



Monday, 8 June

Outside of School Hours Care providers acknowledge Government announcement on ECECRP / \$708 million support package

We acknowledge the Federal Government's announcement today regarding the short-term extension of the current ECECRP to July 12, and confirmation of the funding package to apply following this.

Over recent weeks, the OSHC sector has worked in close consultation with the Government to ensure an adequate safety net be maintained for parents and children requiring ongoing assistance as they transition away from the current free childcare regime and adjust to changed circumstances.

Australians have been successful in flattening the curve of COVID-19 but the OSHC sector is still concerned about the long-term effect this will have on families and children, and want to continue to work collaboratively with Government to ensure access to care for all who need it.

While demand for care has risen over recent weeks as schools have returned to face-to-face teaching, it has been supported by the availability of free care.

We are pleased that there will be a relaxation of the activity test for parents, so those in need will continue to receive a high level of subsidised care and be able to access these valuable services for the foreseeable future. However, we remain anxious that demand levels may fall from here due to affordability. Working together with the Government we will watch this closely.

We appreciate the Government's acknowledgement that the sector has been operating well above the 50 per cent attendance level for some weeks now, with many providers incurring losses to ensure continuity of care for Australian families throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

While we acknowledge the strength of the Government's ECECRP during the COVID-19 lockdown, providers still face uncertain times, including those that will continue to incur losses during the upcoming holiday period before the 50 per cent reference threshold is increased. We therefore expect that the relevant funding mechanism will fill this gap.

Similarly, while we are concerned about the Government's decision to end the JobKeeper payment for workers in the sector, we expect that the Transition Payment announced will compensate for this.

While we understand a transitional payment will be introduced to support the childcare sector and parents once the current regime ends, we are awaiting further details on how the payment will be applied.