



Rob Stokes
Minister for Planning

Leslie Williams
Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs,
and Assistant Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE QUALITY CHILD CARE WHERE IT'S NEEDED

Child care centres may be built in more areas and frustrating red tape swept away under wide-ranging planning reforms to address shortages and meet projected demand for 2700 more long day care centres by 2036.

Planning Minister Rob Stokes and Early Childhood Education Minister Leslie Williams today announced a range of proposed measures to the planning system to stimulate more child care services and reduce frustrating approval delays.

Among the changes, child care will be permitted on an additional 15,700ha of land in low density residential and light industrial zones under amendments to local environment plans.

Some councils, including The Hills and Parramatta, now restrict centres in residential zones. Centres are prohibited in light industrial zones in two thirds of NSW.

Rules that have limited new child care ventures in some councils will be abolished, including caps on children per centre, age ratios and anti-clustering policies preventing new services close to each other. Applications for new centres will be considered on their merits.

“The proposed changes will streamline planning approvals for child care services to increase the supply of facilities and support families who are struggling to access quality care,” Mr Stokes said.

Ms Williams said the changes would encourage greater workforce participation, provide greater certainty of places and save the child care industry time and money.

“Our Government is delivering on its election commitment to cut red tape by making it easier and faster to unlock early childhood education and care places,” Ms Williams said.

Other changes include:

- Enabling school-based child care to be assessed as exempt or complying development, slashing approval times;

- Ensuring all centre-based childcare development proposals are assessed using a single set of controls and guidelines;
- Providing guidance upfront to assist developers and service providers to deliver high quality and safe child care facilities.
- Aligning the National Quality Framework for early childhood education for planning and building centres with NSW planning controls; and
- Allowing temporary use of land provisions to apply for temporary relocation of child care services in emergencies such as floods or fires;

Since the beginning of 2012, the NSW Department of Education has issued Service Approvals to 2084 new child care services, including 381 long day care centres.

Child care centre developers can face frustrating delays. A sample of approval times found a median range of delays of between 204 and 265 business days. A Killara centre took 508 business days and required an appeal to the Land and Environment Court.

Mr Stokes said the NSW Government has worked closely with childcare industry stakeholders over the last 12 months.

“This has helped us provide greater opportunity for the delivery of appropriately located and high quality education and care facilities,” Mr Stokes said.

Ms Williams said the changes support election commitments to invest in new before and after care school places and provide additional support for public schools to partner with early childhood providers to co-locate facilities.

Discussions with councils, industry and the community will continue during an upcoming public consultation period to complete the new details of these processes.

MEDIA

Kelvin Bissett | Minister Stokes | 0428 767270
Lema Samandar | Minister Williams | 0438 529955