



Department of Education

Productivity Commission Study on Early Childhood Development Workforce

**Submission by the Western Australian Department
of Education**

January 2011

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1. SCOPE

This Paper is the Department of Education's response to the Productivity Commission Study and Issues Paper (October & November 2010) on the Early Childhood Development Workforce. It provides the Productivity Commission with information and background that highlights concerns and emerging issues, specific to early childhood education in Western Australia (WA).

The intended outcomes of this Paper are to inform the Commission about the WA early childhood education workforce, for consideration and investigation by the Commission in highlighted areas - particularly Section 4 and Section 6, and to secure ongoing and additional support from the Commonwealth for WA.

An overview of the current status of the early childhood education workforce in WA is provided, including future projections for supply, demand and quality, within the context of National Partnerships, Frameworks and State strategies. Consideration is also given to the specific challenges faced in developing and supporting an Aboriginal early childhood education workforce, and a workforce in Aboriginal and remote communities. Current work in the early years also identifies the requirement to support the workforce to address confidently the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities, and English as a Second Language/Dialect (ESL/D).

This Paper has been developed by the Department of Education (DoE), and endorsed by the Association for Independent Schools of WA (AISWA) and the Catholic Education Office. The issues and recommendations provided are agreed to be relevant across all education sectors.

Pre-compulsory schooling in WA is provided by schools and comprises both kindergarten (pre-school) and pre-primary, with approximately 73% of kindergarten provision in public schools, 17% in Catholic schools and 10% in AISWA schools. In addition to the kindergarten programs that operate from within schools, there are a number of established Community Kindergartens offering kindergarten programs. These are included among the public school data above. Community Kindergartens are registered under the *School Education Act 1999* and offer educational programs to children in their first year of pre-compulsory schooling (kindergarten in WA). They are managed by a Parent Management Committee and are supported financially and staffed by the DoE. Staff and the programs delivered in Community Kindergartens are required to comply with DoE policies and standards and personnel are line-managed by the principal of the local public primary school.

Officially, no kindergartens in WA are located within the child care setting and this is currently the subject of a feasibility study being compiled through the DoE. An indeterminate but small number of long day care centres, however, list kindergarten provision among their services.

The kindergarten workforce referred to in this Paper comprises:

- Four-year University trained teachers registered with the Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT) and who meet DoE staffing policy requirements for specialization and/or experience in teaching in the early years of schooling.
- The early childhood education assistant (EA) workforce who may or may not have formal qualifications and are not subject to WACOT registration requirements.

2. BACKGROUND

The national generic term 'preschool' is taken to refer in WA to the first year of pre-compulsory schooling, known as kindergarten. This is legislatively defined in the *School Education Act 1999* as the year in which children will reach the age of four years on or before 30 June. For some years, age eligible children in WA have been legislatively entitled to a minimum of 11 hours per week of kindergarten in a public school for which no compulsory fees are payable. A key feature of early childhood education in WA is that provision is legislatively, culturally and industrially embedded within the schooling sector. In addition, most non-government schools offer kindergarten, which in the absence of Commonwealth funding for preschool prior to 2008-9, attracts State Government funding.

Kindergarten programs in schools are an integral part of a cohesive early childhood schooling program extending from kindergarten to Year 3 (typically age four to age eight). Kindergarten programs are planned and conducted by a teacher working alongside an EA, with program quality and outcomes overseen by the school principal. Approximately 22% of kindergarten programs are conducted in mixed age groups (kindergarten and pre-primary or kindergarten, pre-primary and Year 1) across public and non-government schools. Kindergarten teachers are provided with the same pay and conditions as all other teachers.

National reforms and strategies are being implemented to improve access to high quality early learning and care throughout Australia, and to increase the quality and supply of the early childhood workforce. The ramifications of this reform agenda for the workforce in all jurisdictions are significant and will place increased demand for qualified and skilled early childhood education and care personnel, who are currently difficult to source in hard-to-staff locations. The COAG managed reforms include:

- *The National Early Childhood Development Strategy – Investing in the Early Years* is aimed at assisting all levels of government to build a more effective and better coordinated national early childhood development system, covering the birth to 8 years of age cohort.
- *The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and School Age Care*, incorporating the *Early Years Learning Framework* that outlines requirements to ensure that all early childhood education and care services across Australia are of a high quality. It provides the basis for the development of a National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care, and a quality rating system to drive continuous improvement, giving parents relevant information on the quality of learning and care; and, the streamlining of accreditation arrangements.
- *The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education – Universal Access* requires an increase of kindergarten hours in WA from 11 to 15 hours per week, 40 weeks a year to be delivered by four-year University qualified early childhood education teachers.
- *The Closing the Gap: Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership* promotes and supports: the integration of early childhood services through Children and Family Centres; increased access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health; and increased access to and use of maternal and child health services for Aboriginal families.
- *National Early Years Workforce Strategy* aims to improve the supply of the early childhood education and care workforce, particularly in high needs and remote areas.
- *National Framework for Protecting Australian Children* provides a long-term national approach to help protect all Australian children.

In addition to the national agenda, WA factors likely to impact on the early childhood workforce include:

- increased birth rates from around 2003;
- an ageing workforce;
- existing early childhood education workforce shortages in certain rural locations;
- strong growth in the economy, driven by resource and infrastructure projects such as the Gorgon, East Kimberley Expansion, Oakajee Industrial Estate and Port and Rail projects, increasing family migration into regional areas; and,
- increased integration of the early childhood education and care agenda which is constrained by WA legislation, and subject to different and sometimes competing regulatory environments. For example, public schools can only provide programs for children who have reached the pre-compulsory age of schooling, and there is currently no provision for State funding for kindergarten programs in child care services. This demarcation is under review and consideration is being made to align legislation in this area with other jurisdictions.

There is growing community, parent and school interest in the provision of early intensive educational intervention for children at risk of experiencing difficulties with learning in their transition to compulsory schooling. The National Disability Strategy currently in development will be included within the COAG managed reforms. It is a major commitment to setting out a ten-year agenda for coordinated, across-government action for Australians with a disability, and will have implications for the design and delivery of services and supports for the early childhood workforce.

3. CURRENT AND PROJECTED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

Important information to note when interpreting the data referred to in this section:

- Forecasted projections have been made to 2014 in the first instance to align with the roll out of the majority of National agendas, and where possible up to 2020, to provide a longer term perspective. These projections are best considered as a guide only.
- Kindergarten and pre-primary data is reported together (unless indicated otherwise) i.e. this data is not able to be disaggregated for each of these year groups. The assumption has been made that general trends for both groups are similar.
- The four year early childhood University courses referred to are not restricted to the Kindergarten years only - many are inclusive of Kindergarten to Year 3 (age 4 to age 8).
- All tables and figures referred to are located in Appendix A.

3.1. Student Demographics

There are currently 29 581 students enrolled in public school and non-government school kindergartens (ABS 2010), and it is anticipated that there will be a sharp increase in student numbers in 2011 - approximately 6.8% across both sectors. This will be followed by a steady increase of around 2.2% annually (not cumulative) for public school kindergartens (including Community Kindergartens) and 3.3% annually for non-government school kindergartens (Table 1) from 2012 to 2020. The spike in 2011 kindergarten enrolments is considered to be the result of a combination of factors, with the Baby Bonus introduced in WA in July 2004, and the resources boom bringing an influx of families into the State having a significant influence.

Aboriginal students attending kindergarten comprise 9.4% of the total student population in public schools, and 2.3% in non-government schools. A steady increase in the number of Aboriginal students entering kindergarten is anticipated.

There has been a steady increase in the number of new ESL/D arrivals into public primary schools for the period June 1995 to June 2010 as indicated in Figure 1. The majority of these students are male.

3.2. Teacher Demographics

In November 2010 there were 2187 kindergarten and pre-primary teachers employed by the DoE, with a total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of 1762. The workforce is composed 98.8% female and 1.2% male workers.

The age of early childhood education teachers (kindergarten and pre-primary) is relatively younger than primary and secondary teachers, with an average age of 40.9 in regional areas and 42.3 in the Perth metropolitan area. Nevertheless, there are pockets of an aging workforce especially in Perth. As reflected in Figure 2, 13% of the early childhood education workforce is over 55 years old and employees in the age bracket 60+ account for 4.4% of the workforce.

The workforce is characterised by a high percentage of part-time workers, with data indicating that 37.9% of early childhood education teachers work on a part-time basis only. This high percentage is a direct result of the attendance requirements for kindergarten students who only attend 11 hours (increasing to 15 hours by 2013) of kindergarten per week. The majority of early childhood employees are located in metropolitan schools (71.5%). The remaining 28.5 % work in regional areas.

An examination of retirement and resignation trends (Figure 3) indicates that the number of resignations has declined since 2007. Retirements increased slightly in 2010 compared to the two previous years; however, the numbers are still low in comparison to the entire teaching workforce.

3.2.1. Supply

Information gathered on the supply of early childhood education graduates (Table 2) indicates that the number of early childhood education teachers graduating from WA Universities is projected to increase from 157 graduates in 2010 to 192 graduates in 2011. However, from 2012 a decline in the number of early childhood education graduates is expected, and this will reach a low of 110 in 2013. This may be offset by a projected increase in the number of Graduate Diploma in Education graduates specialising in early childhood education.

An examination of the profile of early childhood education teacher applicants to the DoE for 2011 indicates that current fixed-term and new graduate teachers are more reluctant to take up positions in rural and remote areas, as indicated in Figures 4 and 5. Most new graduates are in the 20-24 year age range, and fixed-term applicants are in the 25-34 year age range (Figure 6). Most applicants indicated a preference for full-time work (Figure 7).

3.2.2. Future Demand and Projections

The demand for early childhood education teachers for the kindergarten and pre-primary years in public and non-government schools is provided in Table 3. The demand projections are based on the number of children expected to enter WA schools at the kindergarten and pre-primary year levels over the next decade. By 2020, it is anticipated that an additional 1247 early childhood education teachers will be required to teach in the kindergarten and pre-primary years.

As shown in Table 3, the supply of early childhood graduates is expected to meet the demand for kindergarten and pre-primary teachers throughout the forecast period. The projections include an allowance for the increased kindergarten contact hours

under Universal Access. It must be noted that these projections do not factor in new graduates declining to work in rural and remote locations, the teaching workforce required to work in child care centres under the National Quality Standard, nor the potential impact of an anticipated future resources boom.

It has also not been possible to project the percentage of early childhood education graduate teachers who will choose to work in the child care environment (should conditions and pay parity be achieved between teachers working in school settings and child care settings), or projections on the early childhood graduates who may choose, or be chosen to, fill vacancies in other early childhood year levels (i.e. within WA up to Year 3).

3.2.3. Qualifications

Table 4 details the qualifications of personnel working in kindergarten, pre-primary and childcare centres in WA and at the national level. Figures 8 and 9 provide details of the variation in early childhood qualifications between jurisdictions. A further break down of this information for teachers as obtained through the August 2010 school census indicates that between 70% - 80% of WA kindergarten teachers have specialized in early childhood development.

Within WA, the final decision on where a teacher is placed within the early childhood phase of schooling (kindergarten to year 3) is made by the school principal. A range of operational factors are brought to bear and sometimes, early childhood trained teachers are allocated to older classes, and non-early childhood trained teachers are occasionally allocated to kindergarten classes. Currently the DoE does not have the capability to effectively track this placement of staff.

3.3. Education Assistant Demographics

The DoE identifies five groups of EAs:

- Mainstream EAs (approximately 2700 staff comprising 2000 FTE), who make up the majority of EAs working in kindergartens;
- Special needs EAs (approximately 5100 staff comprising 3850 FTE), working in schools with eligible students with a disability;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (AIEOs), who work in Aboriginal Kindergartens or mainstream kindergartens with high numbers of Aboriginal students;
- EAs with specialist training in Auslan (31.48 FTE), Braille (6.2 FTE), and who work in Behaviour Centres (14.35 FTE); and;
- Ethnic Education Assistants (100 FTE) who work in Intensive English Centres and mainstream schools with large numbers of ESL/D learners.

3.3.1. Supply

A high percentage of EAs (60%) work on a part-time basis only; working two or three days per week.

- The large majority of students who have an identified disability are educated in mainstream settings, and attend their local school. Schools are provided with supplementary FTE to enable appointment of Special Needs EAs. This allocation is determined by eligibility, and the level of teaching and learning adjustments required for individual students.
- There are currently 500 AIEOs employed by DoE who work across all school years. A review on AIEOs will be published in the first quarter 2011.

3.3.2. Future Demand and Projections

As a workforce, in the past mainstream EAs have not been characterised by high rates of turnover. It is predicted that this is unlikely to become problematic in the future and that supply will continue to meet future demand. In contrast, however, the supply of special needs and AIEO EAs varies, with current and projected future vacancies for these workers in hard-to-staff regional and remote locations.

3.3.3. Qualifications

Table 4 provides details of the break down of qualifications in the early childhood education and care sectors in WA, as well as the average for the nation. It should be used as a guide only as the definition of pre-school between jurisdictions varies.

The Certificates III / IV and Advanced Diploma figures are most likely to relate to EA and child care worker positions in WA, while the Bachelor degree or above category are most likely to be reflective of teachers. The assumption has been made that the number of EAs in kindergartens with Bachelor degrees is likely to be very low across the State. The table therefore indicates that approximately 16.8% of EAs within school settings have achieved a Certificate III or IV, as compared to 29.2% of the Care sector child care workers. Both of these figures are similar to the national average.

The number of students achieving Certificate III and above in Education Support and Teacher Assistant courses as part of their Vocation and Education Training (VET) within schools are indicated in Table 5. These courses are designed for articulation into work opportunities in all years of schooling; that is, they are not restricted to the early childhood education teaching and learning area.

AIEOs are being actively encouraged to obtain teacher qualifications and Certificate III / IV. The DoE funds access to these qualifications and provides a mentoring program for the Aboriginal early childhood education workforce. Whilst attrition from some teacher training courses has been high (around 75%), once a teacher qualification has been gained, staff retention rates are high (96%), particularly in rural and remote locations.

4. DISCUSSION AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1. Teacher Workforce

Evidence from the low number of early childhood education teacher vacancies, projected course completion rates, and current workforce age would suggest that WA is well supplied with early childhood education teachers to meet workforce needs in the short to medium term. However, the impact of the upcoming 'resources boom' on drawing teachers away from the sector, particularly in regional areas, is an unknown quantity. The education sector felt this acutely in the last 'resources boom', which resulted in teacher shortages across all school years and locations.

While the current overall supply of early childhood education teachers in WA is adequate, this does not translate into workforce supply throughout the State. Shortages continue to occur in hard-to-staff regional and remote locations. Evidence indicates that new and existing teachers continue to prefer metropolitan area placements, in spite of the DoE providing a substantial range of incentives for the workforce in regional and remote areas. These incentives are provided through the 2008 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and include salary supplements, free housing in remote locations and subsidised housing in regional areas (when available), permanency after two years through the Country Teaching Program, additional sick leave allocations and travel assistance. In addition, given the considerable distance

between many towns in regional and remote locations, there is the issue of low staff mobility, with many staff reluctant to relocate to other towns and schools.

The DoE has also employed a number of innovative strategies to recruit staff from overseas and from other jurisdictions (kindergarten through to Year 12). Success has been demonstrated in the recruitment of staff from Tasmania and the United Kingdom in particular. These teachers are provided with on-entry training. To date, the initiative has enjoyed 81% retention of these teachers. To ensure that teachers from Tasmanian universities have the appropriate skills to work in Aboriginal communities, when they are completing their courses they are provided with specific training by the WA Aboriginal Education Directorate.

4.2. Education Assistant Workforce

The supply of mainstream EAs throughout the State currently meets demand and as this workforce has not been characterised by high rates of turnover in the past, this is unlikely to become problematic in the future. In contrast, the supply of special needs and AIEO EAs is not consistent, and vacancies for these workers are particularly difficult to fill in the regional and remote areas.

With the National Quality Framework (NQF) requirement to have a Certificate III or equivalent, or to be working towards this by 1 January 2014, the AIEO EAs are likely to be the most at risk of not meeting this requirement. The magnitude of this potential problem needs to be considered in the context of the number of government Aboriginal Kindergartens (28) relative to the total number of government kindergartens across the State (664). In addition, there are twelve Independent Aboriginal schools with kindergartens.

The recent success of the Certificate III Early Education EA Scholarships offered through Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation and funded by the DoE has highlighted the appetite and commitment among the workforce to increase the level of their qualification. In 2010, of the 75 students enrolled in the program, 40 graduated with a Certificate III and the remaining 35 are expected to complete the course early 2011.

Under the NQF rating system, the number of EAs employed in schools without the required qualifications will have an impact on school ratings. Kindergartens staffed with a number of EAs who do not hold a Certificate III will not meet the national quality standards, and will be able to achieve a "Foundations" Level rating at best. As these ratings are likely to be published on the *"MyChild"* website, pressure to facilitate the training required to meet standards could fall onto individual schools.

In WA, the number of students achieving full qualifications in VET Education and Teaching Assistant school streams is low, and a commitment could be made to promote and develop this pathway to further support demand in difficult to staff kindergartens.

4.3. Workforce Training

The Australian Government and the DoE have made a number of resource commitments, which continue to assist with the recruitment of the early childhood education workforce in WA. These have focused primarily on removing barriers to accessing appropriate training and include:

- the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) which replaces the current Higher Education Equity Support Program (ESP) and is funded for 2010 to 2013 inclusive;

- the creation of additional University places for early childhood education teachers;
- Commonwealth scholarships available to students from low socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. currently twelve student teachers enrolled at Murdoch University);
- Commonwealth scholarships available to students through the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership – Training Schools Residency Program. Up to \$30 000 scholarships are available to final year student teachers, including early childhood student teachers from 2010 to 2013. This program is being conducted through the New Pathways into Teaching initiative and involves both the DoE and Edith Cowan University;
- through the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership and under the Better Pathways into Teaching Program, the DoE has commenced the Up-skilling Program for school support staff. This enables support staff, including early childhood EAs, to obtain a Diploma in Education Services qualification through TAFE, and potential recognition of prior learning for a teaching qualification from 2010 to 2013;
- HECS-HELP reimbursements for EAs;
- Early Childhood EAs Certificate III Scholarships through Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc, funded by DoE in 2010;
- the Productivity Places Program, which provides a range of courses to the community targeting the most disadvantaged; and,
- the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP), which provides flexible funding for projects and training that lead to employment for Aboriginal job seekers until 2012.

4.4. Meeting National Partnership Requirements and Future Demand

Whilst the WA early childhood education workforce has been characterised by a relatively low level of turnover, the reasons contributing to this turnover include:

- geographical isolation of many kindergartens within the school community;
- perceived greater emotional demand than for teachers of older children;
- perceived fewer career opportunities and professional development opportunities;
- lack of opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to better support the learning needs of ESL/D, Aboriginal and special needs children;
- State and Federal industrial awards that cover working in kindergartens; and,
- restrictions imposed by different registration and accreditation requirements for early childhood teachers between jurisdictions, and which restrict employment transfers between states.

Future disruption to the workforce that produces new issues and exacerbates the above reasons could negatively impact on both the level of workforce turnover and the quality of practice.

With regard to hours of kindergarten delivery, in WA these are around 11 hours and working towards an additional four hours. To accommodate this, a four-year roll out throughout the State has been agreed across the public, Catholic and Independent school sectors. Details of this rollout by DoE Education Districts (2010) and the cost implication for the early childhood education workforce are indicated in Table 6. Over the next four years, the cost of capital works may total \$98.4 million, and there are concerns that this budget may be exceeded.

The most significant issues that will arise through implementation of the NQF and Universal Access in particular, are requirements relating to staff-to-child ratios in early childhood education, and staff qualifications. WA is well placed since it already

meets the requirements of the staff-to-child ratios, driven through State industrial agreements for teachers.

WA schools for the most part meet the requirement for four-year University qualified teachers through the WACOT registration requirements. A small group (3.3%) of early childhood teachers, “Foundation Members”, do not meet this requirement. These teachers may have a three-year University qualification, Advanced Diploma or a Diploma and were practicing prior to the introduction of the four-year requirement through WACOT.

The national requirement for all early childhood education staff to have a recognised qualification with specialisation in early childhood development may place existing teachers in this area at risk, should strategies such as recognition of prior learning not be put into place.

Currently permanent teachers in public schools in WA who have been employed in kindergarten or pre-primary for a period of seven years, and can provide proof of proficiency and appropriate professional learning in this area, are granted permission to transfer to early childhood positions in other schools. Should this process be unable to be maintained in the future, then it will be important for the Commonwealth to commit to providing scholarships for existing teachers to obtain specialisation in early childhood teaching.

The implications under the NQF to have four-year University trained early childhood teachers in child care settings where there are 25 children, and access to a teacher below this number, are likely to impact on the care sector. Based on current data, there are already indications of shortfalls in the number of four-year University trained early childhood teachers. However, as previously stated, it is possible that the education sector may experience a drift of early childhood education teachers into the child care sector, should attractive conditions of employment and/or future pay parity draw them into it.

The WA Government has a major role in managing the quality standards and regulations in the early childhood education sector. Currently the Department of Education Services (DES) has responsibility for the regulation of standards within Independent and Catholic schools, while the DoE has oversight of public school standards regulations. With the introduction of the National Quality Standard, this arrangement may change to a single regulatory body (potentially DES) with responsibility for standards regulation for the public and non-government school sectors. This could place additional demands on teachers within public school kindergartens, since they will be required to comply with DoE and DES regulations.

Teachers working in specialist schools for students with disabilities require a recognised qualification and an authorisation to teach in these schools. There is a reported decline in the number of pre-service teachers seeking entry into ‘special needs’ or disability pathways. Existing teachers and programs for early childhood students with disabilities may be at risk if teachers are required to demonstrate both early childhood and special education qualifications. This working environment may be further compounded by competing demands for specialization in other areas such as literacy and numeracy teaching skills. In addition, the increasing numbers of ESL/D students enrolling in WA schools will place further pressure on teachers and support staff to address the needs of this student cohort.

A state-wide Visiting Teacher Program, available to both the public and non-government schooling sectors, ensures that special assistance is provided in context. This includes up-skilling and wrap-around support for school leaders, teachers and EAs. As the Visiting Teacher Program does not include all disabilities, a consultancy service is available in the non-government sector for support of other students.

While the early childhood education teacher workforce currently meets requirements of the Universal Access National Partnership, not all early childhood EAs meet the proposed Certificate III or equivalent requirements of the NQF. This sector of the WA early childhood education workforce will be the most affected by the national reforms. This is compounded by existing shortages for special needs and AIEO EAs as aforementioned.

Notwithstanding implementation issues, the reforms being undertaken through the NQF; the commitment to four-year University trained early childhood teachers, and EAs with Certificate III or equivalent, are generally regarded as a positive step, since they may provide another vehicle to increase the profile of early childhood workers and improve the outcomes for all children.

4.5. Integrated Service Delivery

The move to more integrated and family-centred early childhood services has gained momentum in WA, with a number of non-government and public schools independently developing early childhood centres (e.g. Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre), and national funding committed to establish five Children and Family Centres. Working in these integrated settings requires different approaches to teaching and learning for the early childhood workforce, and may require job re-design and the development of new knowledge and skills by teachers and school leaders, supported by professional development and mentoring. The University of New England has recently proposed the establishment of a new course for early childhood educators designed specifically to support the needs of the workforce in integrated early childhood settings¹.

At a State level, changes to the existing legislation and industrial conditions may be required for early childhood teachers and EAs to work in integrated settings.

¹*A vision for integrated early childhood service delivery* Prof Margaret Sims, Children Communities Connection Conference (November 2010).

5. SUMMARY

- In the short to medium term the teacher component of the early childhood education workforce in WA schools is currently well placed to meet the projected demand for places, apart from some rural and remote hard-to-staff locations.
- The EA component of the workforce is well supplied for mainstream EAs, but in the short term shortages are anticipated for AIEO EAs, special needs EAs, and in difficult to staff locations.
- Current WA teacher workforce qualification requirements and existing staff to child ratios in kindergartens ensure that the State meets the requirements of the NQF. Commonwealth and State funding for training and up-skilling of teachers will need to continue to maintain this.
- Not all teachers currently employed in kindergartens have specialist training in early childhood education, or the specific skills required to address the needs of special needs, Aboriginal and ESL/D students.
- There is a risk that WA will not meet the NQF requirement for all EAs working in early childhood education to have achieved a Certificate III or equivalent by 1 January 2014.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To build the capacity of the early childhood workforce to accommodate changes that the national agenda and reforms will bring, and to meet the likely increase in demand for skilled and qualified staff, simultaneous efforts on several fronts are required. These include:

- strengthening the current investment in workforce development;
- implementing new recruitment, training and retention initiatives over the short to medium term, both at local and national levels, which will reduce immediate shortages and target where the need is greatest;
- supporting multifaceted, sustainable approaches to recruitment and retention;
- maintaining and consolidating links between the early childhood and schooling sectors at a national level, including links between the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) workforce initiatives;
- enhancing the capacity of existing initiatives and supporting new initiatives that promote collaboration between service providers; and,
- pursuing broader reforms over the medium to long term, to achieve self sufficiency of workforce supply in WA.

Some immediate, medium, and long term actions that could be adopted by the Commonwealth are proposed below.

A. Immediate Actions

Fund National awards for excellence in early childhood that reward and recognise outstanding early childhood practitioners.
Continuation of existing Commonwealth initiatives to fund additional early childhood education places including University placement, the TAFE fee waiver, and the HECS-HELP benefits.

Analyse the results of the first National Survey of the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce and provide both national and jurisdiction-specific feedback.
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.
Map teacher registration, accreditation, or alternative processes of qualifications across states and territories, and investigate any impacts on teacher recruitment and mobility.
Ensure consistency across AITSL and ACECQA qualification requirements and definitions to enable fluidity of movement across childcare and school settings for early childhood teachers.
National advertising and promotion of existing education and employment early childhood education workforce opportunities.
Review early year's VET courses to ascertain the level of consistency of course offerings, content, pathways for students, and provide national support to address retention and other equity issues.
Actively promote and encourage school students to consider early childhood as a career option through both VET and Tertiary Education Entrance (TEE) pathways.
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 skills.
Scope demand conversion courses for teachers who currently work in early childhood but have no formal qualifications.
Scope demand for EA Certificate III qualifications and consideration of industrial implications of these qualifications regarding pay demands for schooling sectors.

B. 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 lead-in time for practitioners to upgrade their qualifications to meet the NQF requirements in areas and sectors of greatest need and where workforce shortages exist.
Provide additional support for specialist ESL/D services and teacher training in ESL/D in kindergartens in WA.
Improve local access for the early childhood workforce to relevant information and e-learning opportunities by upgrading communications technology infrastructure in rural

and remote locations. Provide ongoing support to communities once this infrastructure has been put in place.
Build on existing Australian Government initiatives to fund additional University early childhood teaching places, TAFE fee waiver and HECS-HELP benefit.

C. 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.
Encourage states and territories to implement workforce planning when any capital, service, or infrastructure planning is carried out for the early childhood sector.
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.
Develop inclusive, consultative approaches when developing national policy and agendas that will impact on the early childhood education workforce.

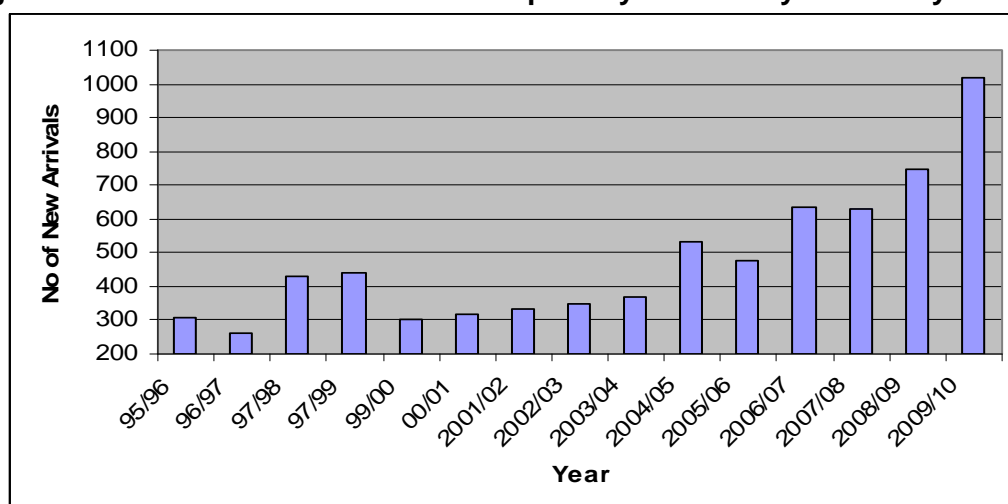
APPENDIX A

Table 1: Projected kindergarten enrolments for 2011 to 2020

Year	Government	% Increase	Non-Government	% Increase
2010	20665		8916	
2011	22125	6.6	9589	7.02
2012	22531	1.85	9876	3.00
2013	23066	2.38	10220	3.39
2014	23589	2.28	10567	3.38
2015	24122	2.37	10925	3.38
2016	24675	2.3	11300	3.44
2017	25233	2.25	11683	3.39
2018	25787	2.2	12073	3.35
2019	26342	2.15	12471	3.28
2020	26895	2.1	12877	3.26

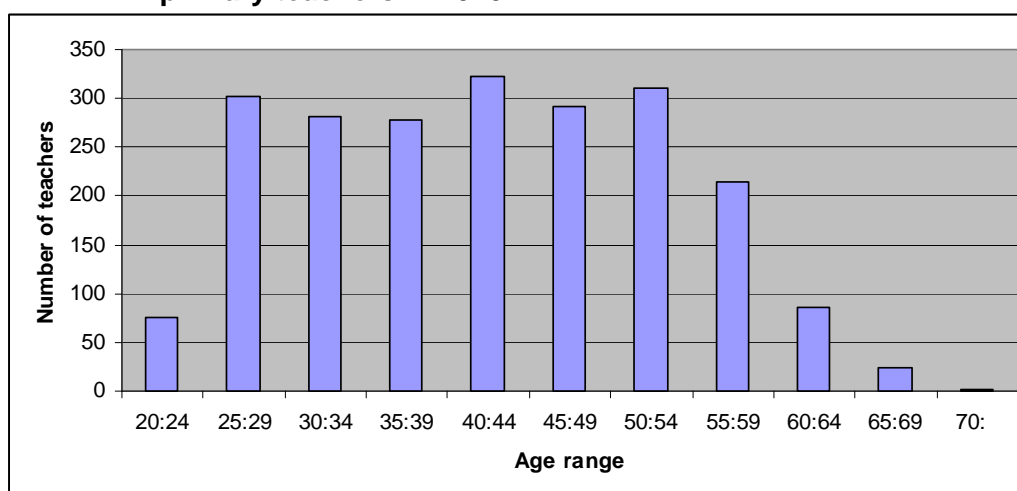
Based on ABS "A" series population projections, Semester 1 2011 to 2020. This data includes Community Kindergarten students (Government).

Figure 1: ESL/D new arrivals in DoE primary schools by financial year.



Source: Department of Education

Figure 2: The age profile for DoE early childhood kindergarten and pre-primary teachers in 2010



Source: Department of Education

Figure 3: The number of retirements and resignations of DoE early childhood teachers from 2006 to 2010.

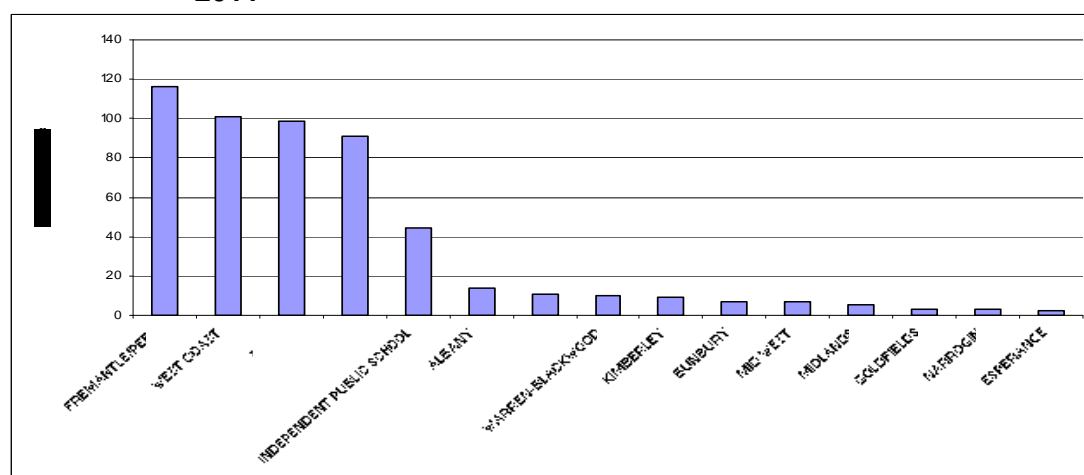


Source: Department of Education

Table 2: Rates of completion for undergraduate and Graduate Diploma in Education students with specialization in early childhood

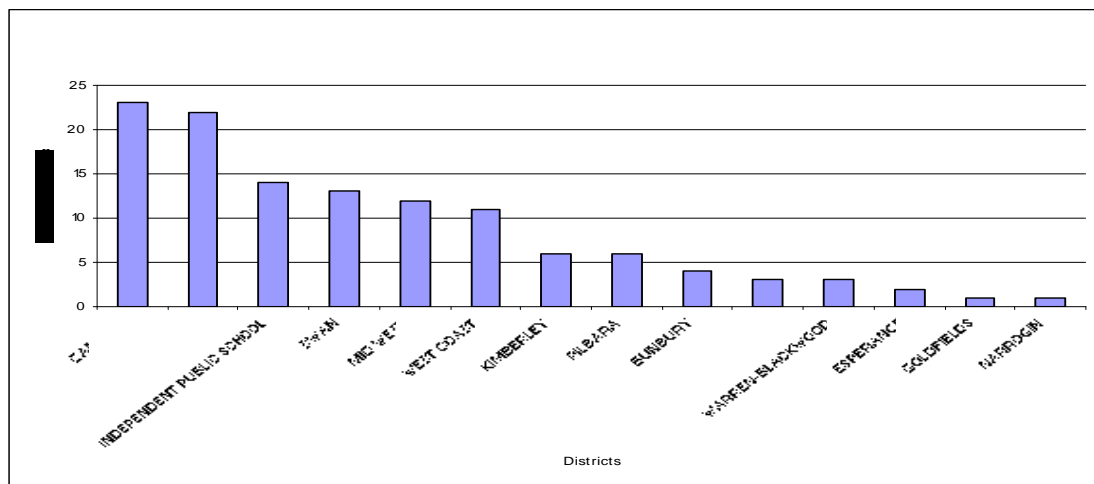
Early Childhood - Universities Completion Data					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Undergraduates	165	157	192	158	110
Graduate Diploma in Education	37	37	37	57	57

Figure 4: DoE early childhood qualified fixed term teacher applicants for 2011



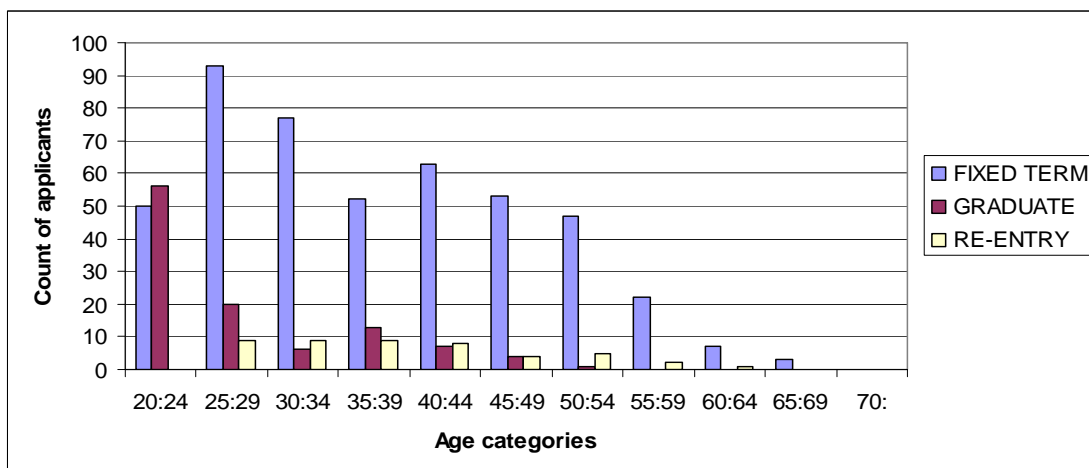
Source Department of Education

Figure 5: DoE early childhood qualified new graduate teacher applicants for 2011



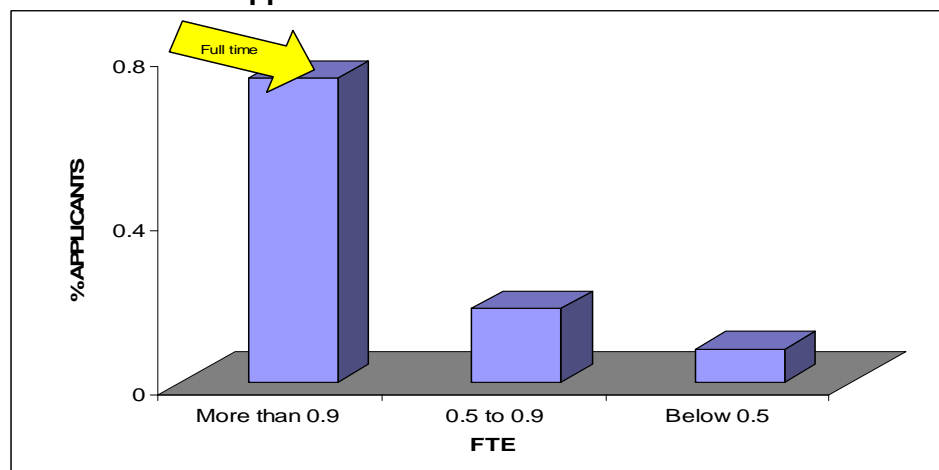
Source: Department of Education

Figure 6: The current (2010) DoE age profile of new and existing early childhood teachers across WA



Source: Department of Education

Figure 7: The work hours (FTE) fraction preference for DoE early childhood teacher applicants for 2011



Source: Department of Education

Table 3: Early childhood teacher demand projections from 2011 to 2020

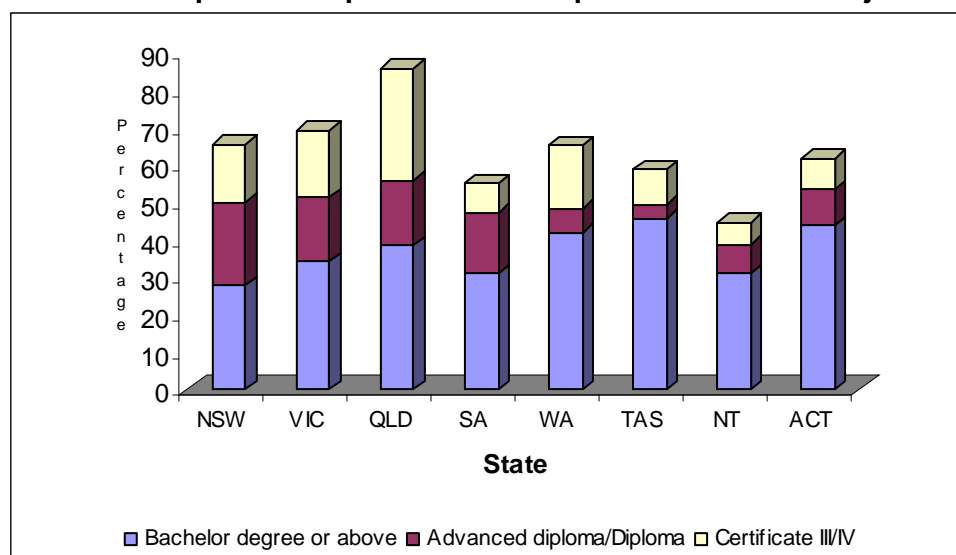
Public and non-government school kindergarten and pre-primary											
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Teachers Required	2423	2685	2880	3035	3121	3207	3296	3388	3481	3575	3670
Extra Required from previous year		262	195	155	86	86	89	91	93	94	95
Supply		194	229	215	167	167	167	167	167	167	167

Table 4: Early childhood education workforce qualifications

	WA	AUST	WA	AUST
	Kindergarten	Preschool	Childcare	
Bachelor degree or above	42.0%	34.1%	6.2%	9.8%
Advanced diploma/Diploma	6.3%	16.1%	28.7%	27.1%
Certificate III/IV	16.8%	16.1%	29.2%	29.4%
Total staff with a formal qualification	65.3%	66.3%	64.1%	66.2%
Total staff without a formal qualification	34.7%	33.7%	35.9%	33.8%

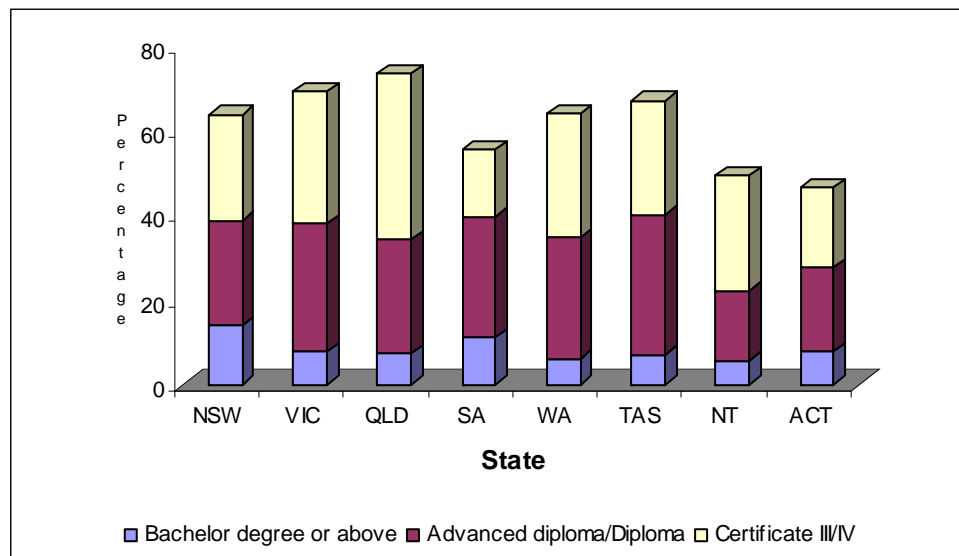
Source: DEEWR 2010

Figure 8: Comparison of preschool staff qualifications across jurisdictions.



Source: DEEWR 2010

Figure 9: Comparisons of early childhood qualifications in the care sector across jurisdictions.



Source: DEEWR 2010

Table 5: VET students enrolled in Certificates III and IV in Education Support and Teacher Assistant for 2010

Qualification Code	Qualification Name	Number of schools with students participating in qualification	Number of student enrolments	Number students achieved full qualification	Number of students who achieved partial qualification
CHC30808	Certificate III in Education Support	29	107	16	71
CHC41708	Certificate IV in Education Support	2	2	2	0
51779	Certificate III in Teacher Assistant	17	30	20	7

Source: Curriculum Council

Table 6: Provisional expenditure table for the roll out of four additional hours of delivery in kindergartens as part of Universal Access for Public and Private Schools in WA

Roll out year	District	Teacher FTE	Education Assistant FTE	Estimated Cost for Govt and Non- Government - cumulative
2010	Goldfields	4.42	2.9	\$8 million
	Kimberley	3.92	5.9	
	Midwest	5.7	4.3	
	Pilbara	4.55	4.7	
	Swan	24.8	14	
2011	Fremantle - Peel	32.05	TBA	\$16.91 million
	Bunbury	6.45	TBA	
2012	Albany	TBA	TBA	\$25.75 million
	Canning	TBA	TBA	
	Midlands	TBA	TBA	
	Narrogin	TBA	TBA	
	Warren Blackwood	TBA	TBA	
2013	Esperance	TBA	TBA	\$20.997 million
	West Coast	TBA	TBA	
TOTAL				\$ 71.657 million

Source: Department of Education