

120,000 childcare places go to waste [AU] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY
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EXCERPTS

Up to 120,000 childcare places are going unused every week, according to new figures that the Government says prove there is no childcare crisis.

Figures collected by a government-funded childcare hotline show between 112,000 and 120,000 vacancies for the week ending September 17, with every state and territory having available places.

About 600,000 childcare places are used by parents every week. But the figures suggest that while there is an oversupply in some areas, there is an undersupply elsewhere.

Because childcare centres are expensive to build, many providers say they are reluctant to establish them in areas where rents are already high and space is limited.

However, a spokesman for Family and Community Services Minister Mal Brough said the figures proved that Labor's claims of a widespread childcare shortage were baseless.

...

But Labor childcare spokesperson Penny Wong said statewide figures were meaningless because of big variations in demand.

"The reality is there's an oversupply of childcare in some areas and shortages in others," she said. "The fact that there's vacancies overall across a state means nothing to parents who live in areas where there are shortages - and there's plenty of such areas.

"To say to a parent in one suburb that there's a childcare vacancy an hour's drive away is absolutely useless. It's also useless for a mum to be told there's a vacancy for one day a week when she needs three. Or that there's a spot for a two-year-old when she has a four-year-old."

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- reprinted from The Australian

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

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