

Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

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So far so good: CEW welcomes Productivity Commission's childcare proposals

- **Making childcare benefits simpler and focusing on low-income earners will help more women enter the workforce**
- **Improving provision and quality of childcare is a necessity for Australia's economic growth, not a luxury**
- **Childcare policy won't translate into more women leaders until childcare options meet the needs of families**

Chief Executive Women (CEW), which represents Australia's most senior women leaders from the corporate, public service, academic and not-for-profit sectors, today welcomed many of the recommendations in the Productivity Commission's report on Child Care and Early Childhood Learning.

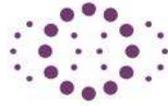
If implemented, these reforms will enable many more women to increase their participation in the workforce, for the benefit of all Australians. Progress in this area is vital to Australia's economic future: it is a necessity, not a luxury.

CEW President Diane Smith-Gander said: "If the Government can deliver to the Productivity Commission's recommendations it will be a good start. Focussing on lower-income earners will help to get more women into the workforce and grow our economy.

"But let's not forget to remove the disincentives that prevent women from moving beyond part time and into more senior leadership roles," said Ms Smith-Gander.

In particular, CEW welcomes the Commission's recommended reforms

- Steps to reduce the complexity of the current early childhood education and care (ECEC) arrangements both from an administrative perspective and for parents, including:



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- The provision of support through a single child-based subsidy that is means- and activity-tested, paid directly to the family's choice of approved services based on a benchmark price for quality ECEC; and
 - Integration of ECEC with schools, and child and family services.
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- Retention of the National Quality Framework and its extension to all Government-funded ECEC services;
 - Extension of support to include in-home services such as approved nannies;
 - Recognition of the need for reform of after-school care, as an important lever for the increased participation in the workforce of parents of school-age children.

CEW looks forward to participating in the promised broad consultation process that we expect will seek to resolve the following important questions:

- How to best remove the powerful disincentives for many women to work more than part time?
- What level of means testing will drive not just increased participation of women in the workforce, but increased progression of women into senior leadership roles?
- How can Australia effectively close the gap between men's and women's superannuation levels?
- Is there an opportunity for Australian parents to make a choice between receiving ECEC support or tax deductibility of their approved childcare expenses via their personal income tax return?
- How will Australia address the significant challenges faced by the child care industry, such as retaining skilled workers and accessing skilled workers from overseas?
- How to improve the quality of outcomes in early childhood learning and care?

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Further information available at cew.org.au:

[CEW's position on the Federal Government's scrapping of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme](#)

[CEW's submission to the Productivity Commission on 26 June 2014](#)