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Content:

This submission comments on the parking aspect of the draft Child Care and Planning Guideline (the draft).

The draft states that the rate specified by DCP should be used, or the rate of 1 car space per 4 children should be used if a site is not within 400m of a metropolitan train station. Most DCPs in NSW set car park ratio for child care center to 1 per 4 children. This ratio has been set over 20 years when Sydney population was substantially lower than the current level. This ratio is too high for the current child care users, and it certainly does not support projected child care demand in the future. The ratio of 1 per 6 children might be more appropriate. This is because unlike school students who must arrived at schools at a set time, children at child care centres do not have a rigid start time. Parents generally do not arrive at the same time, hence, the chance of taking all the parking space is low. By lowering the ratio to 1 car space per 6 children, land use efficiency is increased while parking needs are also satisfied.

Secondly, the draft states that the parking ratio of 1 space per 10 children applies if a site is within 400m of a station. While this guideline reflects very well on "Car and bicycle parking in a centre-based child care facility should be determined in relation to the availability, frequency and convenience of public transport" (section 3L of the draft on page 57), it ignores another important form of public transport - bus. Buses cover a wider metropolitan area than trains do, and they are used more frequently than trains. The ratio of 1 parking space per 10 children should also applies to sites that are close to bus stops.

Additionally, if sites are close to schools (say within 400 meters), then a lower parking ratio (e.g. 1 per 8 children) should be applied. The reason for this is that some families might have older children attending at schools while sending the younger ones to nearby child care centres. It is unlikely that these families need to park their cars twice.

Finally, guideline #4 on page 57 states that "For small centres in areas with convenient and safe on-street parking spaces this parking may be considered as an offset to off-street parking if it can be demonstrated it does not affect the safety and amenity of the adjacent area.". This guideline should specify what "small centres" mean. It is desirable to add that sites which front parking lanes can offset the off-street parking space.

Overall, parking space is better to be regulated at the state government level for consistency.