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# Media Release

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## NEWCASTLE CHILDCARE CRISIS

A *Newcastle Childcare Survey* with initial results from sixty-seven Newcastle parents reveals widespread problems with access to and affordability of childcare in Newcastle.

More than 86% of parents reported having difficulty in finding childcare and 65% said that the cost of childcare was prohibitive.

Despite increasing costs which put child care out of reach for many, parents also said they would “pay anything” to ensure the very best care for their child. Childcare is now a major cost in the weekly budgets of many families with national figures showing that both parents are now working in over 60% of families.

Sixty per cent of Newcastle parents, who have child care, reported not having enough hours of care to meet their actual needs.

Newcastle parents are particularly frustrated by the long waiting lists for all types of childcare, but Long Day Care and Family Day Care are in particular demand, with more than 75% of survey respondents reporting that they were on waiting lists for either or both.

Some mothers reported putting their names on childcare centre waiting lists when they were just 12 weeks pregnant in the hope of getting the childcare they needed. Others reported waiting 18 months to find suitable childcare for their child.

With almost 21,500 children aged less than 15 years in more than 10,300 families in Newcastle, childcare is a critical issue for this electorate.

Sharan Burrow, President of the ACTU, will today launch in Newcastle the interim results of a National Childcare Phone-In which highlights Australia’s childcare crisis.

The results of my *Newcastle Childcare Survey* demonstrate that Newcastle families are also suffering from the Howard Government’s lack of adequate planning and funding of childcare. Unfortunately our experiences are being reflected across the nation.

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