CHILDCARE CHANGES MAY HIT PARENTS AND EXPANSION OF RURAL CHILDCARE

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says proposed changes by the Government to the ratio of parents to children in childcare centres may add at least an extra $45 per week to what parents are presently paying per child.

Gerry says that unless the NT Government assists in covering the extra costs many parents may have to consider giving up work to stay home to look after the kids.

He says childcare centres like the Palmerston Childcare Centre cannot expand to take more children so they will have to pay the same number of staff but will receive less income because of the new staff to children ratios.

Gerry says up until last week Palmerston Childcare was looking at signing a contract to build a new childcare centre at Howard Springs but the manager, Peter Hill, has told Gerry that because of the extra costs associated with the proposed changes the new childcare centre would not be viable.

Gerry says he understands that many parents don’t know of the proposed changes as they did not attend the so called public consultations.

He says the costs to parents could even be higher when the new minimum certificate 3 becomes a requirement, a new requirement for a qualified teacher is added and the annual increase in the national weekly wage is thrown in.

Gerry says the consultation process should be more widely promoted and the Government should explain what it intends to do to make sure childcare does not become unaffordable because of these proposed changes.