



The Hon Kate Ellis MP
Minister for Employment Participation
Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care

Mayor Genia McCaffery
Chair, National General Assembly
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8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL	
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Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter of 3 September 2012 concerning three of the resolutions passed at the 2012 National General Assembly of Local Government.

I note that Resolution Number 71 falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for Health. I have referred this resolution to Minister Plibersek for consideration.

I have provided below the Australian Government's response to the remaining two resolutions that relate to my portfolio responsibilities as Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care.

Resolution Number 72 – Every early childhood education and care service under the National Quality Framework (NQF) received a resource kit from the Australian Government to assist them with the implementation of the NQF. Additional copies of these resources are available for purchase from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority www.acecqa.gov.au.

Through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), training and support on the NQF can be obtained from Professional Support Coordinators in each state and territory. Inclusion Support Agencies also provide practical support to help services build their capacity to provide a quality inclusive environment. Contact details for IPSP providers are available on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website www.deewr.gov.au/IPSP.

Resolution Number 73 – The Government is working hard to improve child care affordability for Australian families. The Government increased the Child Care Rebate, from 30 per cent to 50 per cent of out of pocket child care costs, and raised the maximum amount claimable from of \$4354 to \$7500 per child per year.

As a result of our investment the proportion of disposable family income being spent on child care has almost halved since 2004, dropping from 13 per cent to 7.6 per cent in 2011 for families with one child in care and earning \$75 000 per year.

Families can also now receive their Child Care Rebate payments fortnightly, instead of having to wait until the end of the year for this critical assistance—making it easier to balance the family budget each week.

Over the next four years, the Government is investing over \$19.9 billion in direct child care assistance to help over 900 000 families each year. This is more than triple the investment of the former Coalition Government.

We are seeing record growth in the number of Australian children using child care, including an increase of 9 per cent in the year to September 2011, based on data released by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in August 2012. This growth reflects the strength of the economy and the labour market in general. It also reflects the investment the Government has made to make child care more affordable for families.

The Government would like to see the market respond as effectively as possible so that families have greater choice and appropriate access to child care. This is important not only for workforce participation purposes, but also to ensure that more children have access to vital early learning opportunities.

To this end, the Australian Local Government Association may be interested to know that I have written to members of the Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood, advising them that the Australian Government will be listing an agenda item at the Standing Council concerning barriers to the supply of child care in Australia.

I will propose that, as part of this agenda item, Ministers consider the establishment of an inter-jurisdictional working group to guide consideration of the issues involved and to provide further advice, involving ALGA.

I have also written on this matter to my colleague the Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, as Chair of the Australian Council of Local Government.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the Assembly's resolutions.

Yours sincerely



Kate Ellis

10 OCT 2012