




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Toohey Electorate, Childcare Centres

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.35 pm): Today I would like to speak about the importance of child care for working families. Motherhood, more so in Australia than in any other country, hurts participation in the labour force by women, particularly for women working full time. Before having children, Australian women have an equivalent participation in work as men. However, once they have children many women will drop out of work, with some never going back. It has been found that often those who do return pay a career penalty. Child care is the highest hurdle for families where both parents want to work. Parents want to know that their child or children are safe, have appropriate positive and protective care, and that it does not cost them more in childcare costs to work than it does to stay at home.

It is important to support and value childcare centres across our communities. I work closely with the existing childcare centres in my area. Both Anthea and the team at Sunnybank Community Preschool and Kindergarten and Sandy and the team at C&K Moorooka Community Kindergarten provide a stellar service to families in Toohey.

Today I want to talk about a new childcare service that has opened in Toohey, Happy Tots on Keats in Moorooka. It is in addition to the existing services provided by the Sunnybank kindy and the C&K kindy at Moorooka, to name a few in my electorate. Like all childcare centres, there was paperwork to submit and legislative requirements to meet. Therefore, it was with much fanfare that Happy Tots welcomed stakeholders and local families to a morning tea recently. Charmaine and the team are very excited to have met the criteria allowing them to open their centre and to offer services to the families in Moorooka and surrounding suburbs. Enrolments have been flowing in from eager parents and Happy Tots in Moorooka is already advertising for more educators. The centre is ready, willing and able to meet the needs of the local community and surrounding suburbs.

Charmaine and the team were kind enough to show me around their wonderful facility. Sound barriers have been erected to protect the neighbours from the wonderful noise coming out of the facility while the children participate in play time. We all acknowledge that learning by play has been proven to give children the best start in life and a firm foundation for ongoing learning as young minds grow. The team at Happy Tots in Moorooka has put a lot of thought into how to engage young minds and allow creativity to blossom. State-of-the-art play equipment will provide a safe environment for the children to play before moving on to prep. We know working families are struggling right now and we need accessible and affordable child care.