



November 9 2005

Ms Pru Goward  
Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner  
Striking the Balance Submission  
Sex Discrimination Unit,  
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

### **Striking the Balance Submission**

As a mother and business woman, I have been following your inquiry into Striking the Balance with great interest. My awareness of the issues in relation to child care in particular is fuelled by the fact I am the founder of Australia's most comprehensive child care directory and referral service dedicated to assisting families in finding care for their children.

This business, CareforKids.com.au, was established in response to the reality that finding child care is one of the more daunting and time consuming tasks faced by parents and to provide much needed centralised support to help connect parents to child care services.

CareforKids.com.au is the gateway to over 9,000 registered child care providers across Australia including child care centres, family day care facilities, pre schools, before and after school care, babysitting services and nanny/au pair agencies. Over 450,000 parents a year turn to CareforKids.com.au to find and access child care services.

An important part of our corporate program see's CareforKids.com.au partner with leading companies such as Macquarie Bank, McDonald's, Bluescope Steel, NRMA, IAG and Nine Network to help their staff access child care services.

I thought it would be worthwhile to share some views with you and alert you to a new initiative released by CareforKids.com.au.

In respect of child care centres, it is our experience that whilst there is an overall shortage of child care placements, suffered in some areas more than others, there are many vacancies that do exist. Parents just need to be able to find them. To assist this process, we have developed a new service, Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert, which effectively saves families time and energy and increases the likelihood of finding suitable care quickly.

This service is the first of its kind in Australia and was developed in collaboration with the Child Care Industry. Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert has the potential to provide significant assistance and support to all parents wishing to re-enter the workforce. It is simple and straightforward to use, but very effective in generating real results. The attached flyer explains more.

Given that lifting workforce participation of mothers is an ongoing issue, we believe that a service committed to easing the burden of locating care and helping to connect families to child care providers would be of interest to the inquiry.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss CareforKids.com.au in more detail and explore any opportunities for sharing further information and collaborating to address the significant issues faced by parents trying to balance work and family life.

Yours sincerely

Roxanne Elliott

## Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert will help parents find child care

Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert is an efficient mechanism for coordinating the supply and demand of child care services. It provides much needed support and information for families looking for care and eliminates the arduous cycle of searching, waitlisting and waiting.

The way that Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert works is simple:

1. To take advantage, parents register at [www.CareforKids.com.au](http://www.CareforKids.com.au) specifying the suburbs where they are seeking a child care centre and the days that care is required.
2. CareforKids.com.au then promotes these enquiries to child care centres in each region and makes this database available to child care centres for access at any time.
3. When a vacancy meeting a parent's requirement becomes available, the child care centre contacts the family direct.



Parents register with CareforKids.com.au



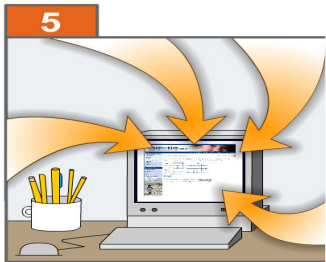
During the registration, parents are asked to specify the postcode/region where they are seeking a child care centre and also provide information about their child's age and the days that they require care



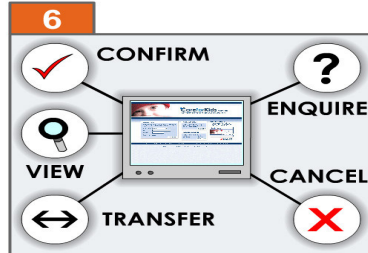
Parents then receive an email from CareforKids.com.au confirming the Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert Registration



Parents registrations are collated into a database. This information can also be accessed by Child Care Centres in corresponding postcodes/regions



On an ongoing basis, CareforKids.com.au communicates with child care centres advising that there are parents looking for vacancies in their area



Meanwhile, CareforKids.com.au continues to up-date parents on the progress of their search. Parents are also required to keep their Child Care Vacancy Alert information up-to-date



As a vacancy becomes available, Child Care Centres access the Child Care Vacancy Alert database to find families whose requirement matches their vacancy



The Child Care Centre then selects a family to match their vacancy and contacts them direct

In essence, Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert widens the net by creating more opportunities and taking the search for a vacancy across a wider range of centres, therefore increasing the chance of finding a placement faster.

In addition to the benefit derived by families, Child Care Centre Vacancy Alert can also be applied to offer great value to organisations looking to identify and address areas with child care shortages.