

**MEDIA RELEASE
4 April 2016**

Australian parents want action on childcare reform

The Parenthood, Australia's largest independent organisation representing parents, is calling on the Turnbull Government to take immediate action on childcare reforms almost a year on from their original announcement.

The Senate's Education and Employment Legislation Committee this afternoon released its report into the government's Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015.

The Parenthood's Executive Director Jo Briskey said the report was well overdue and now it was time to give parents certainty.

"Mums and dads have been told time and time again by the Abbott-Turnbull Government that they were going to tackle the sky rocketing cost of childcare but there has been no action," Ms Briskey said.

"Childcare affordability is a vital issue for thousands of families. With tax cuts for big business on the table in the upcoming budget, the Government must not forget its promise to improve childcare affordability and deliver much needed relief for working families.

"With this Senate report now finalised, the Government must demonstrate through immediate action in the Parliament that it is serious about improving cost of living pressures for Australian families and delivering fee relief next year.

Ms Briskey said parents were also disappointed the Senate Committee report had failed to recommend changes that would ensure every child, irrespective of their parents' work circumstances receive access to at least two days of subsidised childcare a week.

Currently, the Bill proposes that if both parents are not working, volunteering or studying a minimum of 8 hours a fortnight they won't receive any childcare subsidy if their household income is over \$65,000.

"The Parenthood's national survey of close to 1,500 parents revealed that at least 1 in 10 parents won't meet the new activity test and their children will miss out on early education," Ms Briskey said.

"If at any point parents do not meet the new activity test they will get nothing from the government to help meet expensive childcare costs.

"This is very worrying for parents because life is unpredictable - working and earning capacity can change in an instant, but access to consistent childcare is vital and once you've given up a day you often can't get it back."

"The reforms need to be fair, flexible and work in practice – family life is hectic enough. That's why it is important that Parliament makes minor amendments to the Family Assistance Bill to ensure no Australian family or child will be worse off.

"The changes proposed in the Committee's dissenting reports would be welcome amendments to improve outcomes for children and families."

Ms Briskey called on the Turnbull Government to introduce the Family Assistance Legislation when Parliament returns for three additional weeks on 18 April, in order to give Australian families certainty.

“Mr Abbott’s vote winning paid parental leave scheme went up in smoke - we would hate to see its big childcare reforms follow suit,” Ms Briskey said.

“We call on Mr Turnbull to show mums and dads that he will deliver on his Government’s promise to make childcare more affordable.”

END

MEDIA INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE

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