NSW GOVERNMENT

Literature Review

Early Childhood Education Directorate



Early Childhood Education Workforce issues in Australian and international contexts

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Introduction

An initial study of the Australian and international literature regarding Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) raises several key issues for its workforce. Much of the policy interest focuses on the role of the workforce in delivering quality education and care. The critical question is how staff can deliver early childhood programs that are of high enough quality to support positive learning and developmental outcomes for children, especially among those facing risks to their healthy development.

There is evidence that ECEC with the most favourable cognitive and social outcomes for children are indirectly related to well-trained and qualified professionals and lower staff-to-child ratios (OECD Publishing, 2012). The National Quality Standard (NQS) in Australia has addressed these factors by setting minimum staff–to child ratios and qualification requirements. However, improving these standards has now contributed to a shortage of qualified ECEC staff across Australia, particularly in NSW (Productivity Commission, 2014).

The primary issue currently facing the early childhood workforce in Australia appears to be attracting and retaining appropriately qualified ECEC professionals. Factors include comparatively poor pay and conditions, few progression opportunities and a lack of professional recognition and support despite the complexity of the work. Some Australian governments have attempted to address these issues through ECEC workforce strategies. Internationally, the ECEC sector faces similar problems including low wages, fragmented ECEC sectors, a lack of information sharing and the need for professional recognition and a more diverse workforce.

"The primary issue currently facing the early childhood workforce in Australia appears to be attracting and retaining appropriately qualified ECEC professionals"



Characteristics of the Australian ECEC workforce

The Australian early childhood workforce is overwhelmingly female (94%), with a median age of 26 for males and 36 for females (The Social Research Centre, 2013).

There are two distinct groups of workers:

- **Educators** (around 70% of the workforce) hold vocational education and training qualifications such as a Certificate III or Diploma. They support and provide education and care to a group of children and may also assist with developing and delivering early childhood educational programs.
- At least 50% of educators in a service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification (reg 126 *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*). All other educators, relied on to make up educator to child ratios, must have (or be actively working towards) a Certificate III qualification.
- **Service Directors**, **Educational Leaders and Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs)** (around 30% of the workforce) work mostly full-time and have relevant bachelor qualifications (Productivity Commission, 2014). They plan program activities, observe, assess and record each child's development and learning and lead educators (teach.NSW, 2017). Experienced educational leaders guide and mentor other educators in planning, implementing and reflecting on their learning program. For many services this may be either the director or an early childhood teacher at the service.

In some cases, the pathways into the ECEC workforce can involve entry as an educator, progressing to an ECT and potentially on to director roles, after further study and experience is accrued.

New South Wales

In NSW, the ECEC workforce is comprised of around 94% female and 6% male staff, with 2.5% being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Department of Education, 2013). The 2013 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census data showed that:

- Around 48,200 workers are employed in NSW early childhood education and care services, or 31.5% of the national workforce (The Social Research Centre, 2014)
- More than half of these workers (51.4%) are in long day care (LDC) services
- The sector has a large proportion of part-time workers (56%)
- Most of the workforce is predominantly low waged with over half of full-time workers (57%) earning between $31,200 and $51,999 per year. Most part-time workers (74%) earned less than $32,000 per year
- Over 80% of workers have a formal qualification. Staff without formal qualifications are most commonly found in outside school hours care, as there are no qualification requirements for these services (Department of Education, 2013)
- Almost two thirds of the workforce in preschools and family day care are more than 40 years of age (The Social Research Centre, 2014).

Government frameworks for regulating the ECEC workforce

The Australian Government frameworks for regulating the ECEC workforce are:

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (2009) was created with a 'shared vision… that by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p4)
- The *National Quality Standard* (2012) sets standards for qualifications and higher staff to child ratios that were progressively phased in from 2012
- The *Early Years Workforce Strategy* (2012) states that '(t)he aim of the strategy is to guide governments and the sector to:
  - deliver a sustainable, highly qualified and professional workforce
  - foster a flexible and responsive workforce capable of identifying and delivering services in response to the needs of children and families
  - support ECEC staff to work in a more integrated way with the broader early childhood development (ECD) workforce including the range of professionals that work with children and their families across health and family services' (Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, 2009, p1)



Key issues facing the ECEC workforce

A shortage of qualified staff

Demand for both vocationally and university-qualified educators has substantially increased as a result of the higher staff ratios and qualification requirements associated with the *National Quality Standard*, leading to widespread staff shortages with diploma and university-qualified educators (Productivity Commission, 2014). The 2013 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census data showed that 37% of LDC services in Australia did not have access to an ECT (PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, 2014). It is unclear whether this shortage was primarily for small or large LDC services, who are required to employ a certain number of ECTs depending on how many children are enrolled. The population of children aged birth to 13 years in Australia is also projected to grow by 23% between 2011 and 2025. Demand for ECEC is expected to remain high (Productivity Commission, 2014).

In 2014, the Productivity Commission found NSW was experiencing an acute shortage of early childhood teachers and educators particularly in regional and remote areas, and in the long day care sector (Productivity Commission, 2014). A 2016 Department of Employment survey found employers had difficulty recruiting early childhood teacher roles for LDCs in the NSW metropolitan area, and placed early childhood teachers on a skills shortage list (Department of Employment, 2016). However, the Department noted the filled rate for early childhood teachers had risen to 82% in 2015-16 from 71% in 2014-15 (Department of Employment, 2016).

In 2011, the Productivity Commission found that although staff turnover was a problem for Indigenous-focused services and services in rural and remote areas, turnover for the ECEC sector as a whole was 15.7%, only slightly above that of other sectors. It estimates that the average tenure of ECEC staff is between 6 and 7 years, which is consistent with the rest of the Australian workforce.

Causes of workforce shortage



Studies of the ECEC workforce have put forward various reasons for staff shortages, including:

- Poor pay and conditions relative to other workplaces (Bretherton, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2011 cited in Press, Wong & Gibson, 2015, p90)
- Lack of public recognition of the educator's professional status (Bretherton, 2010; SCSEEC, 2012 cited in Press et al, 2015, p90)
- Stress (Productivity Commission, 2011, cited in Press et al, 2015, p90)
- Workers going into the field with unrealistic expectations of the work (Amos Hatch, 1999 cited in Press et al, 2015).

The 2013 National ECEC workforce census staff survey found that most workers (80.4%) expected to be with the same employer or business in 12 months' time (The Social Research Centre, 2014). Among those staff that said they wanted to leave their current job in the next 12 months, the main reasons given were:

- to seek work outside the sector (30.2%)
- dissatisfaction with pay and conditions (28.5%)
- return to study, travel or family reasons (22.4%)
- finding the job stressful (20.5%)

Data shows that early childhood educators earn below the general workforce average and ECTs often have substantially worse pay and conditions compared with primary school teachers.

Press et al (2015) note that:

> A review of a wide range of existing studies alongside these reports, makes it clear that causes are multifaceted and are to be found in various stages of the workforce cycle, including who is attracted (or recommended) to work in early childhood, and how well they are prepared for the reality of the work, as well as, but not only, the conditions they encounter within the workplace.

They suggest that when exploring factors that impact on the ECEC workforce, moving away from single factors to 'a cumulative approach' to identify a 'package' of characteristics of a skilled and effective ECEC workforce would appear more useful (Sylva et al, 2004; Harrison et al, 2011 cited in Press et al, 2015, p100).

Poor pay and conditions relative to other sectors

The 2013 National Workforce Census (The Social Research Centre, 2014) showed that just under 50% of staff at preschools and LDCs were satisfied with their pay. Across Australia, the sector has a high proportion of part-time workers (56%) and is predominantly low waged. Over half of full-time workers (57%) earned between $31,200 and $51,999 per year. Most part-time workers (74%) earned less than $32,000 per year. Around 30% of the employees wanting to seek other employment elsewhere said the reason was because they were unhappy with pay and conditions. Data shows that early childhood educators earn below the general workforce average and ECTs often have substantially worse pay and conditions compared with primary school teachers. This is particularly the case for ECTs working in long day care services, which generally offer lower salaries, longer hours and fewer holidays. There appears to be a mismatch between the pay and conditions available in the sector, and the work skills and qualifications required.

Many stakeholders note that continued shortages in the ECEC sector suggest that the pay and conditions are significant barriers to recruitment and retention of educators in the sector, in particular ECTs (Productivity Commission, 2014). This is because university-qualified educators can be attracted away from the ECEC sector to alternative career options, especially teaching in schools (Bretherton, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2014 cited in Cumming, Sumsion & Wong , 2015, p7). Macquarie University's Early Learning Institute states that 'Lower wages than those paid to comparable teachers in early childhood wages, higher regulatory demands and the

nature of the early childhood workforce... are all reasons for ECE teacher shortages' (Macquarie University, 2012).

Despite the high demand for qualified graduates in the ECEC sector, Macquarie University highlights 'the significant wastage' of graduate teachers who have early childhood teacher education degrees but are unable to find suitable placements in schools (Macquarie University, 2012, p8). Many do not seek or gain employment in their relevant education sector after graduation.

Possible causes for persistent low wages include:

- Staff-to-child ratios limiting the number of children in an ECEC worker's care which then limits that worker's income.
- The ease of using award wages as the default wage for small community-run service providers
- ECEC workers feeling unable to ask for pay rises due to potential fee increases for parents (Productivity Commission, 2014).

Most Australian and international academics and researchers agree on the need to improve pay and working conditions. This includes offering the same pay as school teachers with similar qualifications and experience, and an increased status that recognises their responsibilities.

Some academics suggest government funding is necessary to support wage equity (Cumming et al, 2015). However, the Productivity Commission believes that universal government wage subsidies to attract and retain staff are likely to be 'ineffective, inefficient and unsustainable' (Productivity Commission, 2014). Also there were no structural issues preventing services from offering higher wages and better conditions. Instead the Productivity Commission suggests that targeted support for ECEC services facing the greatest recruitment and retention challenges (such in rural and remote areas) could be beneficial (Productivity Commission, 2014). There remains a tension between improving wages and conditions for ECEC staff and more affordable and accessible ECEC services (Press et al, 2015). .

A lack of professional status or recognition in the community

The Australian ECEC sector is becoming professionalised as a result of revised minimum qualification requirements. Despite undertaking studies and their experience supporting children's early learning and development, ECEC workers often feel unrecognised for their contribution to society (Irvine, Thorpe, McDonald, Lunn & Sumsion, 2016; Productivity Commission, 2014). Only around half of the staff employed in the Early Childhood Education sector stated in the 2013 National Census that their job is important to them because it has high status and that they receive positive recognition in the community (The Social Research Centre, 2014).

Some early childhood workers have reported feeling that the community views them as 'babysitters' (Irvine et al, 2016). Such views are influenced by parents, friends, the community, colleagues in other educational contexts and governments (Irvine et al, 2016). Although it appears that early childhood educators are generally more satisfied with their jobs than the average of the labour force (PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, 2014), these perceptions contribute to ECEC professionals deciding to leave their profession (Irvine et al, 2016).

Only around half of the staff employed in the Early Childhood Education sector stated in the 2013 National Census that their job is important to them because it has high status and that they receive positive recognition in the community (The Social Research Centre, 2013)

It has been suggested that the complexity of early childhood educators' work is poorly understood by the public because of maternalist discourses characterising ECEC as 'natural' for women, rather than as an occupation requiring specific skills and professional knowledge (Ailwood, 2007; Bown et al, 2009 cited in Press et al, 2015, p90). Press et al (2015) note that this has led to status inequalities which are reflected in pay and conditions.

Lyons (2011) points to the blurring of centre-based ECEC with less formal child care arrangements (such as occasional or family day care) and domestic parenting. Lyons explains that:

> To achieve recognition of the renamed occupation as a profession, practitioner labour must have scarcity value by excluding the untrained and unqualified from centre-based employment. This outcome need not be university education faculty based, as ECEC is largely multidisciplinary with a holistic approach to working with children, parents and their communities (Lyons, 2011, p128).

With the current emphasis on qualifications, it is important that the concept of professionalism is inclusive of non-formal as well as formal ECEC knowledge, so that practitioners do not feel that their previous knowledge and experience has been discounted (Irvine et al, 2016).



Limited career development opportunities

Currently, there are limited career advancement opportunities in the sector. Pathways to the ECEC sector can involve entering as an educator, progressing to an ECT, then potentially appointment to director roles. However, neither the length of service nor the level of qualifications has a major impact on earnings. Some stakeholders have suggested that teacher performance could be recognised through remuneration and career structures (Macquarie University, 2012).

Lack of ongoing professional support, learning, mentoring opportunities

Ongoing education and training are important for staff to maintain their professional skills, fill knowledge gaps and stay aware of new developments, which can lead to better outcomes for children. Professional development can include studying for higher qualifications as well as targeted in-service training.

A lack of opportunities is an often-noted issue in addressing recruitment and retention (Bretherton, 2010; CSMAC, 2006 cited in Harrison et al, 2011, p123).

With the current emphasis on qualifications, it is important that the concept of professionalism is inclusive of non-formal as well as formal ECEC knowledge, so that practitioners do not feel that their previous knowledge and experience has been discounted.

Problems impacting ECEC workers' ongoing professional development include:

- A career structure that does not adequately reward staff who have higher qualifications or greater experience
- More than 40% of employees who were not currently enrolled in studies stated in the census that the cost of studying was too high. Around 45% said that it was not worthwhile as any resulting wage increase was too small (Social Research Centre, 2014)
- Limited opportunities for employees to undertake further training or study in paid time, especially in rural and remote ECEC services. However, the 2013 Census showed that staff undertaking professional development training in the previous 12 months increased from 81% in 2010 to 84% in 2013 (PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, 2014)
- Workers having to pay for education materials themselves (Productivity Commission, 2014)
- Accessibility of programs – information about federal, state and territory government programs to support the ECEC sector in meeting NQF qualification requirements is difficult to locate (PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, 2014)
- It is unclear how accessible ongoing professional development is currently for Early Childhood Education staff.

Insufficient ECEC leadership training

The need for leadership has emerged as an important issue in ECEC workforces. A shortage of service leaders may create additional pressures where educators are promoted beyond their skills, experience and knowledge (Bretherton, 2010 cited in Cumming et al, 2015, p6). Considering the difficulty of ECEC work, staff can potentially experience burnout without ongoing mentoring and skills development.

Analyses of ECEC professional development initiatives from the United States highlight the:

- varied effectiveness of different professional development programs in changing practices
- importance of specialised, targeted training and the negligible benefits of 'one-off' training
- benefits of 'coaching' (sustained specific support from a mentor over time)
- need for broader understanding of professional development to include, for example, active participation in professional bodies (Harrison, Sumsion, Press, Wong, Fordham & Goodfellow, 2011).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood workforce

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and teachers, particularly those in remote communities face many barriers (including logistical and cultural) in gaining qualifications. For example, this may include a lack of familiarity using technology, English literacy issues, the need to travel long distances, and training that is not culturally appropriate (Harrison et al, 2011). Despite this, 2013 ECEC Census data showed increased qualification levels amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers from 51 to 72% in preschools, and 69 to 80% for LDC services (Harrison et al, 2011).

In 2011, the Productivity Commission identified increasing employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff as a critical factor in delivering culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It found that innovative solutions, such as more flexible work arrangements (for example, access to additional leave) that accommodate cultural and family responsibilities, have been introduced in some areas but need to be offered more widely (Productivity Commission, 2011).

It is also noted that the ECEC sector employs teachers and educators from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who may have English literacy issues. These staff may also need additional support and tailored resources to obtain their ECEC qualifications.

Lack of support and training for staff working with children with additional needs

There appears to be a lack of support and training for early childhood staff to provide effective and inclusive services to children with additional and complex needs. 'Children with additional needs' includes those with a range of conditions and/or circumstances that can result in these children requiring extra support (Owens, 2009 cited in Productivity Commission, 2011, p514), encompassing children:

- with a disability or developmental delay or undergoing assessment for a disability
- from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with limited English spoken at home
- from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background
- from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Early Childhood Education centres are becoming more culturally diverse with more children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other backgrounds and home environments attending. Developing cultural competency in staff to support children has become increasingly important.

Early Childhood Education centres are becoming more culturally diverse with more children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other backgrounds and home environments attending. Developing cultural competency in staff to support children has become increasingly important. Around 4% of children have chronic physical, intellectual or medical needs and 17% speak languages other than English at home, and this is set to increase (Productivity Commission, 2011).

As KU noted at the Productivity Commission's public hearing:

> … inclusion is not just being able to enrol your child at a service, it's about enabling that child to actively participate in all the educational programs offered by the service with their typically developing peers. (Productivity Commission, 2011, p514)

Macquarie University has also emphasised the importance of exploring teachers' relationships with families in early learning. It noted that '(t)he significance



of developing reciprocal partnerships with families needs to be acknowledged and teachers need to be given guidance on how this partnership can be enacted to ensure the best outcomes for children' (Macquarie University, 2012, p12-13).

Variable quality of ECEC education and training

In 2011, the Productivity Commission found substantial variability in the quality of training and graduates from the vocational education and training (VET) sector. It noted that unless concerns about poor training quality are addressed, much of any increased investment in VET could be wasted. It recommended oversight mechanisms to maintain a consistently high standard of training, with 'an appropriate mix of formal qualifications, workplace training and recognition of prior experience... to ensure the required workforce standards are met' (Productivity Commission, 2011, p345).

Many educators were overwhelmed by what they frequently referred to as 'paperwork', which they saw as undermining rather than supporting their professional work in providing high quality education and care

Mismatch between expectations and reality of Early Childhood Education work

The complexity of the work of early childhood educators and teachers is poorly understood by the community. This leads to new staff entering the field with unrealistic expectations of early childhood work. Some graduates with VET or university qualifications realise they are not suited to work in the early childhood education sector, leaving the sector soon afterwards (Irvine et al, 2016). TAFEs and registered training organisations (RTOs) may need to find ways to better screen candidates, and provide more information to help students understand the early childhood sector (Productivity Commission, 2014). Macquarie University has also raised the importance of quality practicum placements and the ability of supervising teachers to work effectively with student teachers (Macquarie University, 2012). This can help student teachers to understand expectations and requirements, and to determine their suitability for the profession (Macquarie University, 2012).

Stressful working conditions

In the 2013 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census, slightly over 50% of the early childhood workforce indicated their job was stressful (The Social Research Centre, 2014). Staff have stated they felt overburdened with the new paperwork requirements specified in the Early Years Learning Framework (Productivity Commission, 2014).

These documentation requirements are set out in Quality Area 1 of the National Quality Standards, regulations 73 to 76 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and section 168 of the *Education and Care Services National Law*. This includes documenting the assessment and evaluations of each child's learning and development, and curriculum planning (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017). Some stakeholders have noted there can be insufficient time, with some work expected to be done in their own time without pay (Productivity Commission, 2014).

These views on paperwork came shortly after the introduction of the National Quality Framework, which might have been expected since it was an enormous change for the industry. However, this appears to be a continuing issue. A 2016 Queensland study found that:

> Many educators were overwhelmed by what they frequently referred to as 'paperwork', which they saw as undermining rather than supporting their professional work in providing high quality education and care (Irvine et al, 2016, pp5, 14).

These staff referred to 'paperwork' as educational documentation (child observations, learning stories, child journals, transition statements), health and safety checklists, parent information and other administrative paperwork (Irvine et al, 2016).

A study by Irvine et al (2016) highlighted the personal cost of choosing to work in ECEC, especially in long day care settings. For many workers, these costs included financial hardship and challenging work contexts which caused stress and impacted on educators' mental health and general wellbeing. Stressful work conditions also have the potential to undermine staff capacity for high quality practice.

Current Australian Workforce Strategies

Historically, in Australia the issue of ECEC has been closely linked to parents' return to work and productivity issues. Overseas research and Australian research have increasingly highlighted the importance of the ECEC workforce to the development of skills and abilities in children that impact their future wellbeing (Melhuish et al, 2015; Mitchell Institute, 2016). Some jurisdictions such as New South Wales and South Australia do not appear to have specific strategies for the ECEC workforce. Instead, ECEC workforce issues are incorporated more generally into primary and high school workforce strategies. Available workforce strategies and relevant submissions from Australian Commonwealth and State governments regarding their ECEC workforce are outlined below.

Overseas research and Australian research have increasingly highlighted the importance of the ECEC workforce to the development of skills and abilities in children that impact their future wellbeing

Australian governments' ECEC workforce strategies in detail

Australian Government

The Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Strategy for Australia 2012–2016 states that:

'The aim of the strategy is to guide governments and the sector to:

- deliver a sustainable, highly qualified and professional workforce
- foster a flexible and responsive workforce capable of identifying and delivering services in response to the needs of children and families
- support ECEC staff to work in a more integrated way with the broader early childhood development (ECD) workforce including the range of professionals that work with children and their families across health and family services'

Identified key priority areas are:

- **A professional workforce**
  - Support professional development and leadership opportunities
  - Promote the professionalism of the ECEC workforce to the wider community
  - Recognise professional practice
- **A growing workforce**
  - Promote early childhood careers
  - Promote existing training programs and pathways
  - Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build a career in ECEC
- **A qualified workforce**
  - Facilitate greater uptake of existing training initiatives
  - Support the higher education and training sector to continue to deliver high-quality, relevant and flexible training to the ECEC sector
  - Review training initiatives
- **A responsive workforce**
  - Enhance the capability of educators to meet the needs of children from a diversity of social and cultural backgrounds
  - Enhance the capability of ECEC educators to further develop skills in working with children with diverse



needs and connecting them with appropriate support services

- **A collaborative workforce**
  - Support qualifications that enhance the skills of ECEC educators to work effectively with other ECD professionals
  - Promote evidence-based integrated service practice
  - Improve the Australian evidence base on ECD (Department of Education and Training).

New South Wales

The Department of Education and Training's 5 Year Strategic Plan: 2012-2017 broadly sets out the government's longer-term priorities in early childhood, school and tertiary education. There is also an accompanying Strategic Human Resources Plan, but it appears to be a workforce strategy for departmental staff, and so does not address the large majority of the ECEC workforce in NSW.

Victoria

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development created a 2009 strategy called Improving Victoria's early childhood workforce: Working to give Victoria's children the best start in life.

Its vision is 'A highly skilled, professional early childhood workforce that supports the health, learning and development of all Victorian children' (State of Victoria, 2009).

Goals of the strategy are:

- To attract an adequate supply of qualified early childhood professionals.
- To support a professional workforce committed to developing its knowledge and skills.
- To support the workforce to collaborate across professions and work with families to meet children's needs.
- To enable early childhood professionals to create rewarding careers.

The Victorian Workforce Strategy has 3 overlapping phases:

1. The right people in the right places

2. Transform work practices

3. Build a performance culture.

It states that the following key initiatives of the strategy will assist in achieving universal access through supporting the recruitment and development of a greater number of early childhood educators:

- A scholarship fund that supports early childhood staff to upgrade or attain early childhood qualifications.
- A scholarship fund that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to upgrade or attain early childhood qualifications.
- An incentive fund to attract early childhood staff to services in hard-to-staff locations.
- A range of professional development programs to support professionals in the early childhood intervention services sector.
- Professional development courses offered through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, designed to build the capacity of leaders in early childhood settings.
- Professional development training, resources and advice through Gowrie Victoria.
- The Early Years Great Careers initiative, which aims to showcase a range of early childhood professions available in the sector. Professional training and development for early childhood professionals focus on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Regarding professional development, Victoria is currently offering an Effective Mentoring Program which is a free professional development opportunity for experienced ECTs.

Queensland

In the *Queensland Early Childhood Education and Care - Workforce Action Plan 2016-2019*, the Department of Education and Training highlighted the following action areas:

1. Being valued

- Launch an ECEC careers campaign.
- Consult with the ECEC sector and other key stakeholders regarding options for professional registration for early childhood teachers.

2. Qualifications

- Subsidise Certificate III in ECEC through Certificate 3 Guarantee Program.
- Subsidise Diploma in ECEC through the Higher Level Skills Program.
- Subsidise the Diploma of School Age Education and Care through the Higher Level Skills Program.

- Broaden access to a diploma subsidy to allow more registered primary teachers to gain an approved early childhood teaching qualification through the ECT Bridging Program.
- Provide additional study support for rural and remote educators through a new Growing our Own Program across the state.
- Offer new ECT scholarships to support Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualified educators in remote and rural services to gain teaching qualifications.

3. Skills

- Launch innovative Early Years Connect service, providing a 'one-stop shop' of online resources for educators working with children with additional needs, disability, complex emotional and social behaviours. The interactive online resources will be complemented with a statewide program of face-to-face professional development 'in the inclusion of children with additional needs and working collaboratively across disciplines'.
- Subsidise industry-endorsed skills under Higher Levels Skills Program:
  - Team leader skills set
  - Supporting children and families with complex needs skills set
  - Building inclusive practices skills set.
- Pilot leadership skills development projects, supporting local networks.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional development programs.
- Work with peak bodies to develop and implement professional development programs, training materials, resources.
- Support teachers in age-appropriate pedagogies.



In relation to its implementation strategy, the Workforce Action Plan (WAP) outlines the following:

- Consultation – creating new ECEC Partnership Officers, website, workforce surveys, regional forums.
- Accountability – working with stakeholders to produce annual WAP reports, tracking progress under the plan, and identifying priorities for implementation.
- Evidence base – undertaking analysis of population level workforce data collected through annual Queensland ECEC census to inform review process. The DET will support a major new study identifying effective strategies to grow and sustain a professional early years workforce, conducted by QUT and Charles Sturt University, C&K and Goodstart.

Regarding professional development, Queensland has also established the *Remote Indigenous Professional Development Project* – professional development to ATSI educators across Queensland, Northern Territory and South Australia in partnership with the Australian Government.

Western Australia

A specific ECEC workforce strategy was unable to be located. However, in its 2011 submission to the Productivity Commission, the Western Australian government noted that immediate actions were to:

- Fund national awards for excellence in early childhood that reward and recognise outstanding early childhood practitioners.
- Continue existing Commonwealth initiatives to fund additional early childhood education places including university placement, the TAFE fee waiver, and the HECS-HELP benefits.
- Support jurisdictions to map the provision of professional development for the early childhood education workforce, including induction programs, mentoring, coaching, and opportunities to develop cultural capabilities and leadership skills.
- National advertising and promotion of existing education and employment early childhood education workforce opportunities.
- Promote programs to increase Aboriginal employment in the early childhood workforce, such as apprenticeship programs, work experience programs and the Australian Employment Covenant.
- Provide opportunities for the engagement of and funding streams for mentors to support Aboriginal workers into and within the early childhood workforce, including programs targeted at increasing numeracy and literacy skill.

Medium Term Actions

- Fund attraction and retention bonuses in the form of scholarships, and support flexible work arrangements to attract returning early childhood teachers back into the early childhood workforce.
- Support jurisdictions to provide incentive packages to attract a high quality early childhood workforce into remote areas and Aboriginal communities. This could include travel and relocation allowances, housing, tailored professional development, retention bonuses and national tax and income incentives.
- Facilitate processes to improve pay and ensure pay parity for the early childhood workforce across all education and care settings.
- Provide additional support for specialist English as a Second Language (ESL) services and teacher training in ESL in kindergartens in WA.
- Build on existing Australian Government initiatives to fund additional University early childhood teaching places, TAFE fee waiver and HECS-HELP benefit.

Long Term Actions

- Develop and implement national strategies that support leadership development in early childhood education and care.
- Develop and support training for the early childhood education workforce in leadership and collaborating / working with integrated family-centred centres that partner with parents and service providers.
- Support states and territories to implement workforce planning that builds the capacity of Aboriginal communities.
- Lead and support national early childhood education and care research.
- Improve national consistency of early childhood education and care workforce data, and the collection, processing, and provision of this data (Western Australian Department of Education, 2011).

South Australia

A specific ECEC workforce strategy was unable to be located.

Tasmania

In the *Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Sectors Skills Plan 2012-2016*, Early Childhood Australia Tasmania (ECA Tasmania) branch is collaborating with Skills Tasmania 'to develop key strategies to support the intent of the National Reform Agenda'. It notes that the 'sustainability of the strategies must be supported through improved wages and conditions for the sector'.

This Skills Plan supports:

- ECA Tasmania in achieving its goals, identified in its Strategic Direction 2011 – 2014, namely:
  - being a strong and credible voice for children
  - promoting high standards of practice for those who care for and educate young children
  - working collaboratively with government and non-government agencies to support initiatives which aim to improve outcomes for young children
  - promoting a cohesive early childhood education and care sector, keeping abreast of emerging education and care issues and ensuring members remain informed.
- Skills Tasmaniain achieving four Action Areas identified in the Tasmanian Skills Strategy 2008 -2015, namely:
  - deliver responsive, high quality education and training
  - skills for innovation and future industries
  - meet industry demand for skills
  - improve workforce development
- Skills Tasmania in its overall priority setting for purchasing and funding skill development activities.

Tasmania has implemented Professional Learning programs such as the Recognition Project undertaken by The Skills Institute (TSI), which has trained a number of people to be workplace coaches. They are trained assessors in the LDC workplace who understand the training requirements of Certificate III and Diploma. Some services are also engaging with the Early Years Learning Framework.



Tasmania has identified the following key themes:

1. Workforce Planning and Development – recognising there has been little opportunity for state-wide ECEC and School Age Care (SAC) sector discussion to specifically develop and promote an agreed vision for a highly skilled, professional Tasmanian ECEC and SAC workforce.

- The need to promote this vision in terms of ECEC and SAC as a valuable and valued career to a range of potential workforce entrants, and to support those already in the workforce to further develop their skills and knowledge and lead engagement with the EYLF.
- Lack of understanding of workforce planning for the period 2012 – 2016 on the part of many ECEC and SAC services.
- Capacity of those entering the workforce, and their commitment to ECEC as a career. This includes issues such as inappropriate 'streaming' at Years 10, 11 and 12; VET selection processes; literacy levels, etc.

The objective is that the ECEC and SAC sectors will have access to a sufficient supply of appropriately qualified workers to meet the requirements of the SAC services.

- Develop a position statement to facilitate adoption of a skilled, professional ECEC and SAC workforce.
- Develop effective marketing campaign to promote the ECEC as a career of choice, focusing on Years 11/12, males, specific sectors such as Out of School Hours Care (OSHC).
- Working with Senior Secondary Colleges to further knowledge of NQA, and promote Certificate II and III as entry level training to ECEC career path.
- Working with employment services providers to promote awareness of NQA, realistic educator requirements and 'reshape' recruitment material.

2. Capacity and Capacity Building – There is widespread sector concern regarding the quality of VET training offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and related issues, such as assessment procedures.

This includes the sector's understanding of its capacity to drive the content and standard of delivery of training, and therefore its capacity to lead the development of appropriate training and development solutions for the sector, for example, leadership training.

3. Skilling and Developing the Workforce – Moving from the VET to Higher Education sector, there is a need for an easily understood process and pathways which support those already in the ECEC workforce.

- Retention of experienced, unqualified educators in order to avoid exacerbating the shortage of skilled personnel in 2014 when the NQS qualification requirements are implemented.
- The need to establish a 'pool' of educators with mentorship, coaching and assessment skills.
- Specific issues within certain parts of the sector, such as FDC and OSHC.

The objective is that the ECEC and SAC workforce will have required skills and knowledge to ensure that learning and development outcomes for children meet that outlined in the NQF and NQS.

- Offering training 'Best Practice in Family Day Care' workshops to RTOs.
- Pilot project: partnership between a selected RTO and the sector, where chosen pre-service candidates encouraged to undertake qualifications, and are coached and mentored by ECTs (who are released from their usual role).

4. Capacity to Implement the Skills Plan – deals with how the sector can afford to implement the steps necessary to achieve NQA requirements during the period 2012 – 2016.



Australian Capital Territory Government

The goal of the ACT *Education and Care Workforce Strategy 2012-2014* is to:

- lead to better education and care for children
- guide the ongoing professional development of educators
- be a partnership between government, the sector and individuals that represents how we should work together

The four key objectives of the strategy were to:

1. attract new educators

2. retain existing educators

3. develop workforce skills

4. raise the professional profile of the sector in the ACT community.

The ACT Government has established two early childhood scholarships programs:

- **The Early Childhood (CertificateIII) Scholarship Program** (established in 2012) – these are awarded on merit and cover the full cost of course fees to the registered training authority, a start-up payment of $300 and completion payment of $500. It also includes funding for employers to release students for study during working hours.
- **The Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program** – 50 scholarships have been awarded so far, with recipients entitled to up to $1,500 per year to a maximum of $6,000 over 4 consecutive years towards the cost of an early childhood teaching qualification. This includes course fees, study leave, placements and course materials (ACT Government).

Northern Territory

A specific ECEC workforce strategy was unable to be located.



Issues in ECEC Workforces in International Contexts

New Zealand

All ECEC services are delivered through a bicultural early education curriculum called *Te Whāriki*, developed in partnership with the indigenous Māori people. Everiss et al (2017) note that market-driven early childhood education services have seen a steady growth in child participation, with the majority of services delivered by private for-profit organisations. However, they noted a recent government focus on participation and enrolment targets is often at the expense of 'quality' initiatives, particularly regarding teaching qualifications.

In a 2015 nationwide survey of 601 teachers, it was found that a quarter of teachers held reservations about the quality of education and care at their centres (ChildForum ECE Service and Research National Network, 2015). Issues raised by teachers included:

- a lack of time to develop relationships with children
- insufficient management support of caregiving practices
- understaffing and low teacher to child ratios
- long working hours, putting them at risk of emotional and physical burnout.

Canada

Halfon and Langford (2015) note that in Canada, the private market model, the devaluation of caring work, and increased professional expectations without adequate workforce advocacy are problems for the ECEC workforce. They state that the predominantly female workforce is the common link between the three factors, and argue that addressing these factors is a matter of gender justice.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) notes that staff face 'persistently low wages and inconsistent working conditions including limited access to benefits, pensions and ongoing professional learning' (AECEO, 2017, p2). This has affected the retention of qualified staff. They point to a professionalisation gap where increased expectations and responsibilities for the Ontario ECEC workforce accompany limited increases in workforce support, such as compensation, working conditions or access to collective bargaining.

The AECEO argues that to ensure high quality early childhood programs for children and families, the sector should move from a 'flawed market model towards a funded system of public and non-profit' early childhood services (AECEO, 2017, p8). They note that the market model creates fragmentation of training, payment and conditions so that it is 'extremely difficult to create universal professional systems and supports' (Halfon et al, 2015, p134). The AECEO states that a supply-side funded childcare system is needed for an educated and adequately paid ECEC workforce, as well as more affordable and accessible services for children.

The AECEO suggest the following steps be undertaken:

- Establishment of a regional wage scale to equitably raise the wages and morale of all early childhood educators (ECEs) and staff.
- A consultation process with the ECEC workforce to address ongoing challenges.
- Guaranteed pedagogical planning time during the work day to support ECEs in fulfilling their professional roles and responsibilities.
- Paid leave for professional learning and equitable access to professional learning opportunities.
- Further integration of early years and education systems to address structural inequities between educational staff



The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom subsidised universal childcare to all 3 and 4 year olds from 2004 and 1998, respectively, and to the 40% most disadvantaged 2 year olds from 2012. However, an evaluation study has shown that anticipated benefits were muted (Brewer, Cattan Crawford and Rabb, 2014 cited in Mitchell Institute, 2016, p4). It appears that the primary reasons for this are the quality of the services provided and the fact that although all children can benefit from early education, the biggest gains to be made are through participation from the most disadvantaged families. This highlights the importance of quality ECEC to improve population-level outcomes (Mitchell Institute, 2016).

The mixed market model in Britain means that practitioners in the maintained (public) sector can be qualified teachers with degrees, on a national pay scale and represented by unions. Those working in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors can range from having no qualifications to having a degree, receiving variable levels of pay and no union representation. The result is a mixed workforce. This variation was recently criticised in the Nutbrown Review (2012) 'concerning both the range of qualifications that exist, and also their fitness for purpose' (Selbie et al, 2015).

In March 2016 the Childcare Act passed into law in England. The Act provides all working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds with 30 free hours of childcare per week (up from 15 hours), with the aim of closing the gap between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers (European Commission, 2016). However, unofficial data from the National Day Nurseries Association 2016 Survey reported that only 45% of nurseries intended to increase the number of free hours offered, as the cost of provision exceeded the available funding. Low funding rates and pressure to keep fees affordable keep pay low, despite nurseries wanting to reward staff better (National Day Nurseries Association, 2016).

Sweden

There has been an expansion of ECEC institutions and the development of a workforce in Sweden. However, according to some researchers, ECEC as a profession has 'struggled for legitimisation and cultural recognition in society', which is 'obviously related to power relations, gender issues and acceptance of a female labour force' (Persson and Broman, 2015). Persson and Broman note that professionalism takes place in several arenas, not just academic and university qualifications. They observe that 'informal networks, professional associations and unions are important places to define professional knowledge and the working conditions that are needed' (Persson and Broman, 2015, p57). The authors also state that it is a 'major challenge for preschool teachers and carers to develop a professional language and a common knowledge base' (Persson and Broman, 2015, p66).

Although ECEC in Sweden is now highly recognised as an important institution for children's development, there are growing demands for efficiency, new standards and quality development (Persson and Broman, 2015).

Italy

Caruso and Sorzio note that 'A main issue in ECEC is the different quality and diffusion of services in the Italian regions' (Caruso and Sorzio, 2015, p51). As a result, it is difficult to establish a system to circulate practices and ideas for professionals, for example, the concepts and methods needed to structure ECEC programs. This means that there is 'no shared theoretical framework to support educators' and teachers' professionalism'.

Germany

The ECEC workforce in Germany is undergoing professionalisation. Hohmann notes that the first Bachelor and Masters courses were established in 2004, which led to concerns about the feasibility of higher income expectations for students undertaking them, and their role in ECEC institutions. He states that 'it remains to be seen how (they) integrate into the ECEC landscape, whether the qualification enables them to achieve higher incomes' (Hohmann, 2015, pp102-103). There are also concerns that professionals with higher qualifications may choose to work in other areas other than ECEC.

Other issues include ageing practitioners and the pressure to increase the training of new staff.

There is also a concern about the lack of workforce diversity. Only 5% of the workforce is male and they tend to work in leadership positions or with older children (Hohmann, 2015).

United States

A University of California study found that persistent features of early childhood jobs include 'low wages, the absence of a rational wage structure, the low value accorded to educational attainment, pervasive economic insecurity and extensive reliance on public income supports resulting from unliveable wages' (Whitebook, Phillips, and Howes, 2014, p2).

Conclusion

As a result of the revised NQS and introduction of minimum qualification requirements, the Australian ECEC workforce has become increasingly professionalised. This has led to increased demand for qualified ECEC professionals. A range of issues facing the ECEC workforce will need to be addressed to attract and retain appropriate and qualified individuals to work in the sector. A continuing problem is that the community has been slow to recognise ECEC workers as professionals, and the complexity and significance of their work. Issues such as low pay, lack of career advancement, the need for greater diversity in the workforce, and what it means to be a professional in early childhood education are also reflected in overseas ECEC contexts. In addition, constructive relationships and expertise sharing between early childhood professionals themselves, early learning and development researchers, the ECEC industry and training organisations, and the rest of the education sector will likely play an important part of a workforce strategy, and increasing quality outcomes for children.



Annexure

TYPES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES EMPLOYING ECEC STAFF

The ECEC workforce is employed in the following services which are regulated by the National Quality Framework (NQF), except for occasional care and mobile services:

T YPES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES EMPLOYING ECEC STAFF	
Long day care	Long Day Care (LDC) is a centre-based form of early childhood service. There are approximately 24,792 staff (The Social Research Centre, 2014) working in 2,838 centres (Department of Education and Training, 2016) in NSW. LDC services provide all day or part-time education and care for children aged 0-6 years. Centres typically operate between 7.30am and 6pm on normal working days for 48 weeks per year to assist with parents' working schedules. LDC centres are required to deliver an educational program for children as well as meet national quality standards (discussed below). Centres are run by private companies, local councils, community organisations, non-profit organisations and others.
Family day care	Family Day Care (FDC) is where early childhood educators and teachers provide flexible education and care for children, generally from their own approved residence, under the management of a family day care service. They are responsible for delivering a quality, developmentally appropriate program. There are approximately 4,496 staff (The Social Research Centre, 2014) working in 273 FDC services in NSW. Childcare is predominantly provided for children aged from 0-6 years who are not yet at school, but may also be provided for school-aged children. Carers can provide whole day, part of the day, or irregular or casual care. In some states and territories, these carers are required to be registered with an FDC scheme. An FDC scheme supports and administers a network of carers, by monitoring the standard of care provided, and providing professional advice (Cheeseman & Torr, 2009).
Outside school hours care	Outside school hours care (OSHC) services provide education and care for primary school-aged children before and after school and during school holidays (vacation care). There are approximately 5,436 staff (The Social Research Centre, 2014) working in 2,878 services in NSW (Department of Education and Training, 2016). OSHC services are usually provided from primary schools, childcare centres or community facilities, and run by for-profit and not-for-profit providers (Cheeseman & Torr, 2009).
Preschool	Preschool services are licensed and/or funded by state or territory governments to deliver a structured educational program provided by a teacher. It is aimed at children in the year before they start school. In NSW, there are approximately 8,284 staff (The Social Research Centre, 2014) working in 886 preschools. The terminology for preschool varies between jurisdictions, with the most commonly used terms being: ▪ Preschool in Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory and South Australia. ▪ Kindergarten in Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.
Occasional care	Occasional care is a centre-based childcare service that provides professional care for children aged from 0-5 years who attend the service on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals. There are approximately 296 staff (The Social Research Centre, 2014) working in 36 services in NSW (Department of Education and Training, 2016). This type of care is used by parents who do not usually need professional childcare but at times would like someone to look after their child. Occasional care can be provided as a stand-alone service, within LDC services or preschools, at sport and leisure centres, and community centres.
Mobile services	Mobile children's services provide flexible education and care services to children in isolated and/or disadvantaged communities where centre-based delivery is not readily available. Mobile children's services can include preschool, childcare, toy libraries, play sessions and playgroups. Services generally work with children 0-6 years old (Mobile Children's Services Association of NSW, 2017).

REQUIREMENTS OF ECEC WORKFORCE AND SERVICES

Educational requirements for early childhood services under the National Quality Framework

The NQF took effect on 1 January 2012, with key requirements being phased in over time. Requirements such as qualifications, educator to child ratios, and other staffing arrangements are being phased in up to 2020 (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017).

The NQF's educational program and practice requirements for early childhood services and staff are supported by the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*:

Source	Requirement	Applies
Section 168	**Offence relating to required programs** A program must be delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service that: ▪ is based on an approved learning framework ▪ is delivered in accordance with the approved learning framework ▪ is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child ▪ is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.	All services
Regulation 73(2)	**Educational program** An educational program is to contribute to the following outcomes for each child: ▪ the child will have a strong sense of identity ▪ the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world ▪ the child will have a strong sense of wellbeing ▪ the child will be a confident and involved learner ▪ the child will be an effective communicator	All services

Regulation 74	**Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program**
	For the purposes of the educational program, the following must be documented:
	▪ for a child preschool age or under:
	  ▪ assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program
	  ▪ assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program
	▪ for a child over preschool age:
	  ▪ evaluations of the child's wellbeing, development and learning.
	Providers must consider:
	▪ the period of time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service
	▪ how the documentation will be used by the educators at the service
	▪ whether the documentation is prepared in a way that is readily understandable by educators at the service and parents of the child.
		Where children are of the specified age

Source	Requirement	Applies
Regulation 75	**Information about educational program to be kept available** ■ information about the contents and operation of the educational program for the service must be displayed at the education and care service premises that can be accessed by parents of children being educated and cared for by the service ■ a copy of the educational program must be available on request, at centre-based services' premises, and at family day care services venues.	Centre-based services, family day care services
Regulation 76	**Information about educational program to be given to parents** A parent of a child being educated and cared for by the service is provided with the following information on request: ■ information about the content and operation of the educational program relating to the child ■ information about the child's participation in the program ■ a copy of the documents kept under regulation 74 about the child.	All services

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The following educator to child ratios apply in NSW depending on service type and other considerations (Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011):

Centre-based services

Age Of Children	Educator to child ratio
Birth to 2 years	1:4
Over 2 years and less than 3 years	1:5
Over 3 years to preschool age	1:10
Over preschool age	Not yet a national requirement, and no requirements currently apply in NSW

Family day care services

There must be a ratio of 1:7 for family day care educators, with no more than four children who are preschool age or under, including the educator's own children under 13.

Required qualifications for educators under the NQF

Division 4 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (NSW) prescribes the educational qualifications required for educators at centre-based services and educators and co-ordinators at family day care.

Type of service	Qualification
Centre-based service (caring for children who are preschool age and under)	At least 50% of the educators required to meet ratio requirements must have or be working towards at least an approved Diploma level education and care qualification All other educators who are required to meet ratio requirements must have or be working towards at least an approved Certificate III level education and care qualification.
Family day care service	Educators must have or be working towards at least an approved Certificate III level education and care qualification. Family day care coordinators must have at least an approved Diploma level education and care qualification.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS (ECTs)

The following teacher to child ratios apply in NSW depending on service type and other considerations (Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011):

Approved Places	Requirement	Requirement by January 2020
Less than 25 children	Access to an ECT for at least 20% of the time	Same
25 - 59 children	ECT in attendance for: - 6 hours a day (if operating for or more 50 hours per week) - 60% of operating hours (if operating less than 50 hours per week)	Same
60 - 80 children	As above	Second ECT in attendance for: - 3 hours a day (if operating for 50 or more hours per week) - 30% of operating hours (if operating less than 50 hours per week)

Approved Places	Requirement	Requirement by January 2020
Over 80 children	As above	Second ECT in attendance for: - 6 hours a day (if operating for or more 50 hours per week) - 60% of operating hours (if operating less than 50 hours per week)

Remote and very remote services (until January 2018)

Licenced capacity	NQF	NSW
More than 25 children	Access to an ECT for at least 20% of the time	Applies only to all centre-based services with under 30 children. Over 30, NSW requirements for ECTs (see above) apply (Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011).

Mobile services and occasional care

These service types operating in NSW are not covered by the National Quality Framework, but are regulated under a separate NSW State Act and Regulation that are aligned with the national law (*Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Act, 2011*). There are slight differences for centre-based occasional care and mobile services regulated under NSW law. Requirements for these services are as follows (*Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation, 2012*):

Approved places	Requirement
Less than 25 children	NQF rules apply
25 - 29 children	NQF rules apply
30 - 39 children	One ECT in attendance at all times
40 - 59 children	Two ECTs in attendance at all times
60 - 79 children	Three ECTs in attendance at all times
80 or more children	Four ECTs in attendance at all times

SUMMARY OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS' ECEC WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

Jurisdiction	NQF ECEC workforce strategy	Goals
Australian Government	*Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Strategy for Australia 2012–2016*	▪ deliver a sustainable, highly qualified and professional workforce ▪ foster a flexible and responsive workforce capable of identifying and delivering services in response to the needs of children and families ▪ support ECEC staff to work in a more integrated way with the broader early childhood development (ECD) workforce including the range of professionals that work with children and their families across health and family services.
Victoria	*Improving Victoria's early childhood workforce: Working to give Victoria's children the best start in life (2009)*	1. To attract an adequate supply of qualified early childhood professionals. 2. To support a professional workforce committed to developing its knowledge and skills. 3. To support the workforce to collaborate across professions and work with families to meet children's needs. 4. To enable early childhood professionals to create rewarding careers. To be achieved in three phases: ▪ The right people in the right places ▪ Transform work practices ▪ Build a performance culture
Queensland	*Queensland Early Childhood Education and Care - Workforce Action Plan 2016-2019*	1. Being valued 2. Qualifications 3. Skills
South Australia	-	-
Northern Territory	-	-
Western Australia	Outlined course of action through 2011 submission to Productivity Commission.	▪ Attracting and developing qualified early childhood professionals ▪ Retaining early childhood professionals ▪ Improving data collection and research.

Jurisdiction	NQF ECEC workforce strategy	Goals
Tasmania	*Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Sectors Skills Plan 2012-2016*	Collaboration between Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch (ECA Tasmania) and Skills Tasmania to develop key strategies: 1. Workforce Planning and Development 2. Capacity and Capacity Building 3. Skilling and Developing the Workforce 4. Capacity to Implement the Skills Plan.
Australian Capital Territory	*ACT Education and Care Workforce Strategy 2012-2014*	1. Attract new educators 2. Retain existing educators 3. Develop workforce skills 4. Raise the professional profile of the sector in the ACT community.
New South Wales	In development	A quality workforce and development of a workforce strategy is a strategic priority of the Early Childhood Education Directorate. The development of the workforce strategy is in response to the need to focus on the quality aspect of early childhood education. The primary goal of the Early Childhood Education Workforce Strategy is to support a highly qualified and sustainable Early Childhood Education workforce, which meets the needs of children and families. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children in rural and remote locations and the inclusion of children with additional needs.



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