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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA EYRE PENINSULA

Media Release: RDAEP takes Regional Childcare issue to Canberra

29 January 2024

Childcare on the Eyre Peninsula has been the subject of anecdotal comments regarding a lack of available places for long day care, occasional care and early childhood education.

At odds with this anecdotal information was the most recent Australian Government grants program the “Community Childcare Fund” with the Eyre Peninsula not eligible to apply for funds to improve services.

To address this issue, Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula (RDAEP) held a Childcare Forum with local government and other stakeholders in late 2023 that resulted in the establishment of a Regional Childcare Taskforce to quantify current and projected requirements.

To further progress this initiative, RDAEP co-funded a consultancy with support from the State Government’s Office for the Early Years to create a comprehensive business case on behalf of participating member councils and their respective communities as a region, to advocate for investment in early childhood education to meet parent’s capacity to work, meet industry needs and to address children’s developmental needs.

“A lack of childcare has impacted on the ability of many local communities to attract and retain the workforce needed to support business growth, and RDAEP is seeking to provide a coordinated approach across the region to both quantify and aggregate the unmet demand for childcare so that it can be presented to the government and the private sector to attract investment” said RDAEP Chair Byran Trigg.

The Report which has now been released, was produced by Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) and shows a clear need for an additional 598 places to be created across Eyre Peninsula, with investment of \$55 million needed for new and upgraded facilities.

“While an investment of \$55 million is significant there is a potential return on investment of around \$44 million per annum in additional income through greater workforce participation, plus an additional \$11 million per annum in new jobs created in the early childhood sector. It is also estimated that savings of \$6.5 million could be created through better child development outcomes” said RDAEP CEO Ryan Viney.

One of the other key findings from the Report is that by investing \$55 million to build an additional 10 long daycare centres, more than 1000 parents could rejoin the workforce. From an economic development perspective this would greatly assist in the success of the Australian Government’s Regional Investment Framework, as it would enhance the ability of the region to deliver its green energy agenda by supporting the workforce needed for projects like Northern Water – which is essential for the development of green hydrogen and further expansion of mining activities such as copper, magnetite iron-ore, graphite and other critical minerals.

“The added advantage is that these parents are already living in our communities, and investing in additional childcare services will increase the region’s workforce without the need for providing additional housing” said RDAEP Chair Bryan Trigg.

“RDAEP not only supports investment in childcare based on economic outcomes that can be achieved, but to progress equality for women and improve mental health for single parents, which the report suggests are the most disadvantaged by a lack of childcare” said RDAEP CEO Ryan Viney.

RDAEP will now use the outcomes of the report to continue to work with local government and inform an Australian Government Budget Submission on behalf of the region, and further advocate for investment in childcare services across the Eyre Peninsula more broadly.

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To access the report, please click here [Eyre Peninsula Early Education and Care](#)

