

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Community Services
Minister for Women
The Hon. Linda Burney MP



Saturday, 10 October 2009

BLITZ ON CHILD CARE CENTRES

Minister for Community Services Linda Burney today announced that a targeted blitz on child care centres in NSW has revealed that not all centres are meeting Government regulations.

Ms Burney said while the majority were doing the right thing, there were still too many centres not fulfilling basic requirements. New legislation will strengthen the Government's powers to crack down on those that do not meet standards.

"Every single parent who places their child in a child care centre does so with an enormous amount of trust that their child is being properly looked after and is safe," Ms Burney said.

"There is simply no excuse for child care centres to be breaching that trust and not meeting regulations – it's just not good enough.

"We take any breaches of our regulations seriously and a raft of regulatory changes will strengthen our powers in dealing with rogue centres.

"Currently, operators that choose not to comply with regulations are open to a range of penalties including the addition of conditions to a licence, a licence suspension or revocation or in serious cases prosecution with associated penalties of up to \$22,000.

"Our new legislation will give us the power to immediately shut down a centre where there is an immediate threat to the health, safety and well-being of children.

"The blitz, which was in addition to regular checks and monitoring carried out by the Government, focused specifically on 37 centres that were the subject of complaints, reported incidents or monitoring."

The blitz found that:

- 5 services did not have procedures around dropping off and picking children up by authorised carers before and after attending the services;
- 7 services did not have procedures in place to ensure that no child remains on premises after the service closes for the day;
- 3 services did not have fences designed to prevent children from scaling or crawling under;
- 15 services had fixtures such as trees and bushes that would allow children to climb over a fence;
- 13 services had fixtures that obstructed the full view of the fence, thus hindering proper supervision.

"Community Services inspectors around the State are reviewing these findings and will revisit these services to ensure they comply with regulations.

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“Most centres in NSW comply with the state’s tough regulations and deliver quality child care services to NSW families – it’s the ones that don’t that we will come down heavily on,” Ms Burney said.

“Every parent has the right to believe that their child is being properly looked after when they drop them off at one of the state’s 3,400 licensed centres.”

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