

7 ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment I - State provision of kindergarten

Tasmania has had a **universal state-funded kindergarten service** in place for over 40 years. The Department of Education (DoE) has provided state funded kindergartens linked to primary schools since 1911, along with others provided by the Kindergarten Union and parents. In 1968, a review recommended the provision of kindergarten as part of the school system which led to a rapid expansion of places. By 1980 the State was responsible for most kindergartens in Tasmania. Non-government schools gradually established kindergartens during the 1980s and now all deliver a program.

Tasmania's high numbers of low socio-economic status families who could not afford to support community kindergartens, was a significant factor in the 1968 decision to embed kindergartens in the education system.

Over time kindergartens have been integrated into school settings, often in purpose built facilities and with age appropriate play areas. In some locations, the kindergarten buildings are separately located on the campus, while in other locations they are part of the main school footprint and linked to the other early childhood provision (K-2). Kindergarten buildings are managed and maintained in line with general school policies and guidelines regarding asset management. Given the dispersed nature of the population in Tasmania, most children are in classes of less than 20.

While the kindergarten year is not compulsory, it enjoys a very high level of acceptance across Tasmania and is widely recognised by parents as being the 'first year of school'. In 2012 96.1 per cent of eligible children are enrolled in kindergarten as follows:

- 73.5 per cent in state schools where provision is 'free'²⁹; and
- 24.2 per cent in schools registered by the Schools Registration Board (ie most non-government schools).³⁰

It is estimated that in 2012 only 150 eligible children did not attend kindergarten.

Students are funded by the State on the same basis as all other students in government and non-government school proportional to their attendance.³¹

²⁹ Government kindergarten is supported by a small parent levy (currently up to \$190 per year), but where a family qualifies for Student Assistance Scheme (STAS) no levy is payable. STAS is assessed on family taxable income and the number of children.

³⁰ Fees in non-government settings can vary from \$0 to about \$7 500 per annum. Fees at individual non-government settings vary also for individual children eg fee relief programs or family discounts and whether they are in integrated education and care settings where Child Care Benefit (CCB) may be payable.

³¹ Students in State kindergartens do not attract CCB or Child Care Rebate (CCR) payments. Students in the non-government sector may attract CCB/CCR however this would depend on individual fee structures.

Prior to the Council of Australian Governments' endorsement of the National Partnership (NP) on Universal Access³², government schools in Tasmania offered a minimum of 10 hours per week (2008).

All kindergarten programs must be delivered by a registered four year university qualified teacher. All kindergarten teachers are paid under teaching awards and have the same employment conditions as other teachers.

All kindergarten students in the Catholic and State systems are assessed using the Kindergarten Development Check (development markers). This data informs their learning programs. Students who are assessed as vulnerable against any of the markers undergo a second assessment later in the school year.

Legislative setting

Under the *Education Act 1994* the kindergarten year in Tasmania is regarded as education provided by a school and is treated as such:

Section 46. Education before compulsory education

- (1) A child who, on 1 January in any year, is at least 4 years of age and has not attained the age of 5 years is entitled to be enrolled at, and attend, a State school.
- (2) The Secretary may issue instructions in respect of the attendance at a State school of children referred to in subsection (1).

Part Five of the Child Care Act requires that non-government schools, including any child care centre wishing to offer kindergarten, are registered by the School Registration Board (SRB). However, section 64 of the Child Care Act precludes the provision of funding to a school that is operated for-profit, even though such a school can operate under registration by the SRB. As noted above, kindergarten students in government and non-government schools are funded by the State.

Current provision in Tasmania

Kindergarten enjoys almost universal take-up by Tasmanian parents. Tasmania also has the oldest school starting age in Australia. Children must be five before 1 January to enrol in the first formal year of school which in Tasmania is also the first compulsory year of education. All children are entitled to be enrolled in kindergarten if they turned four before 1 January in that year. Kindergarten is provided in all government (164) and non-government schools (58) with primary grades. Enrolments range from one student up to 86 students.³³

³² In 2008 the Commonwealth and states and territories signed a five-year *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education* (the NP), through which the parties agreed to implement the 2007 Federal Labor election commitment that, by 30 June 2013, every child will have access to a pre-school program for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling (Universal Access). COAG subsequently agreed to a new 18 month *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* (NP ECE) on 19 April 2013 to replace the original NP which expired on 30 June 2013.

³³ Where kindergarten enrolments are low, students are accommodated in a Kinder/Prep class.

Enrolments in 2012 for Kindergarten were as follows:

- 4959 - government schools;
- 1586 - non-government schools; and
- 0 - home-educated.

As mentioned earlier, this represents 96.1 per cent of eligible children (four and five year olds).

Data

In 2012, there were 222 schools, which includes government, Catholic and Independent schools delivering a kindergarten program in a school.

Under the Australian Government definition of a preschool program, there were also 10 long day care centres (LDCs) delivering a preschool program, which are defined as having a preschool program taught by an educator with a university qualification, and the provider reports data in the Federal Department of Education's Child Care Management System (CCMS) data system. These 10 LDCs are not registered as a school to deliver a kindergarten program in Tasmania.

There were 6 646 Tasmanian students in a preschool program in 2012, to give a participation rate of 96.1 per cent based on the ABS 2006 Estimated Population of 4 and 5 year olds as at 30 June 2012.

Modes of delivery for kindergartens All Schools - class sessions in 2012	Count of schools
1/2 day kindergarten classes only	14
Full day kindergarten classes only	182
Offering both ½ day and full day kindergarten classes	20
Other models including LDCs	16
	232

All Tasmanian school teachers must have a recognised teaching qualification, including kindergarten teachers, as kinder is taught in schools. Furthermore all schools must only employ teachers registered by the Tasmanian Teacher's Registration Board.

In 2012 there were 479 teachers delivering kindergarten programs. All were deemed to have a 4 year university trained qualification. In addition there were 434 teacher aides also employed in kindergarten classrooms. Of these, 46 per cent had a Certificate III or higher teacher aide qualification.

DoE is currently funding all current kindergarten teacher assistants (TAs) to undertake the current Certificate III (CHC30812). This course is being delivered by our RTO (TasTAFE) until the end of 2014, when the new course (CHC30213) replaces it.

DoE has always supported the development of TAs through professional learning. Most TAs are part of a school's permanent staffing allocation and are used flexibly across school year levels depending on need, enrolment numbers and their employment hours. On this basis, schools expect TA training to enable skill development about work related to school settings.

Because the course is being offered tailored to each TA's experience and skill level, the core and elective units can be addressed having particular regard for the age group of students involved. In relation to all units, the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standard and the National Quality Framework (NQF) are key points of reference.

Support for children with additional needs

There are four Aboriginal early years liaison officers in Tasmania to assist Aboriginal families in the early years. There were 512 Aboriginal children enrolled in a preschool program in 2012.

Students with disabilities are also enrolled in kindergarten. No data regarding students with disabilities in kindergarten programs was collected in 2012.

Administrative structure

DoE is the Tasmanian regulatory authority under Commonwealth legislation. A specialised unit within the Early Years and Schools Division – the Education and Care Unit (ECU) - is operationally responsible for this function. Historically this unit performed licensing and monitoring functions under the Child Care Act thus broader policy functions were limited. The introduction of the National Quality Framework (NQF) has significantly expanded the scope of the ECU's work – its structure and function is evolving and being refined as the implementation progresses:

- Authorised Officers - 2 North West, 2 North, 4 South
- Policy/admin/moderation/quality assurance support
- Authorised Officers perform combined functions:
 - Monitoring and compliance activity under state and Commonwealth legislation
 - Quality assessment and rating under the NQF.

The Teachers Registration Board ³⁴ ensures that all children in Tasmanian schools are taught by skilled and qualified teachers, who are of good character. The Board promotes the teaching profession, takes action to improve professional teaching standards, undertakes relevant reviews and research projects and develops and maintains a code of professional ethics for the teaching profession.

³⁴ *Teacher Registration Act 2000*. This Act applies to teachers in schools only.

Regulation of kindergartens under the NQF

Because kindergartens in Tasmania are part of government schools or in non-government schools (including long day care services) which are registered by the Schools Board, they are already regulated under the Education Act. It is for this reason and to avoid duplication of some regulatory and administrative processes that the State has decided that they should continue to be regulated under the Education Act rather than under Commonwealth legislation.

DoE is working to ensure kindergartens in Tasmania delivery quality early childhood programs like the other education and care sectors in this State and nationally.

In 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills indicated that he will ensure that processes, policies and other regulatory mechanisms will be put in place under the Education Act to ensure that all kindergartens substantially correspond with the requirements of the Commonwealth legislation, including the NQS and the implementation of the EYLF.

The work to develop the processes, policies and regulatory mechanisms necessary is well underway, the EYLF is being implemented in all schools and a mapping of the regulations is in progress. Under current arrangements further work is expected to continue in 2014.

Attachment 2 - Child and Family Centres

As part of the Tasmania's commitment to the early years, 11 (soon to be 12³⁵) Child and Family Centres (CFCs) have been established across Tasmania.

The CFCs are places for families with children from birth to age five to access a range of services. The purpose of the CFCs is to improve the health and wellbeing, education and care of Tasmania's very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community.

The goals of the CFCs are to:

- improve the health and educational outcomes for children – birth to five years.
- provide a range of early years services in the local community to support the development of children birth to five years.
- build on the existing strengths of families and communities and assist in their educational needs.
- increase participation in early years programs such as those offered through Launching into Learning (LIL).
- build community capacity by developing partnerships with parents, carers and the community.
- respond to child and family needs in a seamless and holistic manner.

The establishment of CFCs was announced by the State in 2009, in response to the steadily growing body of research evidence from around the world about the critical importance of the early years and the need for a radical shift in the way services are delivered to children and families.

The sites for the CFCs were chosen after extensive research to identify communities with both the need for and potential capacity to support a centre. The key factors underpinning the selection of locations were the level of disadvantage, the projected population growth, the number of 0-4 year olds in the immediate area, data from the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation's report *Outcomes in the Early Years: The State of Tasmania's Young Children 2009*, and the *Kids Come First Report 2009* as well as findings from the social inclusion consultations.

The Australian Government has funded the two CFCs at Bridgewater (tagara lia) and Geeveston (wayraparattee) with an investment of \$8 million. A key priority of these CFCs is to help close the gap between the health and education outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. The CFCs will provide support for all families in their local area, and have been established following the same processes as the other CFCs.

The other 10 CFCs are funded by the State.

³⁵ Construction of the George Town CFC will commence in 2014.

Launching into Learning

Launching into Learning (LiL) is a Tasmanian State Funded initiative that commenced in 2006-07. LiL provides resources to schools to develop and lead initiatives with families and their community to support children's early learning prior to Kindergarten. The current annual budget is \$5.9million and largely used to fund early childhood teachers. LiL is funded in all schools with primary enrolments.

LiL is based on the belief that parents are their child's first, ongoing and often most influential teachers. Schools and families work together to give children the best start, leading to a smooth transition into Kindergarten. All schools use the Early Years Learning Framework to plan strategies and programs to support the growth of the whole child including social and emotional development and early literacy and numeracy.

Children's experiences in the earliest years of their life are critical to their ongoing development. These experiences have a significant impact on their future achievements at school and the extent to which they are able to take advantage of opportunities later in life.

We know that support and intervention before children begin school is likely to be more effective in achieving success than trying to do things to help children 'catch up' once they are at school.

At LiL you will see teachers, parents and children playing alongside, having fun and learning together through experiences such as baby massage, out and about exploring the local community, music sessions, physical activities, water awareness, playgroups and Dad's groups. LiL uses quality learning environments to promote children's learning through play.

Attachment 3 - Additional material requested by the Productivity Commission

During the teleconference on 6 February 2014, the Productivity Commission sought advice on a number of issues. Responses are provided below.

Query - the 'averaging of ratios' which has been raised in other Tasmanian submissions.

- Under the previous State legislation, some centre based services in Tasmania used an averaging provision to assist with flexibility of staff/child ratios at beginning and end of days (and similar circumstances).
- Capacity to continue using the provision for children from 24 months to 72 months was included as a transitional provision (Regulation 346). This regulation applies until 31 December 2017. It allows the educator to child ratio for that service to be one educator to seven children aged 24 months to less than 72 months if not more than three of the children are aged 24 months or more but less than 36 months.
- Not all Tasmanian services used averaging provisions prior to implementation of National Law. Only those services that used the provision under the *Child Care Act 2001* (and transferred to Commonwealth legislation as declared approved services) are able to use the provision in regulation 346 (See the regulation for full content).

Query – Is there any collection of longitudinal data and the impact of the NQF on children.

- It is noted that historically child care policy was an Australian Government responsibility which included data collection.
- The Department of Education (DoE) is undertaking a number of data linkage projects to link all Early Years (defined as 0-8 year olds) datasets. The datasets planned to be linked include peri-natal data, Australian Government child care data, kindergarten enrolment data, Kinder Development Check assessments, Performance in Primary Schools (PIPS) (administered to Prep students only) and NAPLAN assessments.
- There are opportunities for longitudinal data collection. However, Tasmania notes that the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has a key research role in relation to the impact of the National Quality Framework.
- In March 2013 children's education and care experts were appointed to a new Research Advisory Committee to guide and shape ACECQA's future research agenda. The committee is co-chaired by Dr David Kalisch and ACECQA Board Deputy Chair Professor Collette Tayler. See more at: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/committee-formed-to-shape-acecqa-research-agenda#sthash.LsyNkB6c.dpuf>.
- As ACECQA has access to all jurisdictional data through the NQAITS (National IT system) this will provide a comprehensive approach to determining the success or otherwise of the NQF. It should be noted that all jurisdictional data is uploaded to the NQAITS on a daily basis.

Query - NQF and adult literacy

Almost one in two Australians lacks the literacy skills they need for everyday life and work.

Launched in October 2012, 26TEN connects Tasmanians with adult literacy programs and services and makes it easier for people to find help. 26TEN is a long-term strategy that is already raising awareness and harnessing the efforts of Tasmanians to make a difference.

26TEN is a network of organisations and individuals working together to improve adult literacy in Tasmania. By helping people to find the right program or service, 26TEN can open doors to new skills, greater confidence, and improved health, relationships and job opportunities.

Tasmania's 26TEN strategy includes:

- a members' program to help build the Network and extend the range of programs, services and support available to Tasmanians;
- the 26TEN website to inform Tasmanians about adult literacy programs and services and to give the Network a home;
- the 1300 00 2610 service to guide and refer Tasmanians seeking help;
- free literacy awareness and plain English workshops to raise awareness and promote action;
- a public awareness campaign to inform Tasmanians of the benefits of literacy skills and that the 26TEN Network is ready and available to help; and
- the 26TEN Grants Program to improve the literacy skills of Tasmanians in workplaces and communities.

Inaugural network members include the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), Unions Tasmania, the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) and the Small Business Council of Tasmania.

In the 12 months since the launch of 26TEN, the 26TEN support team and members of the 26TEN Coalition of Interest have met with more than 100 organisations who are working toward becoming official members of the network.

New members of the network include Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Nystar, Rural Business Tasmania, Centacare, the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, Metro Tasmania, Mission Australia, the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses and the Geeveston Child and Family Centre – to name just a few. Together, these member organisations are demonstrating strong leadership and commitment to improving literacy in Tasmania.

With 26TEN, Tasmania is leading the way nationally. For example, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) recently released its 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy: *Future Focus*. In its strategy, AWPA highlights adult literacy skills development as a critical national priority and calls for "a multifaceted and engaging national public awareness campaign, similar to the 26TEN initiative" in Tasmania.

ASSESSMENT AND RATING PROGRESS & WAIVERS
TASMANIAN EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES 31 Dec 2013.

BACKGROUND:

- The Department of Education (DoE), through its Education and Care Unit (ECU), is the authority responsible for regulation of education and care services in Tasmania, including the approval of service and temporary waivers and assessment and rating of education and care services.

Assessment and Rating

- In mid-2012 the assessment and rating of education and care services commenced in Tasmania and most other jurisdictions. This is one of the key elements of the NQF.
- On 1 May 2013 national publication of service ratings commenced enabling families across Australia to view ratings for education and care (child care) services.
- The ratings are available on both the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)'s website and on the Australian Government's 'MyChild' website. A link to the national registers is provided on DoE's website.
- In addition to the ratings being available online, all rated services are required to display their ratings on site at their services.
- There continues to be an expectation that a significant proportion of services will achieve the 'Working Towards National Quality Standard (NQS)' overall rating as the NQS sets a high quality benchmark.

Waivers

- Waivers are approved where services have genuine difficulty meeting certain requirements and need time to adjust or deal with unexpected events.
- From 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2013 a Tasmanian transitional regulation (r347) reflected the historical situation under the *Child Care Act 2001* effectively requiring 50 per cent of educators to hold the minimum of a Diploma level qualification in the early childhood area. Provision for educators to be actively working towards this qualification was effected as a condition of licence.
- Services holding these conditions of licence at 1 January 2012 were transitioned to the Commonwealth law as waivers against regulation 347 which requires 50 per cent of educators to hold the minimum of an approved Diploma level qualification, thus maintaining the previous high standard in place in this State.
- This accounted for the comparatively high number of waivers (70+) in place during 2012-13 in Tasmania.
- The transitional regulation ceased to have effect from 1 January 2014, from this date the national qualification requirements apply. The number of waivers in place in Tasmania dropped significantly as a result, however this number is expected to increase as services finalise staffing arrangements for 2014 taking into account the new requirements.

Progress to date:

- On 6 February 2014, ACECQA released the fourth NQF Snapshot (Snapshot) providing an updated analysis of education and care services as at 31 December 2013.
- The Snapshot includes national data on services assessed and rated and the number of waivers issued to services by jurisdictional regulatory authorities.
- At 31 December 2013, 32 per cent of Tasmanian services had received a rating. This is consistent with the national average. Overall there has been an increase of 29 per cent in the proportion of services assessed and rated in Tasmania when compared to the Q3 Snapshot.
- There are now 225 approved services in Tasmania, this is 4 more than reported in the previous Q3 Snapshot. However, this represents little actual growth as 2 of these approvals relate to existing services re-locating or changing structure and one has not yet commenced operating.
- Snapshot data of the 71 Tasmanian services reported as assessed and rated shows that 36 per cent (26) of services are rated as Meeting (15 per cent) or Exceeding (21 per cent) the NQS. Nationally 58 per cent of services are rated as Meeting or Exceeding.
- 63 per cent (45) of Tasmanian services are rated as Working Towards NQS (W). This represents a decrease in the W rating being awarded to Tasmanian services when compared to the Q3 Snapshot which showed 70 per cent of rated services to have a W rating.
- This 'Working Towards NQS' result varies from the national data which shows 40 per cent of services rated as 'Working Towards NQS'. This variance, at least in part, is attributed to:
 - only one third (approximately) of the total number of services have been assessed and rated to date;
 - selection of services assessed and rated is targeted rather than random; and
 - early trends show that preschools in other jurisdictions have rated higher than other service types. This data is not available in Tasmania due to kindergartens being outside of the assessment and rating process.
- Achieving a 'Working Towards' rating does not indicate the service is sub-standard. The focus is on continuous improvement as this new assessment and rating system sets higher benchmarks for services.
- No Tasmanian services have been given the lowest rating 'Significant Improvement Required'.
- DoE is working with the Australian Government funded Professional Support Co-ordinator (PSC), Lady Gowrie Tasmania, to assist services to address areas identified for improvement during the assessment and rating process.

- The Snapshot reports that of the 14 116 approved services nationally, 695 (4.9 per cent) of services have a waiver in place. In Tasmania 7.6 per cent (17) of services currently have a waiver in place; this is a significant reduction since the Q3 Snapshot which reported 35.3 per cent (78) of services with a waiver. The change is due to the expiry of waivers related to transitional staffing requirements that ceased at the end of 2013.
- As services finalise their 2014 staffing arrangements it expected the number of waivers in place in Tasmania will grow, particularly as services now need to comply with new qualification requirements including for some, access to/presence of an early childhood teacher, depending on service type and size.
- DoE is implementing strategies to assist services towards meeting the requirements of NQF.
- The ECU is continuing to monitor the emerging trends to determine whether specific strategies need to be implemented to assist services.