/resources/videos

THE COMMUNITY
Michael West, Guwaali

THE PATHWAYS
Karen Bevan
Rebecca Lloyd
Northcott Preschool Disability Support Program

THE MARKETING
Sara Andersson
Preschool Directors Carolyn Leys, Ruth Mules, Kellie Jarvie.

QUALIFICATIONS

From an organisation you already trust

You trust Community Child Care (NSW) to keep you up to date on changes in our sector. Our qualifications are also underpinned by this knowledge. Whether you are looking to study management or gain your Diploma or Certificate III, Community Child Care (NSW) will offer you a great learning experience and a successful outcome.

CALL 8922 6444 OR GO TO: www.ccccnsw.org.au/rto
A new resource designed to assist educational leaders to support staff at education and care services who are undertaking additional study has been developed by the Australian Government and Griffith University.

According to the Department of Social Services, the Leading Learning Circles for Educators Engaged in Study resource ‘provides tools for early childhood staff to pursue professional development opportunities and build their capacity as encouraged by the National Quality Framework.

‘The resource explains the processes and benefits of using learning circles and includes ‘conversations’ that can be used by pedagogical leaders to help encourage and deepen staff understanding of early childhood education and care.

‘The learning circles approach can be used to establish learning communities which nurture emerging educators and improve retention of staff in the early childhood and child care workforce.’

A copy of Leading Learning Circles for Educators Engaged in Study will be sent to all services.

It can also be downloaded from: www.docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/learning_circles_resource.pdf

What’s happening in the parallel universe of corporate childcare?

G8 Education is currently Australia’s fourth largest provider of education and care (in terms of numbers of services), with 455 services and 32,782 licensed places. Affinity Education comes in at number seven, with 152 services and 11,600 children. These are our only publicly listed corporatised services at this stage.

Corporate childcare watchers are beginning to feel uneasy about the financial security of both corporations.

The Sydney Morning Herald (Business Day, 12 March 2015) recently reported on G8 Education as follows.

‘The company’s entire strategy is to buy unlisted childcare centres at an EBITDA multiple of around 4–5, roll them up and sell them to shareholders at far higher prices. But profits are rising, say the bulls. Well duh. G8 has increased its asset base from $40 million in 2009 to almost $800 million today. Of course this has lifted earnings.

‘The rate of return, however, is poor. G8 generates a return on assets of just 7 per cent, a figure that will surely come under pressure from newly listed peers like Affinity. Competition will work to lift acquisition prices and lower returns even further.

Seriously, what kind of investor pays 30 times earnings for a business like this?

G8 should not be worth any more than the sum of the acquisitions it has made. And yet it trades at almost four times net asset value.

‘It makes no sense. This company adds no value, has no competitive advantage, and produces mediocre returns.’

Affinity Education is also showing some interesting signs. It posted a $4.1 million loss in 2014 and is now trying to raise $75 million by selling new shares, $45 million of which will be used to pay down debt.

Unfortunately for them, their current share price is below the price the new shares are being offered at. Investors seem to be judging Affinity Education as not that good a buy, and their 2014 results show lower than expected occupancy levels.

Where to from here, and is the Department of Social Services watching what’s happening? In 2011 an amendment was passed to Family Assistance legislation to provide for the assessment and monitoring of the financial viability of large long day care centre operators and to authorise the Department to engage an expert to carry out an independent audit of such an operator, where there are concerns about its ongoing financial viability.
After the Productivity Commission report...

After all the submissions, all the talking, and all the reports, early education and care in Australia could be facing the biggest change ever in a few weeks (possibly even by the time you read this issue of *Broadside*).

Here is a super summary of the possible process and some educated guesses at the outcomes.

**What will happen next?**

The Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison, and the Prime Minister will announce the Child Care Package. It may or may not be announced in conjunction with the rest of the Families Package.

**When?**

The Minister is on the record as saying it will be before the Federal Budget, which is on 12 May 2015. This probably (but not necessarily) means it will be announced in the latter part of April – after Easter.

**What will it contain?**

Our educated guess is that it will contain a small increase in expenditure, a new childcare benefit/rebate system consisting of one payment based on a benchmark cost of care (possibly with loadings for different areas where the cost is higher). This is likely to be means tested but will not taper out completely for the richest families. It is likely to also have some sort of mechanism for addressing unmet demand in cities, especially for under 2s.

It is unlikely to be presented against the Productivity Commission recommendations – i.e., the government will cherry pick the ones they want, and the ones not chosen will pass into oblivion.

It is unlikely that there will be wholesale changes to the NQF at this time. Any changes that are to be made have been flagged in the NQF Regulatory Impact Statement but the Minister has indicated that the NQF is secure.

The Minister has made it clear that he views ‘childcare’ primarily as way of ensuring ‘families can work’, so the package will be geared towards this end.

**What about Universal Access?**

An announcement about Universal Access funding may be made as part of the childcare package announcement or may be held off until a later date.

**What impact will it have on our service?**

Although the changes will be geared towards families, in an attempt to make childcare more affordable and accessible, there will be changed rules about eligibility for funded care, priority of access and changed CCMS processes.

**What help will we get?**

In addition to what the Department of Social Services will offer, Community Child Care (NSW) will, as always, provide information for our members.
Conferences!

Heard about the great Community Child Care (NSW) conferences and not sure which ones you should go to? Here is information on the first two:

**Influence! (Speaking up and Speaking Out)**

Remember Community Child Care (NSW)’s 35th birthday celebration? This is the conference we kicked off for our birthday – it’s an advocacy conference where we ask radical/noisy interesting speakers from both inside and outside the sector to talk for 20 minutes each on a subject of their choice – and then finish off the day with a stylish cocktail party to allow networking and plain old fun! Expect to be challenged, excited, and recharged. Book for the day, the cocktail party or both.

**Friday 22nd May**


Strictly limited numbers, so book soon.

**Incubate!**

Many young people flock to childcare as a job BUT how many stay in early childhood education and care as a career?

Incubate! is **NOT** just an ordinary conference. Firstly, there will be ping pong tables, giant jenga and awesome people to greet you as you arrive. Secondly, it is being held in the stunning Sunroom at the Ivy. More importantly, this under 30s event is run by young educators, for young educators and is designed to strengthen, support and sustain one another. How? Through:

- strengthening our identity and knowledge;
- supporting our communication and advocacy;
- sustaining our wellbeing and relationships.

This is the first event of its kind in Australia! Intrigued? Be there. [www.ccccnsw.org.au/pd](http://www.ccccnsw.org.au/pd)

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**Early education in the news**

So many words are being written and said about early education and care at the moment that it is very hard to keep up.

**But we really wanted** to pull together three of the best of the recent articles about childcare – the ones that we think are ‘MUST reads’. You can access them all at [www.ccccnsw.org.au/greatreads](http://www.ccccnsw.org.au/greatreads)

**First of all, this one from Ross Gittens**

**Summary?**

Politicians need to understand the importance of early education and care!

**Best line?**

‘... but the issue you and I call childcare and the politically cool call ECEC – early childhood education and care...’

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**...then this one from Eva Cox**

**Summary?**

Productivity Commission report shows blind faith in market and it shouldn’t.

**Best Line?**

“This exclusion of children currently entitled to support entirely removes the original social functions of local children’s services as part of a community that supports families’ other needs.’

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**...then this one from Kate Ellis**

**Summary?**

Childcare isn’t just about productivity – it’s also about children’s early education.

**Best Line?**

‘I do want to celebrate and recognise the professional educators who are so critical to the development of our children.’