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## MID NORTH COAST

# Media Release

## Mid North Coast Childcare in Crisis

October 2023

### Parents and Providers Survey Responses indicate Urgent need for Reform and Investment

Childcare providers and parents from across the Mid North Coast have responded to recent surveys from Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC) in significant numbers and with great passion and desperation about the state of childcare across the region. The surveys were a result of wide-ranging discussions over the past few months where concern was expressed by both employers and parents looking to return to work.

RDAMNC conducted two surveys in September, one with childcare providers and another with parents in the region. Results indicate that:

- 92% of responding families have children aged 2 years or under that require care but
  - only 52% of providers accept babies under 1 year of age
  - only 58% accept children that are 1 and
  - 79% accept children that are 2
- 91% of families are on one or more waiting lists and 91% of providers have extensive waiting lists
- 85% of parent respondents indicated that they want or need to work more hours than they are currently but are not able to access care
- 68% of providers are willing to, or are currently, offering traineeships
- 56% of providers currently require staff
- 33% of providers have been recruiting to fill staff vacancies for over 12 months
- 25% of childcare providers are operating under capacity due to staff shortages.

The results clearly highlight the need for urgent reform and investment in this sector.

RDAMNC Chair, Kieren Dell said the responses to this survey have been alarming and highlight the issues facing the sector.

“When there is a cost of living crisis and 85% of parents aren’t working the number of hours they need to, and 52% of parents haven’t been able to get any childcare at all, there are clearly some big issues that need addressing. Not only that, given the region as a whole is suffering from a skills shortage, urgent solutions are needed in the childcare sector so parents can return to work.”

RDAMNC CEO, Madeleine Lawler said there is so much work to be done and RDAMNC is only just at the beginning of our work in this sector.

“The preliminary results really highlight just how tough it is for the childcare providers trying to operate in the current environment and for families who are struggling to find care and to make ends meet.”

RDAMNC is currently undertaking an economic analysis of these results, conducting face-to-face engagement with stakeholders including peak body organisations and government organisations. In addition to advocacy, workshops will be held early in the new year between relevant stakeholders to look at opportunities to relieve the strain on the industry across the Mid North Coast.

RDAMNC has compiled a quantitative and qualitative summary of the survey responses and they can be viewed on our [website](#).

RDAMNC is seeking to engage with stakeholders who are involved in the sector or would like to be part of the discussion in looking for local solutions.

For more information or to organise an interview, contact Dianne Wall on 02 5525 1500 or [operations@rdamnc.org.au](mailto:operations@rdamnc.org.au)

ENDS

**Available for interview**

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