**Oversupply in Tuggeranong forces Anglicare to close Gordon Long Day Care and refocus on child welfare service**

Anglicare will close its mainstream Long Day Care service in Gordon at the end of the current school year due to an oversupply of child care places in south Tuggeranong, and explore the possibility of repurposing the centre for much-needed family welfare services.

The plan will also see Anglicare consolidate its mainstream Early Learning operations in the area to its Calwell centre to ensure all current parents can be guaranteed ongoing places.

 “Over the past three months, Anglicare management has conducted a comprehensive review of the Gordon Early Childhood Centre to determine if there is a viable future for the centre,” said Jeremy Halcrow, CEO of Anglicare. “The centre has experienced continued and increasing financial losses over the past five years exceeding a quarter of a million dollars. This is clearly not sustainable.”

At its most recent meet the Anglicare Board agreed with management’s recommendation to close the Gordon Long Day care service at the end of the current school year on December 23, 2016 and focus on child and family welfare services that meet a gap in service provision for the region.

“This has been a very difficult decision for management and one we have not made lightly or quickly,” Mr Halcrow said. “We are aware this decision is likely to be a shock to parents and staff alike. We will make every attempt to provide ongoing support to all those affected. Our intention is to offer staff at Gordon permanent or casual positions over coming months in Anglicare’s other centres, as vacancies arise.”

“Nonetheless, Anglicare is committed to providing ongoing children’s services to the region and has therefore made the strategic decision to explore the possibility of utilising the Gordon centre for a much-needed support services for disadvantaged families within the Lanyon Valley community. This is consistent with Anglicare’s core strategy to help the most disadvantaged children and families break out of inter-generational poverty.”

Mr Halcrow also said that Anglicare remains strategically committed to growing its Early Learning portfolio in Canberra and southern NSW.

“We are actively looking for opportunities to develop a new 80 to 100 place centre in a new growth area of Canberra where there is currently an under-supply of child care places.”

Management reviewed a range of options for Gordon including offering a disability-specific room. However all options which included a mainstream Long Day Care service proved financially unviable after detailed analysis of pricing, the wider market and current demographics in southern Tuggeranong. Ultimately the following issues were decisive:

* Anglicare’s research indicates that southern Tuggeranong already has a significant oversupply of child care places and this has contributed to the decline in enrolments at Gordon over many years.
* Our Gordon ECC is directly competing with our nearby Calwell ECC as indicated by a significant overlap in the location of where families of both centres live. Given the over-supply in child care places, it makes financial sense to consolidate our operations in Tuggeranong into the one centre.
* A new 90 place centre has been approved to be built on Knoke Ave and this will further impact on enrolments at Gordon.
* The Lanyon Valley has an aging population and there will be fewer Under 5s requiring early childhood education and care into the future.
* Sector-wide analysis demonstrates that centres under 50 places will be financially marginal given current regulatory requirements for staffing. There is no physical capacity to expand the Gordon building to become a larger centre.
* Gordon ECC is an aging building which requires maintenance and updating to meet current expectations of families.

All families who had planned to continue at Gordon Early Childhood Centre in 2017 will have the option of transferring their enrolments to Anglicare’s Calwell Early Childhood Centre which is less than 5 kilometres away from the Gordon Centre and has the same daily fees. Calwell was recently was assessed as an exceeding the National Quality Standards Assessment and Rating and is in the process of applying for a centre of excellence rating. For interested families Anglicare will be arranging an open day at the Calwell Centre over coming months.

**For more information, please contact Amy Lanham on 0437 321 451**