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Positive steps towards more accessible childcare

KU Children's Services responds to Commonwealth childcare package



Australia's most experienced provider of early childhood education, KU Children's Services, welcomed the Commonwealth Government's childcare package announcement, saying the news promises a simpler, fairer and more generous childcare system overall.

"Additional investment, and the targeting of subsidies towards middle and low income earners, will be a welcome relief for many families struggling to pay fees. More often we have been seeing these parents forced to reduce days, or give up work entirely," explained Christine Legg, KU's Chief Executive Officer.

"Affordability has long been one of the biggest barriers for families wanting to access quality early childhood education and we support any moves to direct the funding to where it is needed most.

"It is also pleasing to see that some level of subsidy will be retained for those on higher wages. These families also rely on the rebate to be able to return to work, particularly in places like Sydney, where quality childcare places are expensive and subject to lengthy waiting lists.

Acknowledging that there is still much detail to work through, and that additional investment in childcare will be subject to other budgetary pressures, Ms Legg said KU stands ready to work with the Government to ensure reform and fairness can be achieved, but warns that childcare must not only be seen as a driver of productivity.

"The most important thing to remember in all of this is that we are talking about children," said Ms Legg. "The long term benefits of quality early childhood education are undisputed.

"Whilst we recognise that more affordable childcare will enable increased workforce participation, above all, KU believes that all children have the right to early childhood education. We are pleased that a financial 'safety net' has been proposed, however a more universal 'safety net' is needed to ensure all children can access early childhood education. Children should not be excluded or penalised regardless of their parents' circumstances."

KU has long lobbied for simplification of the complex network of funding, subsidies and rebates available to families, so news that the promised new funding model will be administered via a Medicare style 'smart card' has also been welcomed.

"Overall, KU does feel this package is a step in the right direction," concluded Ms Legg.

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About KU:

KU Children's Services provides early childhood education for young children, primarily through preschool and childcare programs. KU has been enriching children's lives through education since 1895, and today operates almost 150 early childhood education centres and services.

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