



# **COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CO-OPERATIVE**

**LTD. (NSW)**

ABN 81 174 903 921

28/1/11

Early Childhood Development Workforce Study

Productivity Commission

LB2 Collins Street East

Melbourne Vic 8003

Please find below Community Child Care Co-op's submission to the Productivity Commission's study on the Early Childhood Development Workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues within your terms of reference.

Yours faithfully,

Leanne Gibbs

CEO

Community Child Care Co-operative

**Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)** was established in 1978 and is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes, supports and advocates for quality children's services; meeting the needs of children, their families and the community.

Community Child Care Co-operative NSW has a variety of roles in the NSW children's services sector which leave us uniquely placed to provide this submission.

We are:

- a peak organisation in NSW representing over 1300 children's services, families and individuals. Although Community Child Care Co-operative represents services in all areas of the children's services sector, our full members are community based long day care services and community based preschools. Our submission thus predominantly reflects the interests of these two groups. Between 1991 and 2001 the number of places in privately owned for-profit long day care services ( a significant proportion of which were owned by corporations) increased by almost 400 per cent compared to only 55 per cent in not-for-profit services. Currently less than 35% of early childhood services in NSW are community based. As our work has its focus in the early education and care workforce, we are confining our comments to this sub sector of the Early Childhood Development workforce.
- A Registered Training Organisation offering a variety of nationally accredited VET courses to children's services in NSW and their employees. We also deliver distance education to employees engaged undertaking traineeships in children's services across NSW.
- The lead agency of Children's Services Central, the Professional Support Co-ordinator in NSW. This program, funded by the Australian Government, under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, provides a range of professional development to all Australian Government Approved Child Care Services in NSW. As the provider of the majority of professional development and in-service training course to the majority of the early education and care workforce in NSW we are uniquely placed to comment on issues relating to the ongoing professional development needs and efficacy of pre-service education for the children's services workforce.
- A well respected advocacy organisation for children's services in NSW

CCCC endeavours to:

- provide leadership which empowers the decision makers within children's services.
- identify service provision gaps and needs, and proactively target resources to these areas.
- support and collaborate with other children's services providers who reflect similar philosophical beliefs.
- embrace the value of difference and debate.
- be a role model for best practice in corporate governance and organisational operation.

# Preamble

Within this submission Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW) has not directly addressed the questions raised with the Productivity Commission's discussion paper. We have instead focused on those workforce issues which our members have raised with us on a consistent basis over the last few years.

We are aware that the Productivity Commission has asked for hard data and that we are supplying a submission with anecdotal evidence. Few workforce studies have been completed in this sector and in their absence the sector compares notes, and discusses what the reality is like for them as individuals, their services and for them as employees and employers in the sector. This is what we have attempted to distil in our paper.

## What are the main issues facing the NSW early education and care workforce?

The early education and care workforce in NSW is employed in a sector typified by:

1. Recruitment and retention issues
2. Low pay
3. Lack of pay parity and pay equity
4. Low status and standing in the community
5. Lack of career pathways
6. Continually increasing job complexity and workplace stress
7. Heavy reliance on government funding
8. Strong sensitivity to government policy changes
9. Rapidly changing regulatory requirements
10. Inconsistent access to in-service training and professional development
11. Uneven quality in pre-service education courses
12. Lack of funded qualifications

**Recruitment of early childhood teachers is a problem for some community based early education and care services; especially rural and remote services, and this may get worse in the next few years.**

- 1.1. Anecdotally Community Child Care Co-operative's members tell us that staff recruitment is an issue, especially in rural and remote NSW communities. Anecdotal evidence tells us, the problem is worse when services are trying to recruit directors or co-ordinators or qualified teaching staff, and is more difficult for long day care services than it is for preschools.
- 1.2. In NSW the NSW Children's Services Regulation 2004 specifies the number of teachers required to be employed in each centre. Teacher shortages has meant the Department of Community Services has had to have a policy since 2002 to allow services an interim exemption where services are unable to recruit early childhood teachers.. Community Child Care understands that the number of services that have had exemptions under this policy remains steady at slightly under 200 at any one time.
- 1.3. The shortage of qualified teachers also effects the capacity of existing teaching staff to leave their services for professional development, for personal leave, and to attend meetings. Our members tell us that they cannot recruit casual teachers within their community to enable permanent teachers release from their role. As the Children's Services Regulation specifies the number of teachers who must be on site at any point in time (for the number of children on the premises) teachers are not able to leave the premises without breaching the Regulation. The lack of capacity to recruit casual teachers is generally thought to be because a casual teacher can command higher wages working in the Government School sector than they can in an early education and care service.
- 1.4. Various government initiatives which come into play in the next few years are considered by the sector to be likely to increase the demand for teaching staff and will therefore exacerbate the current shortages. These include the Commonwealth Government's National Quality Framework. The impact of this will be less in NSW than in other states because NSW services above 29 places are already required by regulation to

employ a teacher. Only those services between 25 and 29 licensed places will be newly required to employ a teacher under the National Quality Framework changes.

- 1.5. The Commonwealth and NSW Government's implementation of the Universal Access agreement on early education and care will also create increased demand for teaching staff, and for more highly qualified teaching staff. The component of this plan which is considered to be likely to cause the highest impact is the NSW Government's Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme. Under this scheme, all children's services are eligible for a subsidy to offset the cost of employing teachers as required under the Regulation, and for any other service who wishes to do so. In 2006 (latest figures available) 1183 services were below the 29 place threshold at which a service was required to employ a teacher. Community Child Care believes that many of these services will take up the offer of a subsidy to employ a teacher, thus pushing up demand for qualified teachers in NSW.
- 1.6. The other component of the Universal Access system that is likely to increase demand for teachers is the requirement that preschool programs be delivered by a 4 year qualified teacher.
- 1.7. This requirement that a preschool program be delivered by an early childhood qualified teacher will push demand again for those services under 29 licensed places that do not currently employ a teacher but also from services that do currently employ a teacher but do not have that teacher delivering their preschool program. The NSW Regulation does not currently specify that the required teaching staff must teach – many services have non-teaching directors who are degree qualified, but do not necessarily have a teacher delivering their preschool program. These services are likely to want to employ an additional teacher within the next year or so.
- 1.8. Anecdotally again, NSW appears to have an ageing teacher population. (The findings of the 2010 Workforce census can be used to determine if this is in fact the case.) When faced with requirements to complete further study to become 4 year trained, some existing teachers may choose to leave the profession rather than upgrade their qualifications.
- 1.9. This increased demand for early childhood teachers is accompanied by a contraction of the number of courses offered by tertiary institutions focusing specifically on training

early childhood teachers. Although some institutions are now trying to refocus on supplying specific early childhood courses, student demand has been for courses which would qualify students to teach 0-8 year olds as this allows graduates to teach in the more lucrative public school sector. Specific 0-5 year courses only qualify graduates to work in early education and care services.

- 1.10. Supply of early childhood teachers wishing to work in early education and care services and students enrolling into undergraduate programs has contracted steadily over the last years because of the issues around the poor status and standing of the early childhood teaching profession and the lack of pay parity between early childhood teachers and their counterparts in infants and primary schools as well as the low wages available for teachers in general. Wages for early childhood teachers are 20% less than for their counterparts in the public and independent schooling system.
- 1.11. Within university courses there is an emphasis on sophisticated concepts of pedagogy but the entry scores are so low that many undergraduates are struggling with the issues. With less practicums students can't make sense of the conceptual framework and yet also graduate without the technical and practical skills required to engage learners and facilitate appropriate group dynamics.
- 1.12. Many of the early education courses offer advanced standing to VET (Diploma) graduates, who then struggle with the required level of expression and conceptual thinking required in a tertiary course. There is some concern expressed in the field that teachers who acquire their degree through these pathways do not necessarily have the understanding of educational theory and pedagogy of other teachers.
- 1.13. In NSW, university entrance cut off marks for early childhood teaching courses are low and yet courses continue to have vacancies at main round university offer time, showing that despite the low entrance marks required, demand for entrance to the courses are low. The following table shows 2010 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank cuts offs for early childhood teaching degrees in NSW tertiary Education. The median ATAR for entrance to an early childhood teaching degree was 69.

## ATAR cut-offs for Main Round offers

Institution	Qualification	ATAR cut-off	Vacancies
Australian Catholic University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Prim) Canberra	59.10	Yes
	B Ed (Early Childhood & Prim) Sydney	80.00	Yes
	B Teaching (Early Childhood) Sydney	73.05	Yes
	B Teaching (Early Childhood) Canberra	61.70	Yes
Charles Sturt University	B Education (Early Child&Prim)	70	Yes
Macquarie University	B Ed (Early Childhood Ed)	75.05	Yes
Southern Cross University	B Education (Early Childhood)	68	Yes
University of Canberra	B Ed(Early Childhood Teaching)	65.00	Yes
University of Newcastle	B Teach(Prim)/B EarChSt Newcastle	66.1	No
	B Teach(Prim)/B EarChSt Central Coast	63.5	No
University of Sydney	B Ed (Early Childhood)	80.7 *	No
University of Wollongong	B Education The Early Years	72.00	No

\* Third lowest ATAR to get into any course at Sydney University.



## **2. Low wages in the sector act as a major disincentive to attracting and retaining staff into the early education and care workforce.**

- 2.1. Early education and care services, especially community based services are generally heavily reliant on government funding. Due to this, no true labour 'market' exists in the sector – i.e. a shortage of supply does not mean increased wages and better conditions which in turn would attract more people into the early education and care workforce. Services do not have the capacity to increase wages so the market cannot achieve balance. Increased wages requires increased funding and/or increased costs to parents. This is particularly the case for teaching staff.
- 2.2. Community based parent management committees are often unwilling to increase their staff wages because they know that this will increase their childcare fees, and for profit centres often use the possible cost increases to parents as a way of fighting against increased pay in the sector.
- 2.3. Children's services report a high turnover of untrained staff members who can earn higher wages in untrained jobs in areas such as retail, or even in other care areas such as aged care, and the health sector without the responsibility of a child carer's job. This is a particularly common pattern for Indigenous childcare workers who are in demand in the health sector.
- 2.4. Services, especially preschools, note that students on teaching practicums report that whilst they love working with the 0-5 age group, they will be applying for jobs within the school sector because of higher wages. In NSW, the Independent Education Union reports that teacher wages are up to 20% lower in preschools and long day care centres than they are in Department of Education, Catholic systemic or independent schools.
- 2.5. The injustice and effects of the low pay in the industry are felt markedly in the loss of qualified staff after maternity leave. Qualified childcare staff, including teachers, cannot afford the cost of childcare for their own children, because childcare fees, especially in metropolitan areas such as Sydney are higher than childcare wages.

- 2.6. Low wages cause high turnover in staff. We know that approximately one-in-five childcare workers leave the occupation every year – many, anecdotally because of the low wages.
- 2.7. Pay rates in the sector for every class of worker from “untrained” workers to teachers and manager do not appropriately reflect the training, skill levels, experience and importantly the dedication of those working in the sector. This makes it difficult to recruit new staff to the sector, difficult to retain staff in the sector and difficult to recruit and retain staff who, because of their personal skill set and drive can earn more money in other professions in less demanding jobs.
- 2.8. Unless we pay qualified people appropriately we will not have the sustained relationships and intentional interactions with children which are essential for children’s cognitive and emotional development.
- 2.9. Wages are not just low, they are also fairly static. Community based children’s services tend to outlay around 80% of their income on wages. (The percentage is less in for-profit services.) Because of this, small increases in wages have disproportionate effects on budgets.

### **3. The sector’s recruitment and retention is hampered by lack of pay parity and lack of pay equity. This is true even in recruiting for casual staff.**

- 3.1. A ‘Think Tank’ was convened in April 2003 by the Commonwealth Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, to address perceived workforce issues in the childcare sector. The aim of the Think Tank was to develop strategies for addressing current issues affecting the status and standing of the childcare workforce. In their report, the Think Tank recommended that “the Commonwealth support the principle that pay and conditions of the early childhood workforce be commensurate with the value placed by the community and government on the skills, roles and responsibilities of the workforce and the value to the nation of high quality Early Childhood Services.” (Department of Family and Community Services, 2003; p. 7) Little real changes in pay and conditions have been achieved since this time.

- 3.2. THE LHMU won a pay equity case for childcare workers in NSW in 2006 on the basis that childcare workers' pay was substantially lower than other industries with comparable work value. The judgement in the case, run by the LHMU on behalf of the then approximately 15,000-strong childcare workforce, recognised the historical undervaluation of their work in awarding the increase of between \$62–\$170 per week. The full bench of the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW said the evidence overwhelmingly showed that rates of pay for the childcare workers to whom the Award applied, were too low and that the work of childcare workers was undervalued. The judgement also highlighted the significant and ongoing changes in work requirements, the increased scrutiny of governments and increased regulation, the levels of responsibility borne by workers for the care and education of the largely under-school-aged children, and the increased skill and complexity of the work undertaken. The case was fought on both pay equity and work value principles and heard evidence about the gender under-valuation of the industry.
- 3.3. The NSW/ACT Independent Education Union is currently running a Pay Parity campaign for early childhood teachers. Early childhood teachers working in community based preschools and long day care centres earn up to 20% less than teachers working in state government preschools and independent and Catholic primary schools. A full time early childhood teacher can earn \$14,000 less per annum than other teachers. The IEU states that "The majority of early education and care services are highly reliant on government funding. Preschools only receive State Government funding. DET preschools, and preschools operated by independent schools, pay their teachers at the same rate as teachers employed in state primary schools. Community-based preschools and long day care centres cannot afford to do this, which in turn, allows private long day care centres to employ their teachers at lower rates.
- 3.4. Services, especially rural services, report on difficulties in recruiting casual teaching staff because any teachers who do not have full time jobs in their communities can earn much more as a casual teacher for the Department of Education than preschools and long day care centres can afford to pay. Services also report on high turnovers of untrained childcare workers who can earn higher wages in other jobs.

#### **4. The low status and standing of the early education and care workforce is a major issue for the workforce and for Australia.**

- 4.1. Despite recent Commonwealth intervention in workforce issues, (eg removal of HECS for rural and remote teachers, removal of TAFE fees for Child Studies courses, additional uni places) there has been little intervention in the major issue of the early education and care workforce status and standing within community. Attraction of school leavers and other new workforce entrants and retention of existing workers is difficult when staff employed in children's services are underpaid, undervalued, and have less tolerable conditions than other industries and even other education sectors. The fact that 99% of the sector is female impacts on status and standing issues. Considerable work is required to promote and enhance the status and professional standing of early childhood teachers and to attract young people to a career in early childhood education.
- 4.2. Even parents who are currently using early education and care services, and teachers from other sectors are often unaware that "childcare" staff may be university educated teachers. The use of the word "childcare" by governments especially reinforces the view that the main task that educators carry out is "caring" for children.
- 4.3. The childcare workforce in NSW is highly feminised and males are only a minor proportion of all workers. There is no specific data analysis being undertaken for childcare workers in NSW and it is generally accepted that around 97% of the Australian childcare workforce is female (as reported by Warrilow et al., 2002; p. 42).
- 4.4. The NSW childcare workforce is young and a larger proportion is casualised compared to similar sectors. The reliance on casual labour is an important factor because it demonstrates the precarious nature of the work and or the lack commitment to long term employment in the industry. The presence of a significant proportion of casual workers in a centre places greater pressure on permanent staff in ensuring the centre is able to maintain consistency of care for children. Because services will always need casual labour, in the same way schools do, there needs to be more done to formalise the employment of causal staff by the sector as a whole, in the same way in NSW the Department of Education employs a casual workforce to supplement their permanent one..

- 4.5. Many childcare workers in NSW are employed in small workplaces and are often isolated from others in their profession. There are around 1000 services in NSW who provide care for 29 or fewer children. In meeting regulatory requirements, each of these centres would employ approximately 3 full time childcare workers of differing levels of experience and qualification. At services providing placement for more than 29 children there may be between 3 and 20 employees.
- 4.6. It is not just the workforce that has low status. If children were truly valued and the role of the early education and care profession in nurturing and educating children was truly understood, articulated and affirmed, retention of staff in the sector would be increased. Until recently, the importance of education in the early years was not articulated by governments. Although improvement has been made in this area in recent years, there needs to be consistent messages by Governments and the sector of the value of early education and care to individuals, families and society as a whole .
- 4.7. Unless we pay early childhood teachers in an equitable way with teachers in primary and secondary education the status and standing of the early childhood education and care workforce cannot be raised. There needs to be pay equity between workers with the same qualifications within the sector regardless of which service type they are working in.

## **5. The lack of career paths in the sector is a major issue.**

- 5.1. The essential nature of the industry, where employers are small and fragmented, with the majority being in stand-alone preschools and long day care centres, means that career paths are non-existent or dependent upon innovative and progressive practices within independent settings.
- 5.2. Many individuals start working in the early education and care sector with the intention to teach – as they achieve longevity in the profession and as it is the only route through which to increase pay levels, they eventually become involved in management of services. Additional burdens without appropriate courses and skill upgrades makes for an ineffectual and time poor management workforce.

- 5.3. The lack of clearly defined career pathways means that new entrants to the sector and more senior staff members are both confronted with the lack of career options and are likely to seek employment in other industries where progression is possible.
- 5.4. There needs to be alternative pre-service and post graduate qualifications that allow ECEC staff to develop more than the soft skills of leadership and focus upon policy/ regulation/ public sector management. We need streams of career development so that we don't have reluctant managers and reluctant teachers within the sector.

## **6. The work is getting harder**

- 6.1. Every year, workers in the early education and care sector, especially teachers, face increasing levels of responsibility, increasing complexity of regulation, compliance issues and workload demands. This is in contrast to the low and static wages and low status of employees. Whilst workload and work demands increase and there is no commensurate increase in pay and status, workforce demand will always outstrip workforce supply.
- 6.2. We know more now, than ever before, about the importance of early education and care both for individual children and for society as a whole. This knowledge brings commensurate demands of early education and care staff. Governments expect ECEC staff to embody a professionalism that was previously not required.
- 6.3. Until the changes that will occur as a result of the National Quality Framework in January 2012, an educator in most states in Australia can be responsible for 5 babies under 2.
- 6.4. There needs to be better recognition by Governments of the stress related to the care and education of young children. We require a response by funding bodies that allows the alleviation and management of this stress by funding training, development, and mentoring.
- 6.5. Parental expectation of the quality of early education and care is increasing each year. Families rightly expect early education and care services to ensure children are ready to transition to kindergarten and primary schools. The requirements for readiness are however changing and new pre-entry testing is placing considerable demands on rote

based academic preparation. This can cause conflict for educators who are taught to value play based education that prepares children for optimum cognitive and emotional development in their primary years.

6.6. Children's services in NSW must provide a safe and appropriate care and educational environment for children as outlined in the Children's Services Regulation 2004. The Regulation covers areas such as the staff who work in services and their level of qualification, the size of a service and the ratio of staff to children, physical requirements of building spaces and equipment, health and safety and administrative requirements. This regulation is becoming increasingly more complex, as it governs every aspect of how children's services are run. The 1996 Regulation had 43 clauses. The 2004 Regulation, which services now operate under has 125 clauses. The new National Law for children's Services has 324 clauses. The National Regulation to this law which is due to be implemented in 2012 will no doubt be as extensive.

## **7. The sector is heavily reliant on government funding**

7.1. Because of the heavy reliance on government funding, early education and care services cannot offer over award pay and conditions in an attempt to retain their workforce. A more highly skilled and a more highly paid workforce will result in increased costs of service provision. This cost must be borne by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments, not parents or services. The question of 'who pays' places a considerable obstacle to appropriate pay and conditions for educators.

## **8. The sector is strongly sensitive to government policy changes**

8.1. Because the sector is highly regulated, and highly dependent upon government funding it is sensitive to government policy changes.

8.2. Current policy changes through the National Quality Framework and Universal Access agreements will create a need to plan for the imminent departure of older teachers from

the preschool sector and the possible drain of teachers from long day care services into preschools.

- 8.3. Ambitious Universal Access targets need realistic analysis of teaching workforce supply and demand.
- 8.4. The sector's sensitivity to policy changes also means that measures designed to increase quality in the sector can have unintended effects on the amount of money available within services for staff remuneration.

## **9. Regulatory requirements for the sector are changing rapidly**

- 9.1. The rapid rate of regulatory change, especially change in the industrial relations arena over the recent years has had a huge impact on community based services where the employer is often a voluntary management committee of parents. Community based ECEC services are finding it harder to recruit and retain members of management committees. Committees are expressing concern about their uncertainty if they are paying the right wages and offering the correct conditions.
- 9.2. The National Quality Framework will undoubtedly lead to higher quality education and care for children across Australia and is welcomed by advocates and educators. For staff in the industry however it is yet another change in regulatory requirements that they have to learn about, assess, understand and implement. Governments must support this process with ample access to professional development.

## **10. Educators have inconsistent access to professional development and in-service training**

- 10.1. ECEC staff should be able to access ongoing professional development and in-service training with funding that covers the cost of professional development and the cost of relief staff. Professional development should be provided by professional support agencies such as the Professional Support Co-ordinators who have a sound perspective on training needs through contact with services and formal training needs analysis and



who deliver training in a balanced objective manner. Professional support and development allows us to reflect, rethink and improve our practice with children.

- 10.2. The regulations that govern ECEC services require set ratios and staffing levels to be maintained at all times therefore the early education and care sector is one of the few workforces where staff cannot attend professional development unless positions are replaced and yet governments fund professional development but not replacement staff.
- 10.3. Early Education and Care staff who work at Australian Government Approved Child Care Services such as long day care centres and family day care services have access to heavily subsidised training through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program delivered by the Professional Support Coordinators. Staff who are employed at other services such as NSW community based preschools do not have access to funded training except as a result of small one off funding opportunities provided by Community Services.
- 10.4. There is a high demand for professional development courses by early education and care staff. This demand increases commensurately with the demands put on staff, especially where the sector becomes more regulated.
- 10.5. Children's services staff need to be able to access a range of different types of professional development and training courses, whether they be short calendared in-service training sessions, courses run at their service or nationally recognised training. this is particularly important in a sector where up to 40 per cent of staff have no formal qualifications. Training and professional development provision has become even more important in the last 12 months as educators have needed to become familiar with the Early Years Learning Framework.
- 10.6. In the 09/10 Calendar year Children's Services Central offered 1,943 hours of training courses for ECEC staff in NSW, consisting of 604 separate courses, to which 11,025 people attended from 2207. We are aware that despite this, many staff, especially staff in for-profit centres do not access professional development. (There are over 3700 AGACCS services in NSW).
- 10.7. There needs to be special training for teachers working with new migrant and refugee families. We need more Indigenous teachers to ensure Indigenous families using early education and care services and to help ensure the cultural sensitivity of other ECEC

workers. We are aware that services employing Indigenous teachers are more successful in engaging Indigenous families in an early childhood program.

## **11. There is uneven quality in pre-service education courses**

- 11.1. Currently employed educators are anecdotally complaining about the quality of new entrants to the sector, especially at the Diploma and teaching levels. Complaints of teachers whose courses demand little or no practicums and Diploma qualified staff who have gone through shortened courses are common.
- 11.2. This is coupled with a reported drop in enrolments in Diploma childcare courses. Students enrolled in Diploma courses allude to a high dropout rate within their courses as fellow students become aware of the reality of work in ECEC services and the low wages that the Diploma qualifies you for.
- 11.3. There are courses available that the ECEC sector that are not considered suitably rigorous enough to equip students to work in the sector. If Registered Training Organisations are to be allowed to issue qualifications within the ECEC sector there needs to be minimum training times and minimum practicum times attached to those qualifications.

## **12. There is a lack of funded qualifications**

- 12.1. Under the National Quality Framework and under universal access provisions, all educators must have a Certificate III qualification with 50% of educators having a Diploma or teaching qualification. Many 3 year trained teachers will need to upgrade to a 4 year qualification. Despite the Commonwealth Government making Diploma qualifications fee free for TAFE students, there has not been widespread funding or provision of courses to enable existing workers to obtain the required qualifications by 2014. Upgrading qualifications is an expensive process and funding support is essential.
- 12.2. In NSW anecdotal evidence is that we have an aging teacher population. We do not wish to lose teachers to retirement when they are faced with acquiring additional qualifications.

- 12.3. Many older untrained childcare workers will need special assistance to gain a Certificate III.
- 12.4. In most professions higher qualifications mean increased salaries. An untrained childcare worker receives the same wage whether they have a Certificate III or not. Although a Diploma trained staff member can command higher wages than a staff member with a Certificate III, whether or not they can in practice, depends on whether there are vacancies within their service for a Diploma trained staff member.
- 12.5. Where a higher qualification is required because of changes to the regulations affecting the industry, and it will not mean higher wages for the individual obtaining that qualification, Government support must be given to enable a variety of funded pathways for staff to obtain that qualification.
- 12.6. There are no clearly articulated pathways between VET and higher qualifications. Institutions vary in approaches and attitude to the process of enabling entry and progressing students with existing qualifications.

# Conclusion

So what recommendations would Community Child Care Co-operative like to see the Productivity Commission make to address these issues?

1. Recommendations that will lead to increased status and standing for the profession,
2. Recommendations that will enable the sector to increase wages and conditions for all staff, through increased Commonwealth government funding of services,
3. Recommendations which will enable early education and care staff to access professional development and funded qualifications easily,
4. Recommendations that will help create career pathways in the sector, and
5. Recommendations that will increase the numbers of people wishing to become teachers in the sector resulting in an increase in entrance scores for early childhood teaching degrees.