

Australia Acts Against 30 Childcare Centers

August 15, 2025

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The Australian federal government has launched compliance action against 30 childcare centers following reports of failures in child safety standards.

Education Minister Jason Clare announced on Friday that these centers failed to meet National Quality Standards. He warned that funding would be withdrawn if performance did not improve within the next six months.

“We have taken action under the new legislation to begin rebuilding confidence in a system that parents need to trust,” Clare said. “This is not about closing centers down; it’s about raising standards. Over the next six months, these centers must improve or face further consequences, including funding cuts.”

The centers, which have not been publicly named, have 48 hours to inform parents about the compliance actions. Failures can include unsafe play areas, poor hygiene, inadequate staff training, or insufficient supervision.

This compliance effort follows new legislation passed by the federal parliament last month, which allows the government to strip funding from centers that fail to meet basic standards. Early Childhood Education Minister Jess Walsh emphasized that children’s safety and well-being are the government’s priorities.

“Today’s action should signal to all childcare providers that National Quality Standards are mandatory, and all services must meet them,” Walsh said.

The move comes amid multiple high-profile cases highlighting serious child safety breaches in the sector. In July, Victoria Police revealed allegations that childcare worker Joshua Dale Brown abused eight children while working at the Creative Gardens Point Cook center between October 2021 and February 2024. Brown had previously worked at 23 centers across Victoria and held a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC).

Later that month, the Australian Federal Police charged David William James with abusing children at six after-school care centers between 2021 and 2024. These cases have prompted calls for reforms within the sector.

On Friday, state and federal attorneys-general met to discuss strengthening safety measures. Attorney-General Michelle Rowland announced plans for a “banned in one, banned in all” system, ensuring that anyone prohibited from holding a WWCC in one state cannot obtain one in another.

Under the new system, criminal histories will be updated and shared in real time between jurisdictions, and eligibility criteria for the WWCC will be strengthened. “It is clear that some individuals have exploited loopholes in the current system,” Rowland said. The national system is expected to be operational by the end of the year.

Additionally, both the Victorian and New South Wales governments have pledged to ban personal mobile devices in childcare centers. Major providers, including G8 Education and Affinity, have committed to installing CCTV to enhance supervision.

These actions reflect efforts to restore public confidence in Australia's childcare system and ensure the safety and well-being of all children in care.