



**Government  
of South Australia**

**Government of South Australia**

**Submission to the  
Productivity Commission study on the  
Early Childhood Development Workforce**

## **Submission by the South Australian Government in response to the Productivity Commission issues paper: *Early Childhood Development Workforce***

The South Australian (SA) Government welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Productivity Commission's issues paper on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) workforce given the vital importance of the early years for children's development, the future demand for a qualified ECD workforce under the new National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care., and the move to integrated service provision

As part of its commitment to training and workforce development, the State Government has released a *Skills for All* Green Paper outlining a 10-point reform program for vocational education in South Australia. The reforms propose a government supported training subsidy to underpin a flexible, responsive demand driven system, transforming it from the current supply driven model. The training subsidy will apply to an extensive range of qualifications identified as in alignment with industry demand and strategic priorities. The reforms also propose a renewed partnership with industry and will encourage increased investment by industry and employers in training. The reforms have the potential to support ECD in that funds could be directed according to actual demand for training.

South Australia has made significant investment in an integrated services approach to Early Childhood Development, and expects that demand for integration will increase. During his time as Thinker in Residence on ECD in South Australia, Professor Fraser Mustard supported SA's development of Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting. Children's Centres provide access to child care, education, health services and family support for children from birth to eight years and their families. They are staffed by multidisciplinary teams, including teachers, child care workers, community development coordinators, allied health workers and family services coordinators. Refer to **Appendix 1** for further information on the Children's Centres program.

The national reforms, including the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, also prioritise service integration. This includes the integration of education and care services but also integrating education and care with other services, such as health services.

In addition to a move towards integrated services, South Australia is progressing two other major areas of reform. *South Australia – A Child Friendly State* is a priority under South Australia's State Reform Agenda. The Child Friendly State expands on the concept of Child Friendly Cities that has already been adopted throughout the world. SA has a more ambitious undertaking, based on a network of child friendly communities and cities linking together to realise a state-wide child friendly vision.

*Engaging Families in the Early Childhood Development Story* is a national project being led by South Australia about supporting parents and families to do the best for their children through clear messages based on neuroscience. This project has become part of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy and provides the foundation for a new approach to integrated parenting information and programs.

In the context of the impending national reforms and the State reform areas, South Australia faces the following key challenges in relation to the ECD workforce.

### Current and future demand for the workforce

- Responding to an increased demand for ECD workers and to raise qualification levels of existing workers.
- A lack of awareness within the industry of impending national requirements and avenues to train or upskill.

### Current and future supply of the workforce

- Attracting and retaining workers in the ECD industry, particularly to rural and remote areas of the State.
- A need for a streamlined Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process for the many individuals already working in the sector but who are not qualified.

### New Skills

- Responding to the implications of a national and local shift towards the provision of integrated ECD services, including care, education, health and family support services leading to new skill requirements for staff in leading and working in integrated services.

This submission will focus on these key challenges for South Australia, provide some context of ECD in this State, and outline the strategies and reforms South Australia has in place to respond to an increased demand for a qualified early childhood workforce.

## **The South Australian ECD context**

South Australia has been recognised as an international leader in early childhood development by such eminent thinkers as Dr Fraser Mustard.

The SA Government, in recognising the importance that early experiences have on children's life trajectories, has moved to the integration of early childhood development programs and services to ensure that parents have access to the information and support they want within their own community.

South Australia became the first state or territory in Australia to develop a Birth to Year 12 curriculum continuum, providing a powerful tool to ensure early childhood development is seen as an interdependent stage of development and learning which provides a strong foundation for future learning.

SA also has a history of strong preschool attendance. It has been a national leader in preschool and its take up by the community because of the strong support for publicly funded preschool education by successive governments over the past 40 years. Preschool enrolments in SA have remained steady for all children while the number of Aboriginal children enrolled in preschool in SA is at an all time high.

## Structure and governance

A Ministerial portfolio of Early Childhood Development was created in South Australia in 2008, providing policy leadership for ECD services across government. The ECD Ministry focuses on coordination and integration of child care, education, health and family support services for children from birth to eight years and their families.

The Minister for Early Childhood Development, the Hon. Jay Weatherill MP, is responsible for the *Children's Services Act 1985* and the associated Regulations which underpin the provision of early childhood education and care services for children in South Australia. Under the Act, the Minister is responsible for administering, monitoring, coordinating, supporting and planning these services.

The SA Government is currently reforming existing education and early childhood legislation, which centres on the *Education Act 1972* and the *Children's Services Act 1985*, to develop a modern legislative framework. This legislative reform will link with the national collaborative laws being developed by all jurisdictions to underpin the new National Quality Agenda.

The governance arrangements for early childhood services in SA vary depending on the type of structure. Descriptions of the early childhood services provided in SA, numbers of early childhood services by type, and numbers of children attending these services is provided at **Appendix 2**.

The South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) data shows that approximately 70 per cent of providers of early childhood services (preschool, child care, Out of School Hours Care and Family Day Care) in South Australia are private or community managed, with approximately 30 per cent being operated by the South Australian Government.

## **Profile of the South Australian ECD workforce**

For the purpose of this submission SA will focus primarily on the "core" early childhood development workforce (occupations which are entirely ECD focussed) such as child carers and preschool teachers. These occupations are most impacted by the national reforms. Primary school teachers have been excluded from this submission to be consistent with the focus of the Productivity Commission's study, as have antenatal services.

SA would, however, like to highlight the move towards the provision of integrated ECD services and how this move changes the view of "core" ECD occupations. The delivery of integrated services will require the involvement of a wide range of occupations that span health, education and other occupations.

In particular, SA would like to recognise the importance of antenatal care to better ECD outcomes. Culturally competent antenatal services, as well as better information and support for women about the factors that can jeopardise healthy pregnancy are key factors in this area, as recognised in the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement.

In the year to August 2010 there were 9,700 people employed in "core" ECD occupations, 1.2 per cent of South Australia's workforce, according to the ABS Labour Force Survey.

Using 2009 DECS data on registered early childhood education and care providers, 49 per cent of child care and preschool workers are employed by DECS, 50 per cent by non government providers (including private providers) and one per cent by TAFE

Over the past five years the “core” ECD workforce has grown by 18.5 per cent, significantly above the state growth rate of 9.5 per cent (ABS Labour Force Survey, August 2010).. ECD occupations are female dominated and have a much lower share of full-time workers when compared with the state workforce. A further contrast with the state workforce is the higher concentration of 15 to 24 year old workers and fewer workers aged 55 years and over.

The location of ECD workers is in line with the distribution of the state workforce with almost three quarters of employees working in metropolitan Adelaide and a further 11.6 per cent located in the greater Adelaide region (Adelaide Hills, Barossa, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island).

In 2006, 54.1 per cent of ECD workers held a Certificate III or higher qualification, higher than the state average of 47.2 per cent.

Refer to **Appendix 3** for more statistics on the ECD workforce in SA.

### **Drivers of demand for more ECD workers with higher qualifications**

An Early Childhood Development Workforce Taskforce has been established in SA to address the workforce impacts of the new NQF. The taskforce is in the process of modelling future demand and supply of skilled labour for relevant occupations. Preliminary draft results indicate a particularly strong demand for child carers (Certificate III) likely arising from the impending changes under the NQF.

Applying the methodology developed by the South Australian Training and Skills Commission<sup>1</sup> to core ECD occupations, , employment in core ECD occupations is forecast to increase by 12.8 per cent, over the five year period between 2008-09 and 2013-14, higher than that of the state average (9.8 per cent). It is estimated that most of this growth will be generated by child carers (child care workers, Family Day Care workers, nannies and Out of School Hours Care workers).

#### National Reform

Impending changes under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care will result in different minimum staff to child ratios for child care and preschool services. The changes to these ratios will increase the number of workers needed. Another key change under the NQF will be the introduction of new requirements for early childhood education and care services to have more highly qualified staff. This will result in a boost in the demand for relevant qualifications in the coming years as existing workers upskill and new entrants enter the workforce with higher qualifications.

#### Retirement of older workers

<sup>1</sup> The Training and Skills Commission was established to provide advice to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education on strategies and priorities for workforce development in the State with the aim of supporting Employment growth and investment in the State.

A large number of older workers are reaching retirement age. According to ABS 2006 Census data, 10.9 per cent of ECEC employment is aged 55 years and over. Within 10 years, it is estimated that 27.8 per cent of that workforce will be aged 55 years and over<sup>2</sup>.

#### Growth in children-aged population

Another key driver of demand will be the growth in the children aged population (children aged 0 to 12 years). The ABS estimates that children-aged population growth in South Australia could be as high as 6.5 per cent (16,300 people) in the five year period between 2009-10 and 2014-15. This is much higher than the growth recorded for the children-aged population in the previous five years to 2009-10 of 2.6 per cent (6,500 people). It can be expected that this will result in a stronger increase in demand for child care services and consequently for qualified child care workers.

#### New models of service delivery

The move to integrated ECD service delivery is resulting in new service partnerships that operate across government and not-for-profit services.

In order to develop and maintain an integrated ECD workforce, strategies to train and upskill the workforce need to be accessible to all employers and their workers. This would enable integrated models of training to be developed that can build an integrated ECD workforce. Cluster or integrated service approaches to training and development could enable small community providers to leverage off government services and to develop local solutions to the attraction, retention and development of a quality workforce.

One of the more significant health related workforce demands in the area of integrated service provision is for specialist early childhood allied health staff, particularly given that they are a scarce resource and most allied health professionals are required to work across a number of programs and/or sites. Given the expansion of initiatives such as the Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting in South Australia to 38 by 2013, the demand for specialist early childhood allied health staff is likely to increase.

### **Other workforce issues**

#### Retention of workers in child care

In SA, the dominant issue in the child care workforce is retention of workers. A significant number of exemptions approved by the DECS' Licensing and Standards Unit suggest that employers are having difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified workers with the necessary Diploma level qualifications. Employers are faced with a high turn over of workers with entry level qualifications.

#### Cost of accessing training

Cost could be a barrier for students wanting to access training or for existing workers to upskill to meet the new ECD qualification demands. It should be noted that there are State and Commonwealth programs in place that subsidise the cost of training to the student. However a previous national study has found that cost, workplace

---

<sup>2</sup> Assuming the same number of 15 to 24 year olds in the core ECD workforce in 2016 and that the only people leaving the core ECD occupations between 2006 and 2016 are those workers aged 65 and over in 2006.

release and balancing work and family are significant issues for existing workers in the child care industry who wish to upskill (National Children's Services Workforce Study CDSMAC 2006)

The *Skills for All* reforms would provide an entitlement to a government subsidised training place. Funds would be directed according to student choice. These reforms may alleviate concerns related to the capacity of the VET system to accommodate demand from individuals.

#### Early childhood teachers in Long Day Care settings

Early childhood teachers working in long day care is a new requirement for South Australia under the NQF for ECEC. The attractiveness of employment in the child care sector for existing preschool teachers is something that will need monitoring.

#### Family Day Care

Family Day Care provides a different kind of service i.e. home based, mixed age range and operating as a small business. These aspects would need to be incorporated into any pre service training.

Family Day Care can support parents' workforce participation and operate effectively in regional areas. It is also a way for individuals (mainly women) to become economically independent and can be a valuable pathway for women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

#### Out of School Hours Care retention and recruitment of qualified staff

The introduction of the School Aged Care Framework, the National Quality Standards and the new modern award during 2011-2012 may influence the retention of qualified staff in the OSHC sector. In the past, significant change in this sector has led to many OSHC staff to relinquishing their Director positions, impacting on the continuity of service provision. This may occur again with the introduction of the National Quality Standards and will be closely monitored by the department.

#### Rural and remote service delivery

Like the schooling workforce, the early childhood workforce faces issues in hard to staff areas, including regional, remote and Indigenous communities. These include staff shortages, employees with lower qualifications, accommodation and limited opportunities to access training and professional development.

Under the COAG Indigenous ECD National Partnership, jurisdictions have agreed to address the needs of Indigenous children.

While the supply of four-year early childhood qualified teachers does not appear to be an issue, the placement and retention of those teachers in rural and remote locations may be a challenge, as will be the case for Certificate and Diploma qualified staff.

#### Aboriginal workers

The South Australian Government is committed to substantially improving the outcomes for Aboriginal children and increasing numbers of Aboriginal ECD workers. Two issues impacting on Aboriginal people undertaking higher education and vocational education are the cost of student fees and the lack of structured and accessible programs for Aboriginal people e.g. teacher education and nursing.

One program that addresses these issues is the Warawara Indigenous Program at Macquarie University NSW. DECS is currently supporting 10 Aboriginal women from SA to undertake early childhood teacher training through the Warawara program.

### Industrial issues

Employers (government and private), unions and employees would have an interest in how any change or streamlining of pay and conditions of the ECD workforce would take shape.

### **Supply responses to meet the skill needs of the industry**

There are a range of programs in place in South Australia, including State and Commonwealth funded programs, to respond to an increasing demand in qualifications amongst new and existing workers who provide services to young children and their parents. The range of responses being used to increase the supply of early childhood qualifications and workers spans the breadth of qualification levels.

During the 2010 election, the South Australian Government committed to an additional 100,000 training places over the next six years. DFEEST is exploring opportunities to enable this funding to support the acquisition of Certificate III qualifications for existing early childhood workers.

### **Education and care sector**

#### School sector

In South Australia, school students are able to undertake vocational education and training (VET) as part of their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). This includes participation in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. VET undertaken in schools is aligned with the Australian Quality Training Framework and nationally endorsed training packages to ensure quality and consistency of VET qualifications. Currently, almost half of all students who gain the SACE include some form of VET in their studies.

Although negligible at this stage, the number of school based apprenticeships undertaken in health and community services, which includes Children's Services, has increased from seven in 2006 to 16 in 2010. Refer to **Appendix four**.

In addition, 1,118 school students undertook health and community services related units of competency from VET qualifications in 2009. Of these students, 108 (or 9.7 per cent) undertook a Children's Services related unit of competency, according to the SACE Board.

VET in the SACE is being reformed to equip more young South Australians to meet the future skills and economic needs of the state. From 2011, students can undertake their entire SACE with a VET focus.



## Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector

Since July 2010, Diploma qualifications for Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care), Children's Services (Outside School Hours Care) and Practice Management have been funded by the State Government. Discussions are underway to include Certificate IV qualifications.

### *Commencements*

In the five years to 2009, total commencements (for TAFE SA and private providers) for Certificate III and above qualifications in Children's Services increased by 35.5 per cent to 2,093 commencements. All of this growth was from private providers. TAFE SA accounted for more than two thirds of commencements for Certificate III and above qualifications in Children's Services in 2009.

### *Completions*

In the five years to 2009, total completions for Certificate III and above qualifications in Children's Services increased by 76.5 per cent to 870 completions. Most of this growth was from private providers. TAFE SA accounted for just less than two-thirds of all completions for Certificate III and above qualifications in Children's Services in 2009. Refer to **Appendix Four** for commencement and completion data.

SA plans to undertake some analysis of how actual completion rates compare with other occupational groups.

### Traineeships

The industry has not been an extensive user of the traineeship system for training new workers. Reasons include the level of pay and the lack of awareness of traineeships. Nevertheless, the number of traineeship commencements in Children's Services in 2009 was almost three times higher than five years earlier. Most of this growth was driven by private RTOs. In addition, in 2009, traineeship completions for Children's Services were almost six times higher than five years earlier. Refer to **Appendix Four**.

The demand for training could be limited by the awareness within the industry of the impending qualification requirements.

As previously mentioned, SA now funds students undertaking a Diploma and Advanced Diploma in ECD, increasing the number of traineeship pathways into the industry.

### National Partnership Agreement on Productivity Places Program

The Productivity Places Program (PPP) is an NP Agreement with the Commonwealth for job seekers and existing workers. SA has been allocated \$177 million between 2009 and 2012. States allocate the funding for training in state skills priority areas and areas of demand. The initiative is jointly funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

The PPP has been used to support individuals who are considering careers in Early Childhood. The following table shows the number of qualifications allocated to

Children's Services under the PPP for job seekers since the inception of the program.

**Figure 1: Productivity Places Allocations to Children's Services job seekers 2009-2011**

Qualifications	Jobseekers	
	Qualifications	\$
Certificate III	167	534,150
Certificate IV	-	-
Diploma	53	277,672
Advanced Diploma	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>811,822</b>

Source: DFEEST 2011

#### Productivity Places Program for Existing workers

The Productivity Places Program has also been used to support existing workers to obtain the training they need. The following table shows the number of qualifications allocated to Children's Services under the PPP for existing workers.

**Figure 2: Productivity Places Allocations to Children's Services existing workers 2008 pilot - 2010**

Qualifications	Existing Workers	
	Qualifications	\$
Certificate III	119	394,015
Certificate IV	-	-
Diploma	393	2,645,634
Advanced Diploma	65	492,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>3,532,399</b>

Source: DFEEST 2011

#### National Partnership Agreement on TAFE Fee Waivers for childcare qualifications

In 2009, as part of the Commonwealth's Early Childhood Development Workforce Strategy, a National Partnership Agreement on TAFE Fee Waivers for childcare qualifications was introduced. The Agreement seeks to minimise any disincentive to participate in training for early childhood by waiving fees for the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Children's Services delivered by TAFE and other government providers.

The Commonwealth funding covers the student course fee only, which is only a small proportion of the whole course cost. The remaining course costs are met by the State Government.

SA has been allocated \$1.2 million in the 2010/11 financial year, and around \$800,000 (providing a fee exemption for around 800 places in child care qualifications for both school leavers and existing workers) of this will be provided by the Commonwealth to DFEEST. The balance of the NP funds cannot be used for other purposes.

#### Migration

DFEEST undertakes detailed assessment of the future demand and supply for workers. This work underpins the advice to Immigration SA in the development of

the State Sponsored Skilled Migration list. The latest list contains a range of occupations that are relevant to the early childhood occupations, thus providing another avenue for workers to enter the industry. There is the requirement to undertake recognition of existing overseas gained skills and qualifications.

### Pathways to qualifications

#### *Recognition of prior learning (RPL)*

In addition to existing workers in child care, there are other groups without the formal Certificate III qualifications who have worked or are working in the ECEC sector, including Early Childhood Workers (ECWs). These individuals will require their skills to be recognised and skills gaps addressed if they are to meet the new quality standards.

TAFE SA has experienced increased demand over the past two years for both recognition services from existing workers within the school system (including gap training where required) and from students wishing to seek employment in the early childhood sector.

In SA, there has been considerable professional development of key people in the VET sector and industry organisations, along with new tools, including the *Skills Book*, to better facilitate recognition processes. The *Skills Book* enables skills gaps to be identified and is used by many organisations including businesses and training providers. The individual can then be referred to an RTO for formal recognition.

Whilst tools such as the *Skills Book* exist, there can be difficulties finding work placements for individuals so that an assessor can observe the individual in a work setting.

To assist overseas qualified individuals to have their qualifications and skills recognised, the SA Government established the Skills Recognition Service (SRS) to help people find suitable employment in South Australia. Since its commencement in 2008, the SRS has identified 150 people looking for work as either preschool teachers or child care workers. Many have experience in the area but only 64 had formal qualifications. At least 82 per cent of people with child care or preschool qualifications were given a Comparative Assessment letter, which is a required component of the formal recognition process through DECS.

Despite this support, the SRS reports that their clients with child care qualifications experience difficulties in finding employment at a level that appropriately reflects their experience and academic qualifications.

#### *Credit transfer*

Credit transfer arrangements can occur between the four different education and training sectors (schools, community learning, VET and higher education). This may be under the Australian Qualification Framework protocols for VET competencies/qualifications or Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between TAFE SA and the university system.

Currently the only MoU arrangements for early childhood education are between TAFE SA and the University of South Australia (UniSA). There are negotiations underway between TAFE SA and Flinders University for a number of courses. It is

also worth noting that negotiations are occurring between TAFE SA and UniSA for credit transfer to a VET qualification for UniSA students who may not complete their full degree in early childhood or junior primary education.

One issue that complicates career pathways for child care workers is a lack of national consistency in credit transfer arrangements for Diploma qualifications into teaching courses which can vary from six months to two years, depending on the university.

### University Education

UniSA and Flinders University deliver courses in early childhood education. Commencement and completion data for Flinders University is limited due to the fact that the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), Bachelor of Arts is a four year course that started in 2007, and the Master of Teaching (Early Childhood) is a two year course that started in 2009.

#### *Commencements*

Between 2005 and 2009, total commencements for bachelor degree and above qualifications in early childhood education increased by 70.7 per cent to 256 commencements. Two thirds of this growth came from Flinders University's newly delivered courses that started in 2007 and 2009.

Despite a smaller contribution to growth, UniSA still accounted for almost three quarters of all commencements for bachelor degree and above qualifications in early childhood education in 2009.

#### *Completions*

Between 2005 and 2009, total completions for bachelor degree and above qualifications in early childhood education decreased by 19.7 per cent to 110 completions. This fall was driven entirely by lower completions at UniSA as the first year of completions for the newly delivered courses at Flinders University occurred in 2010. Refer to **Appendix Four**.

### Basis of Admissions

Between 2005 and 2009, an increasing share of commencements for bachelor degree and above qualifications in early childhood education came from secondary education and higher education students. Over the same period the share of commencements coming from TAFE and mature age students fell. In 2009, most commencements came from secondary education (53.5 per cent), higher education (28.1 per cent) and TAFE students (13.7 per cent).

As with the school and VET sectors, a major issue for universities is the availability and willingness of employers to provide work experience for students. According to UniSA's recent survey of students (as part of the Graduate Destination Survey), the best aspects of courses were the practicums, and students said they would have liked more opportunities in this area.

### Certificate III targeted towards people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

The Department of Education and Children's Services and TAFE SA are facilitating a Certificate III in Children's Services targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This program combines the Certificate III in Children's Services with a Certificate in English Language Proficiency. The program trains people from CALD backgrounds to obtain qualifications to work in their own home based child care businesses, including Family Day Care, and in child care centres. The program has been highly successful in delivering successful outcomes for around 90 per cent of participants.

## **Health sector**

In order to address some of the challenges around the high demand for services and workforce shortages, the health related early childhood workforce is often supported by Child Development Unit Coordinators, Allied Health workers (that specialise in early childhood) and a small number of paediatric nurses (normally where paediatricians are employed).

Another strategy being implemented to address this issue in Country Health SA is the provision of training and development for staff working in the early childhood area, supported by clinical leadership with specific early childhood and paediatric skills, knowledge and experience.

## **Reforms to the VET sector in South Australia – *Skills for All***

More South Australians develop skills through the VET system each year than any other education sector. To meet the State's future skills and labour needs the South Australian Government is seeking greater levels of participation in skill development.

To this end the government released the *Skills for All* Green Paper, as previously mentioned in this submission, which outlines a ten-point reform program for vocational education in South Australia. The centrepiece of the reform suite is the introduction of a government supported training subsidy to underpin a flexible, responsive demand driven system; transforming it from the current supply driven model.

The reforms will result in a managed demand system designed to enable people to upgrade their qualifications, upskill through skill sets and retrain to meet the evolving needs of the labour market and a high skill economy whether they are an existing worker, unemployed, or not in the labour force.

The proposed training subsidy would allow people to obtain skills and qualifications, including meeting the necessary licensing and regulatory requirements necessary for particular occupations. The training subsidy will apply to an extensive range of qualifications identified by DFEST as in alignment with industry demand and strategic priorities.

The reforms also propose a renewed partnership with industry and will encourage increased investment by industry and employers in training.

## **Health and Community Services**

### Industry Workforce Action Plan

The *Health and Community Services Industry Workforce Action Plan 2010-2014*<sup>3</sup> is guiding and informing the SA Government industry education and training providers and other stakeholders in workforce development. The Plan highlights the importance of ongoing industry engagement and leadership of workforce strategies for the long term productivity, viability and success of the industries. Its strategies are grouped across workforce planning, workforce attraction and workforce retention and according to a range of desired outcomes.

The desired outcomes include industry structures, practices and funding models that support effective workforce development, effective workforce planning at organisation and industry level, clear flexible and accessible learning and career pathways, well managed and led workplaces, attraction of new and transitioning workers, responsive education and training sectors, high quality working experiences, and increased workforce participation of people from under-represented groups. These are all important issues for the early childhood development sector.

A strong message in the Plan is the importance of current workers as the key source of opportunity for meeting the workforce challenges.

#### Workplace Research Centre Study

The University of Sydney's Workplace Research Centre's three-year study on the role of VET in improving productivity and workforce participation among the lower skilled has found that employers using good workforce development practices have reduced their previous high levels of staff turnover in early childhood education and care<sup>4</sup>.

In its key messages this report notes that *"employers argue that workers in the sector must develop a skill set which offers an understanding of both care and education"*.

In South Australia there exists and continues to evolve good foundations for merging or, at the very least, strongly linking the education and career pathways for care and education workers. This is due to the establishment of credit transfer arrangements between TAFE SA and UniSA (and soon with Flinders University).

Qualifications in Children's Services and Education Support provide industry and education institutions with the opportunity to merge care and education competencies. The qualifications, which range from Certificate III to Diploma, have the flexibility through customisation of electives to span the ECD existing and future workforce.

National reform in early childhood education and care provides an opportunity for further exploration of the skills sets which would best suit the profile of a worker with demonstrated competency across both care and education.

## **Concluding comments**

<sup>3</sup> [www.workforceinfoservice.sa.gov.au/industryplanning](http://www.workforceinfoservice.sa.gov.au/industryplanning)

<sup>4</sup> Dr Tanya Bretherton "Developing the child care workforce: Understanding 'fight' or 'flight' amongst workers <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2261.html>

The South Australian Government is committed to meeting a future demand for additional ECD workers and raising the qualification levels of existing ECD workers in this State, particularly as a result of the national reforms. However, it is essential that individuals, education and training institutions are also responsive.

The SA government will continue to develop ECD policies and strategies that adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to meet the needs of children and families from a holistic perspective. This includes service and workforce planning which incorporates care, education, health and family support services more broadly.

The implementation of the National Quality Standard will have significant implications for the South Australian ECEC workforce. Preliminary mapping by the South Australian ECD Workforce Taskforce indicates that the new national reforms will particularly impact on child care workers (Certificate III) and Early Childhood Workers and School Services Officers who work with children in preschool programs in this State. The Taskforce will continue its workforce modeling to recognise supply and demand issues for the future.

The State Government has a range of programs in place to respond to the increased demand for a qualified workforce. While an increased demand in individuals undertaking training in Children's Services could be met by the VET sector on a fee for service basis, funding avenues to subsidise training for new and existing workers are almost at capacity.

The State Government has and will continue to monitor the allocation of funds across the VET sector to ensure money is being targeted to the areas most in need, in line with advice from industry. The proposed reforms under *Skills for All* will enable funds to be directed according to actual demand for training from individuals and enterprises in a more flexible and responsive manner.

It must be recognised that any increase in funding to one sector from a State perspective, such as the Health and Community Services sector, would reduce funding to other sectors.

In addition, the low completion rate in Children's Services courses is an issue for South Australia and may have a number of causes that need further exploration. SA has not undertaken an analysis of the completion rates, but this is something we will look into in future.

The State Government recognises a range of opportunities to ensure national ECD reforms are met. The SA ECD workforce taskforce will look at:

- further modeling of the ECD workforce to estimate future demand and supply levels
- monitoring and assessing streams of funding available for the ECD workforce
- an awareness campaign around the new requirements, including information about the options to upskill
- streamlining the current Recognition of Prior Learning model in South Australia

- strategies to ensure placement of qualified early childhood workers and teachers in rural and remote areas
- strategies to respond to the implications of a national and local shift towards the provision of integrated ECD services, including what this means for training.

There are also a range of opportunities that SA would like to be considered at the national level. These include:

- promotion of traineeships to this sector and the facilitation of traineeship models across the industry
- nationally agreed arrangements between VET and higher education for the Diploma in Children's Services
- continued focus on improving RPL strategies in the ECD sector
- the development of national Advanced Practice Qualifications in integrated leadership and practice in ECD
- exploration into making the child care sector more attractive for workers, keeping industrial issues in mind.



## **Appendix One: Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting**

Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting support children from birth to age eight and families to achieve the best possible learning, health and wellbeing outcomes in a universal setting with targeted responses when additional support is required. Children's Centres help parents and children to get the support they need, when they need it, within their own community.

The key partner agencies of the Children's Centres are the South Australian Government Department of Education and Children's Services (lead agency), Department of Health and Department for Families and Communities.

By the end of 2013, the South Australian Government will have established 34 Children's Centres across the State. There will also be four Aboriginal Children's and Family Centres developed as a partnership between the State and Australian Governments.

Each Children's Centre offers core universal programs and a unique and diverse array of services that respond to the needs of children and families within the community.

Together communities, parents, staff and partner agencies and organisations develop joined up solutions and shape the services and programs. Staff from a variety of professional backgrounds work collaboratively and develop skills in delivering an integrated service. This integrated approach supports improvements to the development, learning, health and wellbeing of children, families and communities.

Each Centre offers:

- a preschool program staffed by a Director Education and Care (teacher qualification), early childhood qualified teachers and Early Childhood Workers (unqualified)
- either long day care or occasional care staffed by a mix of qualified and unqualified child care staff
- parenting and community programs facilitated by a Children's Centre Community Development Coordinator (desirable qualification an appropriate tertiary qualification in a related field e.g. social sciences, community development or primary health care and a Certificate IV in work place training and assessment). Programs may be delivered by government, non-government and private providers.

In Centres with particular needs, the team includes staff with expertise to provide targeted support.

- Family Services Coordinators (appropriate Social Work or Allied Health qualification) are employed to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing disadvantages, parenting difficulties and child development issues. Staff work within the education and care setting and provide targeted responses including counselling, service coordination, group work intervention, and referrals, as well as taking an early intervention and prevention approach to improve the take up of services by vulnerable children and families.
- Allied Health staff in the fields of occupational therapy and speech pathology, utilise primary prevention and early intervention approaches to strengthen parenting skills and improve children's developmental outcomes.

The program focuses on:

1. Promotion of processes & environments that assist children's optimal development
  2. Professional Development for Children's Centre staff
  3. Parent education
  4. Intervention for children
- Health Promotion Officers have a particular focus on Aboriginal children and promote strategies to increase staff, parents and children's knowledge and skills in healthy eating (including breast feeding), active play and oral health.

- Child & Family Health Clinic staff may be based fulltime or part time at the Centre and include maternal health nurses who provide child health checks.
- Inclusive Preschool Programs provide a localised and inclusive model of preschool education for children with disabilities and high support needs. Children may have severe multiple disabilities, autism, global developmental delay, or a combination of physical, social and cognitive needs.
- *Learning Together* focuses on the importance of children's oral language development, children being read to at an early age, the development of children's strong dispositions to learning, and the critical role that parents play in supporting their children. Specific activities are developed by a *Learning Together* Manager (teacher qualification), in consultation with families in each location, to meet the individual needs of families and communities.
- Learning Together @ Home enhances the capacity of families to support young children's learning and development, typically through home visiting or involvement with groups, led by Fieldworkers (no qualification requirement). The program is available to families with children aged birth to four years who are disadvantaged and who are not connected with other community, family or children's services are a priority.

All Children's Centre staff are expected to not only demonstrate knowledge, understanding and effective practice in their area of expertise, but also their ability to work in partnership with children, parents and communities, to be flexible and adaptable in the way they work and to effectively work in a collaborative team.

This approach is underpinned by a shared commitment that the Children's Centre will make a difference to children's outcomes and that children and families will experience seamless service delivery.

Shared professional development, opportunities to share knowledge and skills and working alongside colleagues from other disciplines enhances the skills of all the staff in the centre. Children's Centre Leadership Teams (including service leaders, both government and non-government) are being established to provide guidance and support in developing trans-disciplinary and integrated approaches, including developing joined-up responses for individual children and families and providing opportunities for common training and professional development. As an example, during 2010 two Centres were involved in an Occupational Therapy program that gave staff theoretical and practical knowledge and skills with the OT working alongside staff to model intervention strategies with identified children.

## **Appendix 2: Early childhood services provided for children in South Australia**

*Source: Department of Education and Children's Services, 2010.*

### **Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting**

Children's Centres bring together a range of services, including preschool, child care, health and family services for families and their young children from birth to eight years of age. Flexible models of child care are supported at these centres that best meet communities' needs. This may include Long Day Care, Occasional Care, respite care or links with Family Day Care and Out of School Hours Care.

The early childhood education and care component of Children's Centres is based on an integrated services model, with leadership provided by a preschool director, school principal or other professional. As with other integrated centres DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development, operational support and curriculum of the preschool, with the child care staff employed by the management committee/governing council. Funding for health and family programs as well as Community Development Coordinators and Family Services Coordinators is provided by the Department of Education and Children's Services, the Department of Health and the Department of Families and Communities.

### **Child care centres**

Child Care Centres provide full or part-time child care for babies, toddlers and children under the age of six in a centre based environment. The *Children's Services Act 1985* defines a Child Care Centre as: 'any place or premises in which more than four (4) young children are, for monetary or other considerations, cared for on a non-residential basis apart from their guardians'. In South Australia all centres are required to be licensed. Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) is provided by the Australian Government and are available to eligible families accessing child care centres.

Centres may be 'community-based', which means they are managed by a voluntary committee of parents and other community members, or they may be privately owned and run as a commercial business. There are 48 community-based child care centres located on the Minister's land with non-commercial leasing arrangements in place. DECS is responsible for the regulation and licensing of child care centres. DECS does not staff, operate, or fund child care centres. In 2010 there were 335 licensed child care centres in South Australia.

### **Family Day Care**

Family Day Care provides child care for children from birth in the homes of approved care providers. Each care provider is able to provide care for up to seven children (with a maximum of four under school age) at any one time. Care providers are self employed, home-based childcare workers working within a government approved framework. Family Day Care can provide full time, part time, before and after school, vacation, weekend, evening, and overnight care depending on the availability of care providers.

DECS is the major sponsor of Family Day Care in South Australia and operates 12 such schemes across the State. Sponsorship responsibilities include: the management of Australian Government funding (the primary funding source in addition to an administration levy); the overall administration of the program; recruitment, approval, training and payment of care providers; and most importantly, the placement of children into homes that provide a quality learning environment. In 2010 there were 822 DECS-sponsored family day care service providers, catering for 3 511 places.

### **Integrated centres**

Integrated Centres offer a preschool program together with a licensed child care service from the one location, under the leadership of a preschool director. DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development, operational support and curriculum of all of the preschool at the centre. Although DECS does not staff, operate or fund child care centres, those that are collocated with a DECS preschool may operate under the leadership of the preschool director, with child care staff employed by the preschool governing council. In 2010 there were 22 integrated centres in South Australia catering for 1,244 places.

### **Occasional care**

DECS operated Occasional Care is short term child care for babies, toddlers and children under school age, available for up to one session of approximately three hours per child per week (depending on availability). This enables parents/caregivers to participate in activities, keep appointments, or have a break from their child/ren on an occasional basis rather than as a regular booking in a Child Care Centre. Most services are offered in preschools at the same time as the preschool session. Occasional care is offered from many rural preschools where there are no other forms of child care available. Workers are government employees and work as part of the preschool team.

Funding for occasional care is provided jointly by the Australian and South Australian Governments under a formal funding agreement. Some funding is also generated through parent fees. DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development, operational support and biennial reallocation of occasional care in South Australia. The Occasional Care operated by DECS under this model is not to be confused with the term 'Occasional Care' used to define a similar but unrelated option of care at some child care centres. In 2010 there were 86 occasional care service providers catering for 3 495 places.

### **Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care**

The Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) program offers child care and recreation activities for school age children by providing a range of developmental and age appropriate activities that encourage children to be active, learn life skills, solve problems, practice social skills and interact with friends in a leisure environment. Services can be offered before school, after school, during school holidays (vacation care) or any combination of these components. The majority of services are operated from school sites by Governing Councils or community managed organisations.

Out of School Hours Care services are approved to provide care for school aged children by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Operators, including school governing councils wishing to establish such a service apply to the Australian Government directly for approval and funding. Although DECS does not employ or operate OSHC services, the department provides operational support and policy advice.

### **Playcentres**

Playcentres are for children from birth to five years and are predominantly in rural areas where the numbers of eligible preschool children are too small to operate a viable preschool. Parents of children under three years of age are expected to attend with their children while attendance of parents with three and four year old children is optional. Services operate for one or two sessions per week, with the majority of playcentres operating from school premises, however some operate from other community facilities. DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development and operational support of playcentres. In 2010 there were 30 playcentres.

### **Preschool**

Preschool programs are play-based educational programs designed and delivered by degree-qualified teachers using an approved curriculum framework. Children aged four years old are entitled to attend for up to four consecutive terms before they enter Reception at school. Aboriginal children and children under the Guardianship of the Minister may attend from three years of age. Children who have special developmental needs or who access small rural preschools may attend for one or two additional terms. Preschools operate in a range of government funded centres including kindergartens, child-parent centres (CPCs), and integrated centres (such as Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting). These centres may also offer child care and/or unfunded programs such as pre-entry sessions, emergency care and playgroups.

Preschools/kindergartens are incorporated under the *Children's Services Act 1985* and operate under the governance of a preschool governing council and management of a preschool director. Child Parent Centres are under the governance of a school management committee (constituted under the *Education Act 1972*) and direction of a school principal.

DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development, operational support and curriculum of all of the government operated preschools. DECS also provides grant funding for 20 non-government preschools.

### **Rural Care**

Rural Care is a joint funding initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and DECS. It is a service type that is unique to South Australia and offers a long day care service for children 0-12 years in small rural communities. The services provide care for up to four non-school aged children, with a maximum of up to seven children less than twelve years of age at any one time. Services operate in conjunction with DECS preschools, under the sponsorship of the preschool/school governing council. The Preschool Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program. Rural Care workers are government employees and work as part of the Preschool team. DECS is responsible for the funding, staffing, policy development, operational support, and administration of Child Care Benefit associated with the Rural Care services. In 2010, there were 13 service providers catering for 91 places.

### **Learning Together**

The *Learning Together* program is a literacy and support program that aims to improve early learning for children from birth to three years. *Learning Together @ Home* is a home visiting program that supports families to develop skills to help their children's learning and development through play.

### **Playgroups**

Playgroups offer parents and their children an opportunity to meet regularly and socialise, share experiences, and learn together through play and having fun.

### **Babysitting agencies**

These agencies are individual or registered businesses that refer people to care for children in their home while parents are temporarily absent. DECS licenses 20 babysitting agencies under the *Children's Services Act 1985*.

**Figure 1: Number of early childhood services by type, as at 30 June.**

Source: Location Services System, DECS Office of Early Childhood Services.

Service	2009	2010
Preschools <sup>1</sup>	388	383
Children's centres <sup>2</sup>	7	13
Integrated centres <sup>3</sup>	21	22
Playcentres	29	30
Child care centres	329	335
Family day care schemes	13	12
Rural care	13	13
Occasional care <sup>4</sup>	86	86
Vacation care	250	253
Out of school hours care <sup>5</sup>	329	331
Learning Together @ Home	15	15

Notes:

1. Includes centres staffed or funded by DECS. Excludes outreach centres, integrated centres and children's centres. Includes eight Catholic Education preschools funded by DECS.
2. Children's centres are integrated services for children aged 0-8 and their families. They offer a range of education, licensed care, health and family services provided by DECS, SA Health, SA Department for Families & Communities and non-government organisations.

3. Figures reported separately for integrated centres and children's centres.
4. Occasional care includes services in preschools, community based and other funded programs.
5. OSHC services include Commonwealth-approved before, after and vacation care services and State-funded vacation care services. Figures include all outreach services. Services offering vacation care are included in both the number of vacation care services and the number of out of school hours care services in this table. Therefore if determining the total number of early childhood services the vacation care figure must not be included.

**Figure 2: Number of children attending early childhood services**

*Source: Annual Census of Children's Services 2008 and 2009*

Service type	2008	2009
Preschools (including outreach centres)	17 362	17 521
Integrated centres	2 176	2 560
Playcentres	276	283
Child care centres <sup>1</sup>	28 190	31 086
Family day care <sup>2</sup>	10 201	10 516
Rural care	229	243
Occasional care centres	2 050	2 278
Out of school hours care <sup>1</sup>	22 980	21 890
Vacation care <sup>1</sup>	17 460	16 520
Learning Together @ Home	641	721

**Notes:**

- 1 The numbers for child care centres, out of school hours care and vacation care are estimates of the number of children attending.
- 2 Family day care data reflect the number of registered children.
- 3 Figures exclude services that are DECS-licensed but not DECS-funded.

## Appendix 3: Early Childhood Development Workforce Profile

### Employment

In the year to August 2010 there were 9,700 persons employed in core ECD occupations, 1.2 per cent of South Australia's workforce. The ECD workforce was equal to 9.2 per cent of the total health care and social assistance industry workforce in the same period. Using 2009 Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) unpublished census data on registered early childhood education and care providers, 49 per cent of childcare and preschool workers are employed by DECS, 1 per cent by TAFE, and 50 per cent by non-government providers.

**Table 1: Core ECD Occupations, Year to August 2010**

Core Occupations	Share of Core Early Childhood Development Workforce
Child Carers	85.2%
Preschool Teachers	8.0%
Child Care Centre Managers	5.2%
Paediatricians	1.4%
Paediatric Surgeons	0.1%

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

Over the past five years the ECD workforce has grown by 18.5 per cent (or 1,500 persons), significantly above the state growth rate of 9.5 per cent.

**Table 2: Change in Employment, Year to August 2005 to Year to August 2010**

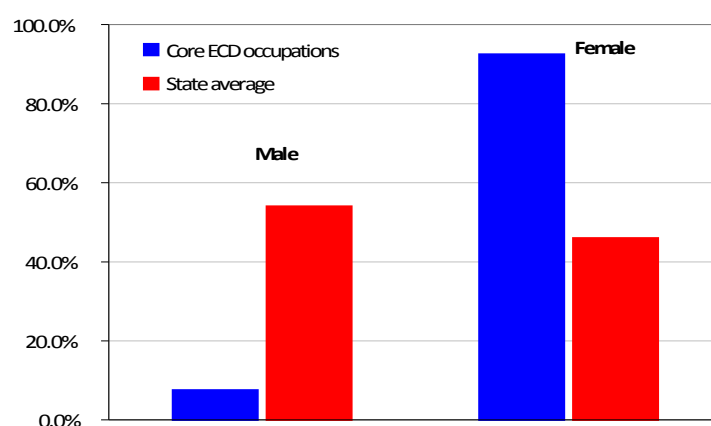
	Year to August 2005	Year to August 2010	Change (persons)	Change (per cent)
Core ECD Occupations	8,200	9,700	1,500	18.5%
All Occupations	736,900	807,100	70,100	9.5%

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

### Gender

The ECD workforce is dominated by females, accounting for 92.4 per cent of the total workforce. This is significantly above the state average of 46.1 per cent.

**Figure 1: Gender Distribution, Year to August 2010**

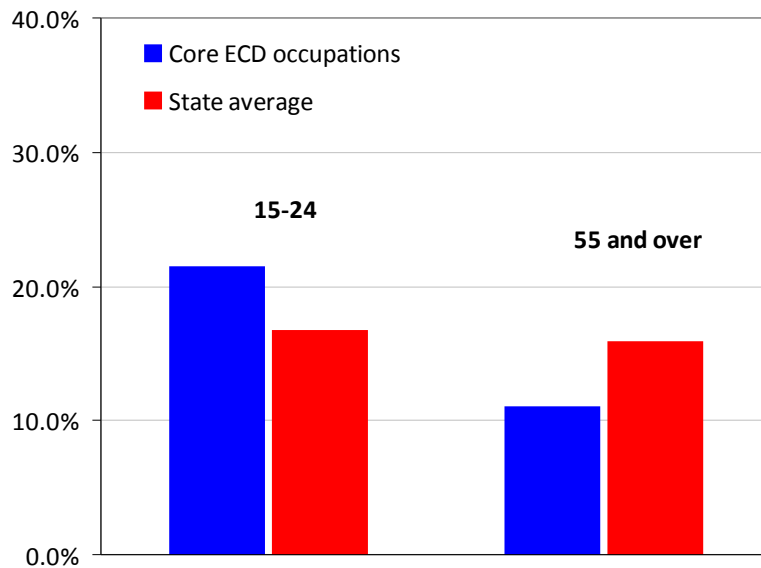


Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

## Age

The ECD workforce has more 15 to 24 year old workers (21.4 per cent) when compared with the total South Australian workforce (16.6 per cent). In addition, the share of the ECD workforce that is aged 55 years and over is below that of the state workforce (10.9 per cent compared to 15.8 per cent).

Figure 2: Age Groups, 2006

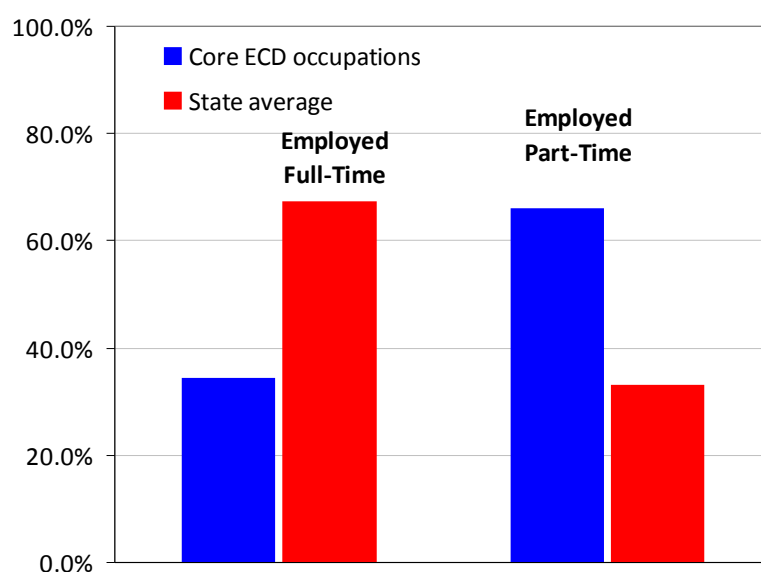


Source: ABS Census of Housing and Population

## Employment Status

Full-time employment accounts for 34.2 per cent of the ECD workforce, which is significantly below the state average of 67.1 per cent

Figure 3: Employment Status, Year to August 2010



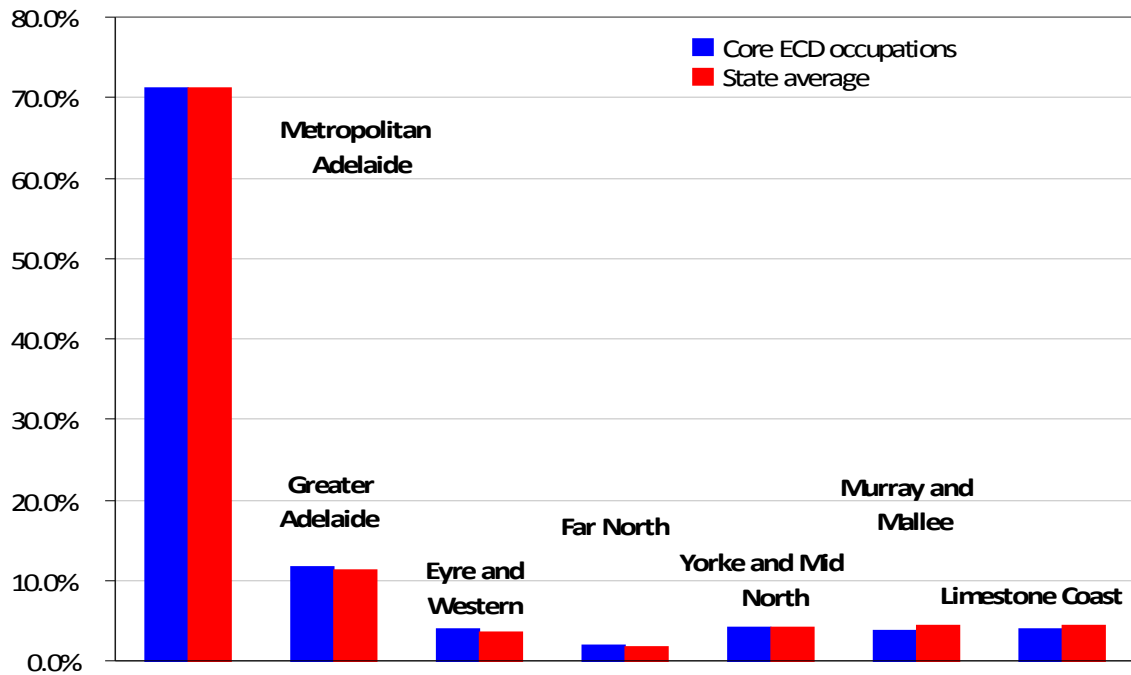
Source: ABS Labour Force Survey



## Region of Employment

According to the 2006 Census, 71.0 per cent of the core ECD workforce was employed in the Adelaide metropolitan region, identical to the distribution of the state workforce. A further 11.6 per cent of the ECD workforce is employed in the greater Adelaide region—also in line with the distribution of the state workforce.

Figure 4: Employment by Region, 2006



Source: ABS Census of Housing and Population

## Appendix Four: Skills and training figures relating to the ECD workforce

### Schooling Sector

*A Community Services Industry Pathways Program has been established in SA and comprises an industry endorsed set of learning strategies, career resources and nationally accredited VET competencies and/or qualification(s) that articulate into apprenticeships, traineeships, further education or training, and direct employment.*

**Figure 1: School Based Apprenticeships/traineeships in Community Services and Health 2006-2010**

Commencements	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Children's Services	1	-	4	17	10
Aged Care	3	-	2	4	1
Community Work	3	3	2	7	4
Enrolled Nursing	-	-	-	1	1
Naturopathy	-	1	1	1	-
Total	7	4	9	30	16

Source: SACE Board, 2010

Note: this information does not indicate that the student has actually completed the full qualification, it indicates they have done a unit or units of competency from this qualification, which in some cases may mean they have completed the qualification.

### Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector

*Note: At the time of writing, commencement and completion data for training delivered in 2010 by private providers was not available. Therefore the following commentary provides information about the supply of relevant VET qualifications to 2009 only. It is also important to note that the data available does not capture privately funded training delivered by private providers.*

**Figure 2: Children's Services – Certificate III and Above**

Commencements	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TAFE SA	1,518	1,257	1,416	1,212	1,212	1,427	1,467
Private Provider	27	57	119	188	305	666	N/A
Total	1,545	1,314	1,535	1,400	1,517	2,093	-

Completions	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TAFE SA	491	431	481	570	598	545	675
Private Provider	2	5	26	10	115	325	N/A
Total	493	436	507	580	713	870	-

Source: DFEEST 2010

### Traineeships

**Figure 3: Children's Services – Traineeships**

Commencements	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Public RTO	39	81	91	39	50	57	49
Private RTO	28	58	79	149	138	132	220
Total	67	139	170	188	188	189	269

Completions	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	22	39	80	91	107	127	79

Source: DFEEST Planning and Evaluation, 2010

**Figure 4: Early Childhood Education Courses – Higher Education**

<b>Uni SA</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Commencements	147	150	211	185	166	185	236
Completions	N/A	137	102	103	84	110	N/A
<b>Flinders Uni</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Commencements	N/A	N/A	N/A	22	72	71	79
Completions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20

*Source: DEEWR Higher Education Statistics, 2010*