

**Early Childhood Development Workforce  
Productivity Commission Issues Project  
Australian Government – Productivity Commission**

Serial #	Question	Comments
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Given the terms of reference, is the suggested scope of the ECD workforce appropriate for the purposes of this study? (page-5)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In early childhood services serving Indigenous people, a whole of community perspective on the development of an ECD workforce is important, and this perspective is provided often by people who have no association with the service or workforce, i.e. by elders and language speakers in ECD. In the cultural context of many remote Indigenous communities in the NT, elders are seen as knowledge holders, and are ‘... <i>recognised as being able to provide advice, offer support and share wisdom in a confidential way with other members of the community, particularly younger members</i>’ (SNAICC, 2010, p11). These people are unique to each community and should be a part of any decision making around the development of the early childhood workforce in that community. In fact the driving force of the workforce needs to come from the community itself</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Which ECD services for children with additional needs should the Commission include in this study? (page-5)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote Indigenous child care services are currently outside the scope of this inquiry unless they are licensed which in most of the remote communities in the NT they are not. These services often need to cater to children with additional needs but there are almost no local staff with expertise in this area. Inclusion of remote Indigenous children’s services is recommended, particularly if ‘Closing the Gap’ in disadvantage for Indigenous children, and children with additional needs is the ultimate goal.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>In terms of the Preschool workforce, does this provide comprehensive coverage of formal childcare settings? Is this an adequate representation of the broad roles and responsibilities of childcare and preschool workers? What characteristics describe the childcare and preschool workforces – in terms of demographics, wages and salaries, working conditions, employment status, staff turnover, unfilled vacancies and job satisfaction? (page -7) <i>What about additional needs teachers and support workers?</i></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are different ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998; Fleer, 2003) that have developed in the ECD sector creating an artificial distinction between ‘care’ and ‘education’ (<a href="#">Centre for Community Child Health's Policy Brief 8: Early years care and education</a>). A contributor to this problem is the form of training received by ECD staff through either the VET or the HE system, each of which tends to emphasise either ‘care’ over ‘education’ or vice versa. This situation creates tensions clearly evident in the urban context and also seen in remote Indigenous children’s services. Add to this the language and cultural differences that exist between remote Indigenous ECD workers and the non-Indigenous managers, employers, trainers and policy makers, and it is easy to see why there is often a mismatch between managers, funding agency etc expectations of workers’ roles and those of remote Indigenous workers.</li> <li>Pay and conditions differentials influence workers’ satisfaction with their work roles. Most of the remote Indigenous children’s services workforce is paid on a casual basis. This gives them more cash in hand on a daily basis but no sick leave or annual leave</li> </ul>

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		<p>entitlements. When the service shuts down for holiday periods, or when staff are ill, they have no income. This creates problems of workforce continuity and staff turn over. Most of the remote Indigenous preschool workforce is paid across the year with leave entitlements. When the school is not open staff are still paid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional needs workers are critical in remote Indigenous settings where access to professional support is extremely limited – usually only available on a fly in-fly out arrangement. Children with special needs need more frequent support and programs tailored to their needs.</li></ul>
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4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What characteristics describe the child health and family support workforces – in terms of demographics, wages and salaries, working conditions, employment status, staff turnover, unfilled vacancies, and job satisfaction? (page-8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently in remote Indigenous communities in the NT a significant number of family support services are provided through NGOs like Save the Children, Red Cross, Smith Family, Fred Hollows Foundation, etc. This means that they are always writing grants, always assessing their financial capacity to provide services, always seeking staff when new funding arrives and losing them when funding decreases and are therefore regularly constrained in the delivery of these vital services by relatively short term funding cycles.</li> <li>In remote settings there are few connections between health services such as clinics, family service providers, and formal children’s service providers whether in the school or in a child care centre – for multiple reasons. The core business of health professionals in remote services is health and it is our experience that they are generally too overwhelmed by health needs of the full range of people in the community to focus specifically on early childhood. We cannot comment on wages, conditions etc.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What characteristics describe the workforce that provides services to children with additional needs – in terms of demographics, wages and salaries, working conditions, employment status, staff turnover, unfilled vacancies, and job satisfaction? (page-8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within remote indigenous context children with additional needs are rarely provided with additional support in the service and when they are they receive very infrequent support visits. It is beyond our area of expertise to identify the reasons for this.</li> <li>Generally in remote regions wages are poor and offer little incentive to remain in the childcare workforce. Turnover is very high and consistency of staff retention is hard to maintain</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What data collections provide information on the ECD sector and its workforce? How might these data collections be improved? (page-8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VET enrolment data</li> <li>EC teacher &amp; cc qualifications when kept up to date within DET</li> <li>Destination surveys for graduates of early childhood courses (not currently undertaken at BIITE).</li> <li>Information collected under Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) includes - <i>Who they are</i> – basic demographics like age, sex, indigenous and disability information, geographic location; <i>Where they study</i> – type of provider (for example, government or private), location of training delivery; <i>What they study</i> – enrolments in Units of Competency, as part of a qualification, the result obtained for unit (outcome), how it was studied (for example, classroom, workplace or online) and how it was funded.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend that Teacher Registration Boards need to keep this data too.</li> <li>• That languages spoken at home should be included in these databases</li> <li>• That whole of community surveys of ECD be undertaken and kept up to date – who are the qualified ECD workers (and potential workers) living in each remote community.</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do the differing roles and policies of governments affect the planning and provision of the ECD workforce? (page 10)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shire vs State vs Commonwealth leadership in remote services is problematic. DEEWR builds remote services and funds a range of ECD services in remote communities. DET licenses and regulates the services. Shires are the employers. Very rarely are the local Indigenous users and workers involved in key discussions and decisions around workforce development. There is a lack of coordination of expectations and approaches, duplication and waste. These expectations and approaches often do not take into account community vision, views, values and history. ECD workforce development and planning should be community driven and led and not just on paper.</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Are there examples of jurisdictions or councils with effective policies and programs that could be usefully transferred and applied in other areas of Australia? (page 10)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is one service run by a local Indigenous woman and local staff at Atitjere (Harts Range) very successfully and which has been operating successfully for 2 or 3 years. This arrangement appears to have been supported by successive administrators, DET sponsored Mobile Early Childhood Services (MECS) staff and DEEWR. Studying this kind of success would contribute to our understanding of whether it is possible to transfer this success, and if so, how. There are very few examples in 2010 of remote Indigenous services run by local community workers.</li> <li>• There is a trend to employ non-Indigenous, sometimes qualified staff (but also unqualified staff) in remote Indigenous children's services. This approach potentially undermines the local workforce who may have more experience and qualifications than the imported staff person, and certainly are more competent in terms of local knowledge and cultural competence. In one service in central Australia the non indigenous coordinator has successfully mentored and worked in partnership with the Indigenous staff who can operate the service effectively on their own. She has encouraged them to undertake training and at this stage has 3 staff with Certificate III in children's services and 2 staff enrolled in Certificate III in children's services</li> </ul>

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10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Are there other significant policies governing the ECEC, child health and family support sectors and their workforces that the Commission should be aware of? (page-12)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and practice associated with the Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) and VET training offered through the dual sector universities and other RTOs in the NT need attention. These two groups are charged with providing professional development to Indigenous ECD services. VET trainers target the same groups as do IPSUs. How well do they work together? How can their work be structured more effectively to support Indigenous children's service workforce development across the health, family, child care and Out of School Hours care domains? Collaboration is currently difficult, due in part of different policies and levels of funding.</li> <li>• 'English only' for first 4 hours of the day policy of the NT government appears to be discouraging some families from ensuring their children attend preschool in remote communities in the NT and may also be impacting on the willingness of local Indigenous workers to participate in the workforce.</li> <li>• On a service level Indigenous families have been consistent in requesting culturally safe programs as reported by Hutchins, et al. (2007, p.2). 'Culturally safe programs and services are characterised by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The employment of Indigenous staff</li> <li>- Reflexive non-Indigenous practitioners</li> <li>- Acknowledgment of the importance of relationships to successful programs</li> <li>- Inclusion of shared care by extended family</li> <li>- Provision of transport to and from services</li> <li>- Incorporation of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world</li> <li>- The role of history – acknowledging the past and learning together</li> <li>- Holism – 'joined up services' addressing all aspects of health and wellbeing')</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If cultural safety policies contained all these elements and were adopted in the development of all Indigenous ECD services, it is highly likely such services would attract both workers and users, particularly in remote communities.</li> </ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are some of the child development reasons families choose to use, or not use, different ECEC services? How is this changing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From the remote Indigenous perspective there is ample evidence that remote families see the benefit of ECD services. In numerous reports (see Fasoli et al 2004 &amp; Hutchins &amp; Saggars, 2009) families attest to their desire for their children to learn basic literacy and numeracy</li> </ul>

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	over time? (page 13)	<p>skills, get ready for school and learn to speak English. At the same time, there is plenty of evidence of resistance to the use of local children's services despite benefits. This resistance may relate to family perceptions that they are mainstream services, only for some families within communities, only for working parents, or not for Indigenous people at all. This is a complex issue that is discussed well in Hutchins &amp; Saggars (2009) and in Fasoli, et al, (2004).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the 'Talking Early Childhood Report' (Willsher &amp; Clark, 1995, p. 135-138). This report documents the diverse needs expressed by remote Indigenous community participants for the development of services for their children, needs that were reaffirmed in the Both Ways Children's Services report undertaken in 2004 in 6 of the same communities. They include the following - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to supplement the care that can be provided by family when women take up work or study,</li> <li>- for short term care of children when families have other business to attend to,</li> <li>- for good child care practices to support young parents who have missed out due to the illness of older family members who would normally have taught these skills,</li> <li>- to prepare young children, in some communities, for school and 'school ways' depending on how well the school community incorporated familiar language and culture practices,</li> <li>- to support communities to improve children's health and welfare through provision of various programs, most notably nutrition and ear health programs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To what extent is female labour force participation influenced by the availability of formal childcare? How might the demand for ECEC services be affected by changes to female labour force participation? (page 13)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In remote Indigenous services in the NT the children's service is a major employer of local women in the community. The presence of a child care service in remote communities also enables local women to take up other formal and informal roles in these communities.</li> <li>• However, the family /clan membership of the child care workforce often has more influence on family use of the service than the availability of child care per se (Both ways Report, 2004). In addition, inclusion of elders and older women was seen as critical to family involvement in services.</li> <li>• As noted above, whether families use a service is influenced by many factors and it is likely that participation in the service by workers is also affected by these factors.</li> </ul>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To what extent does the relative cost of ECEC services determine the demand for those services? (page 13)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until recently remote Indigenous child care in the NT has been virtually free. Fees are rarely collected. Token fees, mostly to pay for food, have been required in some remote services with varying degrees of success so fees have not had a major effect on demand. It will affect demand if fees are implemented.</li> </ul>

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14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What factors affect the demand for, and the skills required of, the child health workforce? (page-14)</li></ul>	
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15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How might the proposed qualification standards, staffing levels, and the implied mix of skills and knowledge assist the delivery of the desired outcomes for children? (page 14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If qualifications result in higher costs of child care in a remote Indigenous community environment it is likely to affect the participation rate of families to reduce it even further thus impacting on outcomes for children. We fully support the increase in qualification levels but the increased costs should not be passed on to community members at this time.</li> <li>If higher qualifications are required and ECD services continue to rely on ‘fly in’ expertise, instead of locally grown and recruited staff, this is also likely to affect child outcomes where fewer families use the service run by non-indigenous workforce. Perceptions of local families that the service is a ‘western’ program will affect participation. Community control and local community participation are critical to implementing new quality standards.</li> <li>As noted in Hutchins, et al (2007, p. 1), ‘Successful programs and services include those which emphasise the importance of Indigenous history and culture, Indigenous community control, and respectful supportive relationships between Indigenous and non- Indigenous people in order to provide quality, holistic early learning and care programs and services.’</li> <li>Staff can be flown in to remote communities to provide leadership and core skills training. They will achieve good outcomes for children if they work in true partnership with local community members. This means understanding their roles as learners who are there to learn with and from the staff they support as well as mentors who can pass on their skills to others. An integrated skill mix is recommended.</li> </ul>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What effect will the new standards and targets have on demand for ECD workers? (page 14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New standards are likely to increase demand for ECD workers in an already stretched workforce, particularly in the remote Indigenous context. The remedy for this is to start immediately with targeted Indigenous training programs that are community based, culturally appropriate, literacy enhanced and coupled with a community and service development approach. There are never going to be enough ‘fly in’ workers to address the significant gap in education, care and health promotion services for young children in remote communities.</li> <li>Literacy is an issue with training staff and informing them of early childhood requirements – in the first instance remote services may need a form of mentoring or at least consistent, regular support</li> </ul>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What options are available for funding the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create incentives to do training and provide remote Indigenous workers with pay</li> </ul>



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	<b>increased wages and salaries of more highly qualified ECD workers? (page 15)</b>	<p>increments as they achieve qualified status. Not all workers need to be on the same wages. Introduce fees slowly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase government funding for the increased costs of employing qualified staff in children's services.</li> <li>• Improve the status of the early childhood workforce to give it proper recognition. This will go some way toward encouraging ECD staff to invest in acquiring higher levels of qualification (i.e. HECS associated with Degrees).</li> <li>• Providing accommodation for trained staff who are employed from outside the community – this is a major issue for ensuring a strong trained workforce. There have been many instances where services could not advertise for trained staff as there was no accommodation available</li> </ul>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How will increased fertility rates, changing family structures, the introduction of paid parental leave and other demographic, social and policy factors affect the demand for ECD services and ECD workers? (page 15)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the remote context, it is likely that someone in each family will choose to stay at home and look after young children with the support of paid parental leave.</li> <li>• Paid parental leave entitlements may support child care workers, currently on casual wages, to remain a part of the workforce when they become pregnant. Currently they leave the workforce. They will have income during the first year of their child's life. If the service welcomes them and encourages them to use the service during this period their skills will remain fresh and they are more likely to remain employed within the service.</li> </ul>
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do providers of ECD services have difficulties finding staff? If so, are these problems more pronounced in some ECD occupations or in some areas of Australia? Why is this the case? (page 16)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, in remote communities finding the right staff for ECD services is challenging. When there is the wrong leader / manager in the services, when the services seem to be run by outsiders who don't listen to the community and when people are not treated respectfully local participation of workers dwindles, to mention just three of the key reasons.</li> <li>• There is enormous difficulty in getting qualified Indigenous staff in remote communities because of lack of access to training within the community and many workers' reluctance to travel to an urban centre for training. It is also difficult to find the right balance of staff from different skin/clan groups.</li> </ul>

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20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How much of the shortage is caused by low wages or wage differentials? Are there other factors (such as working hours or conditions) that are important in attracting staff to the sector? (page 16)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In remote Indigenous communities, staff shortages are not about wages primarily but rather the recruitment of suitable qualified ECD worker from both within and outside the community. There is a serious lack of early childhood expertise within many remote communities, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Even within the schools, there may be no qualified early childhood teachers. Attracting ECD workers from beyond the community requires consideration of additional issues. As pointed out in recent research in the NT, there are significant challenges in finding appropriately qualified early childhood staff. They must first have the maturity and courage to leave their own culture to live in a world where few people speak their language fluently. In addition there is a continuing and serious lack of adequate housing, lack of access to transport and inability to travel to and from communities in the wet season (Elliot, Fasoli, &amp; Nutton, 2009, p. 52)'. </li> <li>• Working hours may affect remote recruitment because of Aboriginal lifestyles, the high incidence of illness, including mental illness within families, and crowded living condition. These conditions mean that many workers have been up until late at night and are not able to start work at 8:00am. In addition, workers have cultural responsibilities that require them to take time off work. If this time is not granted many valuable workers are left with little choice and leave the service. Flexible working arrangements, and transparency in how paid leave is organised/granted, is needed to address this problem.</li> <li>• See Fasoli, et al (2004, p. 113-114) for an example of a flexible, transparent approach adopted in one small remote community to remedy this problem. 'All staff are paid for sick days and personal leave days. Often staff have to be away for various reasons for more than these allocated days. If additional absences are for legitimate reasons, they are paid for these days off, but at a lower rate. So when people must be away for funerals or other cultural business that may take them to other communities or into town for an extended period of time, they are able to receive some pay while the child care centre is still able to hire someone to take their place.</li> </ul> <p>Staff have developed a spread sheet that shows graphically the daily hours worked by every staff member. It is colour coded for reasons of absence (such as blue for sick days and yellow for holidays). This makes it clear to staff when they have been away and for what reasons and how many actual hours they have worked each week. When it comes to holidays, they used to be</p>
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		<p>paid for their full allocated hours per week rate. However, this was not financially viable for the service, now they are paid over their holidays on their average hours worked per week (plus leave loading (p. 113-114).’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retaining non-Indigenous staff with the necessary mix of ECD qualifications and cultural competencies is difficult in remote Indigenous communities. Many non-Indigenous ECD workers experience culture shock and become disillusioned without adequate support and proper cultural training. Adequate support includes strong support from the community and this can only be achieved by working, from the start, with community representatives in the recruitment process. Cultural training is also critical. When training is a two or three day ‘generic’ induction, it will not include local cultural competencies, history, and knowledge which can and should be provided by local Indigenous people.</li> <li>ECD workers from outside of Indigenous communities should be expected and given support to learn some local language prior to commencing their work in communities.</li> <li>See Scougall, 2008, p. 83), ‘...it is crucial that staff have cultural, spiritual, psychological, emotional, social and historic understandings). In regions that retain an orientation to traditional values, an understanding of the family kinship system has been found to be very important.’</li> </ul>
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>To what extent are ECEC, child health and family support services experiencing staff retention issues? Are there examples of effective staff retention strategies in the ECD sector? How might such strategies be replicated throughout Australia? (page-16)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compared to staff recruited from outside of remote communities, local staff retention is remarkably good in many remote Indigenous services. Many staff have remained involved with a service over a number of years. Equally there are many services where staff is continually changing or not available at all. Strategies that appear to work include flexibility in work hours, an understanding of cultural obligations of local staff, highly respectful interactions and community support /control of the service.</li> <li>These strategies are likely to be relevant to remote Indigenous communities throughout Australia.</li> </ul>
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What are the key factors influencing an individual’s decision to work in the ECD sector? Do these vary for different ECD occupations?(page 17)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care remote service worker choice of occupation is influenced by the community promoting certain people to become involved over others, clan and family relationships and the capacity of the service director to work respectfully and collaboratively with workers in a ‘mutual - mentoring’ rather than ‘directing’ role.</li> <li>Where there are few if any jobs for Indigenous people in remote communities, child care remains a very desirable work place. There are a number of reasons for this. The pay is good</li> </ul>

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		<p>relative to receiving a pension. In addition, research has shown that ‘The types of kitchen equipment and food found in a remote Indigenous children’s service are often not available within people’s homes, making the service very attractive places to both adults and children’ (Fasoli &amp; Moss, 2007, p. 268). While this may seem like a small point, it should be understood that children’s services provide much more than child care for the many remote families who live very impoverished lives.</p>
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Why are ECD workers paid less than those working in related sectors? Are the wages and salaries for workers in different ECD occupations appropriate, given the skills and qualifications required? If not, how might this best be addressed? (page 17)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any form of qualification appears to be rewarded generously in remote Indigenous child care due to lack of availability of trained ECD staff. And this will remain the case into the near future given the significant lack of trained staff in remote communities. The lack of appropriate recognition of the worth of an ECD worker through wages is a whole of sector problem. Higher wages are critical to the improved status of the profession. This is best addressed through increasing wage levels of child care workers to achieve parity with colleagues working with a school and health environment.</li> <li>It is likely that as more remote Indigenous children’s service staff gain a qualification they may decide to move between services. While this is a desirable outcome in that their expertise is shared across the sector, child care services may suffer. Staff will seek to move to workplaces with fewer working hours, more pay and better leave conditions, such as the school.</li> <li>The Teacher Registration Boards lack of recognition of the early childhood profession appears to be a serious impediment to achieving improved status of the profession where in some jurisdictions no recognition of early childhood teachers’ experience gained in children’s service is given.</li> </ul>
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Does the regulatory burden have a significant impact on attracting or retaining staff in the ECD sector? Do you expect recently announced reforms to make a material difference to the regulatory burden facing ECD workers? What more could be done to reduce the regulatory burden? (page 17)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulations do not, as yet, impact in remote communities because most services are not licensed or participating in QIAS, but as the Child care Certificate becomes the required minimum standard for all staff (by 2013), and as the requirement for ‘licensing’ through the new quality standards kicks in, it will become a factor in attracting and keeping staff. The impact can be minimised by implementing more collaborative working arrangements amongst government departments and service providers and through providing long term funding to bring these services up to national standards.</li> <li>Regulations and requirements for training can have a positive effect on service quality as was noted in the Both Ways Report (Fasoli et al, 2004). Licensing requirements have a strong affect on practices in centres where they apply. For example, the regular washing of toys and the supervision of children are licensing requirements taken very seriously at (two</li> </ul>

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		<p>services). They are routine activities in the service and occur according to a systematic roster of staff duties. Some form of written program is recorded for children's activities in most services....Individual staff members sign up to do the activity of their choice. In this way they are learning about a range of child focused activities that could be offered. We noticed that in some services staff sit close to children and spend time playing or doing activities with them and in others this is not a common practice. (Fasoli et. al, 2004, p. 189)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulations and National Quality Standards need to be contextualised culturally within the Indigenous communities through consultation</li></ul>
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25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How appropriate are the qualifications required for entry into various ECD occupations? Do differences in qualifications requirements restrict workers' ability to move between jurisdictions or ECD sectors? (page 18)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although not a significant issue in the NT remote communities where there are so few people with the any training, it should be noted that when a local Indigenous worker has any form of EC training, but most particularly a child care certificate, they often choose to move from their job in child care to work the school where pay and better working conditions are available. This can make the children's service a particularly hard place to recruit to.</li> </ul>
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do newly-qualified ECD workers have the necessary skills and attributes to be effective in the workplace? (page 19)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a complex issue in the remote Indigenous services with which we are familiar. Just as existed in the 1980s in mainstream services in Australia, in remote Indigenous communities there are currently very few qualified early childhood staff. As staff become qualified, even if it is only at Certificate III level, enormous pressure is put on them to become leaders of the service or effectively 'run' the service. While many have risen to this challenge, some have back away and chosen not to continue in the field. Without appropriate and regular professional development and support such staff are 'burnt out' quickly.</li> <li>• Experience with a strong mentor would support the development of newly qualified staff in managing services</li> <li>• All ECD non-Indigenous staff need an integrated set of skills across the range in health, education, welfare, competencies in cross cultural knowledge and history, working with staff who have English as a Second Language (ESL), additional needs training, more support and at least an expectation to develop some facility in the dominant local language of their community. Children's services in remote communities are not just about caring for children while their parents work, nor are they primarily educative. They are meant to address a much wider range of needs and visions of their local communities. In some communities people want a 'drop in' centre for young mums or a place to come and get health checks while you have a cup of tea. Too many are being run from a western model that sees their services as child care in separate age groups. That many remote families ignore the service may well be a reflection of how out of touch the service is to the needs and aspirations of that community.</li> <li>• Remote Indigenous workers also need leadership and management skills from the start of their learning journeys, more access to work-based training in the remote setting, more access to computers and the internet (in MOST service there is no access for workers), more experience in a range of ECD services beyond those in their communities (i.e. not all of their training undertaken in their own service), additional needs training, particularly in ear health, and much</li> </ul>

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		<p>more attention to and recognition of their existing cultural competence. These competencies often do not appear in the standard child care training packages offered by mainstream RTOs and are thus afforded no recognition or time within course delivery by some RTOs.</p>
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>To what extent are qualification requirements a barrier to entering the ECD sector? How could any such barriers be overcome? Do people from indigenous and CALD backgrounds face particular barriers to obtaining entry-level ECD qualifications? (page 19)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the remote Indigenous community context, remoteness, lack of training in local language, lack of any opportunity for training available in community, lack of English literacy, lack of IT skills and no access to computers and the internet, low levels of previous schooling, bad past experiences of schooling and training, illness, family obligations, weather are all impediments to gaining qualifications.</li> <li>In our experience, most remote Indigenous children's service staff now express a keen interest in gaining qualifications. This was more common in the Top End since 2000 but not as much in desert communities. But there is now a perceptible change of attitude in this regard.</li> <li>Training packages need to be contextualised for Indigenous culture</li> </ul>
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Are workers who obtain additional skills and qualifications sufficiently rewarded? Is expertise sufficiently recognised and valued? How could opportunities for career progression within the ECD sector be enhanced? (page 19)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous cultural competencies are not recognised in formal training. Even where remote Indigenous staff already hold appropriate qualifications, a sometimes less qualified non-Indigenous staff member is employed at a higher level and / or in a supervisory capacity. This continues to happen despite recognition of this issue as early as 1995. See Willsher &amp; Clarke (1995, p. 130). 'Women appeared very conscious of being "bossed around" by an outside trainer or supervisor and told to run the program or centre differently to the way the community wanted it to run. '</li> <li>As mentioned above, most staff remain on casual wages throughout their time in the workforce and receive no increments. There is no real career progression apparent, even within schools in some notable cases. One very competent worker known to us has worked as a preschool teacher assistant for over 30 years. She has completed her studies at Batchelor Institute in teacher education.</li> </ul>
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Are in-service training and professional development programs meeting workforce development needs? Are there barriers to ECD staff accessing training and development programs? If so, how could such barriers be overcome?(page 19)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, as noted above, the main source of remote Indigenous children's services PD is provided by the IPSUs and this program cannot currently meet needs which are overwhelming in the NT. No where else in Australia do the IPSUs cater for such a large number of remote services with such high need for professional development.</li> <li>Recommend systemically linking accredited training to non-accredited PD training to achieve economies of scale for travel to remote communities and sharing of expertise.</li> <li>See Elliott, et al, 2009.</li> <li>Also see Fordham &amp; Schwab, 2007.</li> </ul>

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30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Do you consider professional status to be an issue for the ECD workforce? What factors determine professional status in the sector? How might a change in status be achieved? What would be the effects of such a change? (page 20)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The gap between education and care is as clear in remote Indigenous community contexts as it is in urban contexts. Staff in schools get higher pay, more holidays and better regard within the community. Child care often loses staff to the school once staff gain qualifications.</li> <li>The status of the worker in a remote service does not depend solely on qualifications or employment position. Family and clan group issues are also important to consider. Elders hold a status in terms of their expertise and knowledge in working with very young children, a status that is often not recognised in the workforce. Elders should be paid and supported to participate in all ECD services in remote communities, probably on a part time basis. This would be a very cost effective way to improve the status of the service within the community and the quality of the service for young children.</li> <li>Change can be achieved through a whole of community development approach to ECD service and workforce development.</li> </ul>
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Will the supply of qualified ECD workers expand sufficiently to meet COAG's objectives? How might the training of additional workers be funded?</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine and coordinate the expertise and activities of staff delivering remote mentors, PD and formal accredited training.</li> <li>Increase tax breaks for students undergoing ECD training.</li> <li>Offer scholarships/stipends etc for workers at the very beginning of their learning trajectory, rather than at Diploma or B.Ed levels, contingent of successful achievement of training activities. If a home grown, local ECD workforce is ever to be achieved in remote services it starts at Cert I, II and III levels.</li> <li>Increase HECS threshold for ECD remote workers to a higher level</li> <li>Provide workers with paid time during working hours to undertake training. Many of the most promising staff have heavy family commitments outside of working hours making it difficult to undertake training. The services managers do not want to close the service while training is occurring. However, it seems that more effort should be made to staff the service with alternate staff to enable core staff to get training. If the will is there, it is possible to find a solution to this problem.</li> </ul>
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Are training providers and courses of sufficient quality to meet the needs of the ECD sector?(page 20)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No in terms of Indigenous pedagogies, English as a second language, cultural competencies of instructors, cultural content of courses and whole of community consultation to secure 'buy in' and support for learners.</li> <li>A review of existing research (Miller, C. 2005, p. 5) identified 7 key factors leading to</li> </ul>



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		<p>positive and improved outcomes for Indigenous students undertaking VET courses. They include: (1) community ownership and involvement; (2) the incorporation of Indigenous identities, cultures, (3) knowledge and values; (4) the establishment of ‘true’ partnerships; (5) flexibility in course design, content and delivery; quality staff and committed advocacy; (6) extensive student support services; (7) appropriate funding that allows for sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfortunately, there are a few RTO providers in the NT who take a ‘tick and flick’ approach to recognition of prior learning (RPL) and course delivery in general.</li> </ul>
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What can be done to ensure that there is an adequate supply of skilled trainers to meet future increases in demand for training? (page 20)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a career ladder with professional development at every stage for accomplished child care workers to become trainers of their own people, in their own communities and in their own languages.</li> <li>• Support the development of remote Indigenous training resources and trainers to support staff through online delivery.</li> <li>• Buy a computer for every children’s service at a minimum and connect it to a satellite dish. This would immediately change the involvement of staff in training.</li> <li>• Subsidise access to the Cert IV in Workplace Training for remote Indigenous leaders with qualifications.</li> <li>• Ensure training within an Indigenous context is implemented appropriately to engage participation of students. Without formal enrolments, funding is not available to support training and the development of skilled trainers.</li> </ul>
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is the scope for productivity improvements in the ECD sector?(page 21)</b></li> </ul>	

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35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Have initiatives to increase the supply of ECD workers been effective? (page 21)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidising of fees for Diploma and degree level training is a bit beyond the level of most remote Indigenous staff. While a good initiative, it misses the starting point for remote staff.</li> <li>• EC supply in remote communities is more complex than in mainstream and relates far more to housing access, transport, support, and staff capacity to develop productive relationships with the community = not just about HECS and subsidies.</li> <li>• Increased access to training in communities is critical to building the local workforce. Training is needed in the community. Also, providing computers so that some contact can be made with remote workers through email and Skype would definitely affect the supply of ECD qualified workers.</li> <li>• Recognition and priority funding for lower levels of qualification than the Cert III would be encouraging to training institutions and students who are just beginning their learning journey in early childhood.</li> </ul>
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Will workers who are required to upgrade their qualifications do so, or will they leave the ECD sector? (page 21)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They may leave the sector unless training is offered well and meets both their learning needs and the aspirations of their communities.</li> </ul>
37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the implications for the ECD workforce, in terms of skill-mix requirements and work practices, from integrating or co-locating ECD services? Is there scope for the development of generalised ECD workforce or a pool of specialised integrated services managers? (page 22)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a very good idea in a remote community context. There is an increased need to focus on qualifications and delivery of core ECD skills that cut across child care, preschool, health and wellbeing services.</li> <li>• There is a severe lack of training across the sector – i.e. skills in working effectively with other organisations, managing services, supporting and mentoring staff within services, working effectively with parents and families, meeting the complex needs of children with additional needs in resource poor work environments, financial management, and other leadership activities.</li> <li>• Also see Scougall, J., 2008. In 2000, FaCS convened an Indigenous Community Capacity Building Roundtable that developed eight additional principles to guide the work of the department in its interactions with Indigenous families and communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encouraging partnership between government and Indigenous peoples in program design and implementation</li> <li>- identifying positive role models and successful approaches</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- empowering Indigenous peoples by developing leadership and managerial competence</li> <li>- targeting the needs of youth and children in areas including leadership development, esteem building, cultural awareness and anti-violence training</li> <li>- empowering Indigenous peoples to develop their own solutions to their own issues and to take responsibility within their own families and communities</li> <li>- giving priority to initiatives that encourage self-reliance and sustainable development</li> <li>- fostering projects that incorporate Indigenous culture and spirituality</li> <li>- building on the strengths, assets and capacities of Indigenous families and communities.</li> </ul> <p>Using a strength-based approach meant that the starting point was identification of the capacities people already had—their resources, skills, knowledge, understandings, interests, hopes and achievements—rather than initially focusing on those areas where families and communities may have been lacking in some way. It was important not to construct Indigenous peoples as, almost by definition, always the ones who lack capacity. A ‘deficit’ approach risks undermining trust, confidence and self-belief (p. 2).</p>
38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In the context of increasing integration of ECD services, does the involvement of multiple unions and professional associations affect the capacity for innovation and flexibility in the ECD workforce?(page 22)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher registration board appears to not understand the role and purposes of ECD services prior to school in that they do not fully recognise the expertise of child care workers and teachers within this sector.</li> <li>• There remains a gap of understanding of the common purposes shared by children’s services and schools.</li> </ul>
39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How will the ageing of the population, the introduction of paid parental leave, and other demographic, social and policy changes affect the supply of ECD workers? (page 22)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging issues are critical in remote Indigenous services in the NT, given that the older women who have been the driving force in the development of these services are the most highly educated. When the next generation takes over this will change and capacity will be lost (Taylor, 2010). We need to start now to address this issue.</li> </ul>
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What skills must ECD workers have in order to provide effective services to Indigenous children? Do all ECD workers who work with Indigenous children have these skills? Given the challenges faced by many services for</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The notion of qualifications that incorporate core competencies in health, education and welfare makes a lot of sense and should be pursued. This is not difficult given that the Community Services Training Package has capacity to integrate most of the relevant competencies.</li> <li>• Cultural competence, leadership for working with other adults and agencies, management</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Indigenous children, how appropriate are the remuneration and conditions for workers in those services? (page 23)</b></p>	<p>skills, mentoring ability to build others capacity, flexible and responsive attitudes, at least basic local language skills in the dominant language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills in using a computer and the internet would assist greatly in connecting remote workers to their profession and the world of early childhood beyond the community. It would overcome many issues for training providers as well. Finally remote workers can connect with each other and learn from each other. At BIITE we are already using Skype to connect workers in Wadeye and Borroloola to talk about their learning through the Learning at Work Book. This is a model that remote workers respond well to and they are very keen to use computers. However, for these skills to be learned remote ECD workers need access to computers. In most services only the director/supervisor (usually non-Indigenous) access the computer. This can be fixed if there is the will to do so.</li> <li>• Ability to think on your feet and plan for contingencies. There is a need ‘...to plan as much as possible for all contingencies; for instance, changes in resources, weather and cultural and business, must be balanced with the ability to react to other unforeseen issues (Miller, 2005, p.28).</li> <li>• Within today’s historical context, employers seek graduates not only with professional competence, but the capacity to complement skills and knowledge with generic, employability skills (Department of Education Science and Training, 2002). The Department of Education, Science and Training (2006) describe the employability skill of communication as central to all work practices helping to produce well-balanced relationships, which when working within an Indigenous context are essential. ‘</li> <li>• Australia’s National peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), advocate good communication as essential for building relationships and developing trust with aboriginal families and communities (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care 2010).</li> </ul>
41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What strategies are being used to attract ECD workers from Indigenous communities and to build Indigenous workforce capability? How effective are these strategies? (page 23)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Elliott et al, 2009, as above.</li> <li>• There is a trend occurring in which Shires employ team leaders, requiring no specific early childhood qualifications on the assumption that they can be supported by trained visiting coordinators with industry skills. For example see <a href="http://www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au/PositionVacancies/tabid/495/Default.aspx">http://www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au/PositionVacancies/tabid/495/Default.aspx</a></li> <li>• A strategy which would be of benefit is offering a position with training and mentoring support to indigenous employees during recruitment</li> <li>• Management and shires should be consulting with the communities regarding initiating the</li> </ul>

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		areas of training. In order for there to be community ownership it needs to be initiated and driven by the community
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do ECD workers have the skills to provide effective services to all the children who they regularly work with, including those with disabilities and other special needs and from CALD or low SES backgrounds? What additional skills or support might they require in order to do so? (page 24)</li> </ul>	As above in Item 37
43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How appropriate are the remuneration and conditions for ECD workers for children with additional needs? (page 24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are very few staff skilled in working with children with additional needs located in remote communities.</li> </ul>
44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are workers from CALD backgrounds represented in the ECD sector?(page 24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficiently</li> </ul>
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are these particular workforce issues for early childhood intervention workers? Is the expertise of such workers sufficiently recognised and valued? Are there career paths that enable early childhood intervention workers to remain with the ECD sector? (page 24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We do not have expertise to comment</li> </ul>
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons can be learnt from the ECD sectors in other countries or from other sectors within Australia? What are some of the caveats that need to be taken into account when making comparisons across countries or across sectors? (page 24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECD in Canadian remote communities provides some useful information that could be applied in remote Indigenous NT communities. See Ball &amp; Pence, 2006.</li> </ul>

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