

Productivity Commission

Education and Training Workforce Study (The ECD Workforce)

Submission by the Department of Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations

March 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The Productivity Commission has invited submissions from individuals or organisations in relation to their 'Education and Training Workforce Study', specifically, at this stage, on the part of the study which relates to the early childhood development (ECD) workforce. In terms of the scope of the ECD workforce study, the Commission has been asked by the Assistant Treasurer to provide advice on:

- current and future demand for the workforce, with particular regard to the skills required to meet society's needs;
- current and future supply of the workforce, in terms of numbers, knowledge and skills;
- workforce composition that most effectively and efficiently delivers desired outcomes;
- appropriate directions and tools for workplace planning and development; and
- factors of notable significance for the workforce.

In addition, the Commission has been asked to consider whether current sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries limit innovation and flexibility in workforce planning, development and practices and factors that impact on building indigenous workforce capability.

To assist with submissions, the Commission published the Early Childhood Development Workforce issues paper in November 2010 providing an overview of the issues to be addressed by the study, and a number of specific questions for discussion and response.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the research study.

DEEWR's submission provides a technical response, rather than a policy response to the matters raised in the issues paper, principally in relation to the early childhood education and care sector, as a specific subset of the wider early childhood development sector. It also responds to the primary themes identified in the Commission's issues paper.

CHAPTER 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) IN AUSTRALIA AND THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

ECD in the Australian context

As outlined in the Productivity Commission's *Early Childhood Development Workforce Issues Paper* ('the Issues Paper') released in November 2010, early childhood development (ECD) is commonly understood to involve the physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development of children aged from birth to eight years of age.

The ECD sector in Australia broadly delivers services that aim to foster the education, care, and health and wellbeing of young children, including early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, family and child health services and family support services.

Historically in Australia, there has been a distinction in the ECEC sector between child care to support workforce participation and early childhood education to support children's development.

The Australian Government is the most significant funder of child care services largely through fee relief for parents. There are several different care types, with each type often associated with a different regulatory and funding landscape. The main types of child care are:

- Long Day Care (LDC) – a centre-based form of child care service. These services may be run by private operators, local councils, community organisations, employers or non-profit organisations. These services are designed to primarily provide all-day or part-time care to under school age children.
- Family Day Care (FDC) – FDC services support and administer networks of FDC carers who provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. To assist with this, each service receives operational support funding from the Australian Government. Both not-for-profit and for-profit providers may operate a FDC.
- Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) – provides care mainly for primary school children before and/or after school and during vacation time.
- Occasional Care (OC) – centre-based child care that provides flexible care for children from birth to school age. Families can access occasional care regularly on a sessional basis or irregularly.
- In-Home Care (IHC) – a targeted form of child care where an approved carer provides care in the child's home. It is only available for families who do not have access to an existing child care service, or where an existing service cannot meet their needs. Some of the circumstances in which a family may be eligible for in-home care include where the parent or child

has an illness or disability, they live in a rural or remote area, or a family has had a multiple birth.

Preschool or kindergarten services, by contrast, have historically been funded largely by state and territory governments and provide early childhood education on a sessional basis generally in the year prior to formal school, although some groups, especially Indigenous children, may be offered preschool for two years prior to school. Most children in Australia (current participation is 70 per cent) attend a preschool program around the age of four and participation is voluntary. Preschool programs generally comprise a structured play-based educational program, designed and delivered by a degree-qualified early childhood teacher and can be delivered in a standalone preschool or in a long day care setting.

One of the major areas of reform agreed under COAG is the National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The NQA encompasses the National Quality Framework (NQF), the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the establishment of a new national body to oversee the new system. Further information on the NQA is available in [Chapter 2](#).

For the first time, the same quality and regulatory framework will apply both to traditional and standalone preschools/early education services as well as to long day care and other types of child care services.

The NQF will deliver a higher standard of care for children in the critical areas of education, health and safety and will provide clearer and comprehensive information for families so they can choose the best services for their child. It includes a compulsory National Quality Standard (NQS), comprising improved educator-to-child ratios, new qualification requirements for all early childhood education and care workers and a national quality rating system.

A significant component of the NQS is the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) which provides parents, carers and educators with an overarching guide to learning and development in the years from birth to age five. Under the NQS, early childhood education and care providers, both child care and preschool, will need to provide evidence of their use of the EYLF in designing and delivering their early learning programs.

Australian Government investment

The Australian Government has for many years invested substantially in the ECD sector. This has included investment in the areas of education and care (for example Child Care Rebate, delivery of quality child care services), health (for example nutrition programs, mental health initiatives) and family support (for example Child Support, parenting programs and community development initiatives). These investments have been delivered by the Australian Government across separate portfolios. More information on the three portfolio agencies with primary responsibility for ECD is at [Attachment A](#).

Investing in the health, education, development and care of Australian children benefits children and their families, communities and the economy, and is critical to lifting workforce participation and delivering the Government's productivity agenda.

What is the case for investment in ECD?

The period from birth to eight years of age is a critical period in a child's life. It is the time when children acquire essential foundation skills and knowledge, and when brain development proceeds at a far greater pace. Cognitive, verbal, social, physical and emotional skills are all developing during this time.

There is evidence from Australia and overseas that the early years of a child's life have a profound effect on their health, development, learning and well-being. A positive start to life can help a child develop to their fullest with potential benefits that can accrue to society as a whole – through enhanced human capital and capability, increased productivity, greater social inclusion and reduced public expenditure in health, welfare and crime related to disadvantage over the life course.

Children with a poor start to life may develop learning, behavioural or emotional problems with potential consequences through their lives, and in turn, their children's lives. These problems can accrue to the whole of society through increased social inequality, reduced productivity and costs associated with entrenched generational disadvantage.

Another key research finding is that quality matters when it comes to the child's learning environment, including the quality of the home learning environment and the early years of pre-primary and primary education. Aspects of quality include the capacity and engagement of parents in their child's development; stimulating play-based learning activities; higher qualifications of early childhood professionals; lower child-to-staff ratios and a strong relationship between the child and a stable caregiver.

Quality early childhood and care programs lead to better intellectual development and independence, sociability and concentration, confidence, language and cognitive development. They can help prepare a child for a transition to school and support parents and caregivers in their role as carers and educators of their children.

Development of the National ECD Strategy

Working with State and Territory Governments through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the Australian Government has set a national ECD reform agenda.

At the COAG meeting of 26 March 2008, all governments agreed on a common framework for reform of education as a key step in the Education Revolution. COAG

also endorsed a comprehensive set of aspirations, outcomes, progress measures and future policy directions in key areas, including early childhood.

In July 2009, COAG endorsed *The National ECD Strategy - Investing in the Early Years* (the ECD Strategy). The ECD Strategy identifies ECD outcomes that the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments are seeking to achieve for children by 2020. The Strategy promotes ECD services that are responsive to the needs of children and families. Responsive ECD services optimise the use of universal, targeted and intensive service layers – through ensuring these service layers are well-coordinated, interdisciplinary and flexible.

Vision of the National ECD Strategy

The ECD Strategy identifies the early childhood development outcomes that all governments are seeking to achieve for children by 2020, and guides their actions to promote optimal child development for the first 8 years of life.

The ECD Strategy sets a clear vision that, by 2020, *all children will have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and the nation*. This builds on the significant current investment across government and non-government sectors. A number of policy objectives relate to this vision, including: greater social inclusion; improved outcomes for the majority of children but specifically Indigenous children and the most disadvantaged; and increased productivity and international competitiveness.

The Strategy includes an ECD Outcomes Framework, which describes seven outcomes where support for children is needed to realise the vision:

- children are born and remain healthy;
- children's environments are nurturing, culturally appropriate and safe;
- children have the knowledge and skills for life and learning;
- children benefit from better social inclusion and reduced disadvantage, especially Indigenous children;
- children are engaged in and benefiting from educational opportunities;
- families are confident and have the capabilities to support their children's development;
- quality early childhood development services that support the workforce participation choices of families.

Governments have identified six specific reform priorities through the ECD Strategy:

- strengthening maternal, child and family health services;
- supporting vulnerable children;
- engaging parents and community in understanding the importance of early childhood;

- improving early childhood infrastructure (including developing service integration models);
- strengthening the early childhood development and family support service workforce; and
- building better information and evidence base related to children, families and early childhood development services.

Importance of the ECD workforce

As outlined above, one of the priority areas included in the ECD strategy is the requirement to “*Strengthen the workforce across early childhood development and family support services*”. The ECD Strategy also articulates a vision for the ECD workforce, recognising the importance of a qualified and sustainable workforce to delivering the best outcomes for children and their families.

2020 Workforce Vision – excerpt from the ECD Strategy

The early childhood sector is attracting the brightest to the profession, and there is a sustainable workforce supply which closely matches demand. Early childhood workers are valued and appropriately skilled according to best practice in quality and interdisciplinary service delivery. Overall job satisfaction and good working conditions are reflected in stable recruitment and retention rates. The profile of the early childhood workforce reflects the community. There are career opportunities and good articulation between training pathways, including recognition of prior learning. Professional development and incentives are in place to grow and support leaders in the field.

Defining the workforce – ECD and ECEC

The ECD workforce includes the range of professions that work with children, and their families, across health, family services and early learning and care. Internationally and nationally, best practice approaches are emerging in the ways in which these professions can work together in an integrated way, particularly to support children and families that are vulnerable.

The early childhood education and care workforce is an important part of the ECD workforce. It incorporates childcare and/or stand-alone preschool for children between birth and five years of age. This workforce is facing some immediate and unique challenges, including changes in the national regulatory environment and the commitment to achieve universal access to early childhood education in the year before formal schooling.

ECD Strategy – a policy ‘umbrella’ for a range of initiatives as part of the Australian Government early childhood reform agenda.

The ECD Strategy is informed by current reforms to improve quality in child care and preschool including the introduction of a National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care from January 2012, which incorporates the Early Years Learning Framework and a quality rating system. It is also informed by the commitment to provide universal access to an early childhood education program delivered by a qualified teacher, for all children in the year before formal school.

These, and other reforms, will stimulate additional demand for a skilled and qualified early childhood workforce. Chapter 2 provides further details of the national reforms underway.

The focus of the remainder of this submission is centred on the ECEC workforce.

CHAPTER 2: AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT EARLY CHILDHOOD REFORM AGENDA

The ECD Strategy is the umbrella for a range of significant national reforms, with all Australian Governments working together and coordinating efforts to deliver a comprehensive ECD system. These reforms will stimulate additional demand for a skilled and qualified early childhood workforce and are briefly described below.

Universal access to early childhood education

Universal access to early childhood education is a COAG commitment by 2013, to provide access to a quality early childhood education program for all children in the 12 months prior to full time schooling, delivered by a four year university trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. This commitment is set out in the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, agreed by COAG in November 2008. Under the National Partnership the Australian Government has allocated \$955 million to states and territories over the five years to 30 June 2013. A further \$15 million has been allocated nationally for data development and research.

Bilateral Agreements between the Australian Government and each state and territory government have been negotiated which include measures that increase and develop the workforce. Examples of these include increasing the number of four year university trained early childhood teachers from 4980 to over 5600 (NSW) and attracting or developing new and existing early childhood teachers ensuring teachers are four-year trained (Victoria).

More information on the workforce initiatives being implemented by jurisdictions intended to increase the early childhood teacher workforce is provided in [Attachment B](#).

The National Partnership and Bilateral Agreements are available on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au.

National Quality Agenda

The Commonwealth is working in partnership with all state and territory governments to implement a nationally consistent approach to the regulation and quality assurance of early childhood education and care in Australia through the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care*. The National Partnership, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments on 7 December 2009, provides for the introduction of a National Quality Framework (NQF), which will be implemented progressively from 1 January 2012.

The NQF will put in place a new National Quality Standard to ensure high quality and consistent early childhood education and care across Australia. These changes will help providers to improve their services in the areas that impact on a child's

development and empower families to make informed choices about which service is best for their child.

The legislative framework for the NQF is provided through the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (the Act) which received Royal Assent in the Victorian Parliament on 12 October 2010. The Act will be incorporated by legislation in each state and territory except for Western Australia, which will implement its own corresponding legislation. Since being passed in the Victorian Parliament, legislation to enact the NQF received Royal Assent in the NSW Parliament on 29 November 2010.

Staffing arrangements under the NQF

The NQS sets out uniform national requirements in relation to educator-to-child ratios and educator qualifications. For some jurisdictions there will be minimal or no changes. For others there will be changes. Changes to the educator-to-child ratios and educator qualifications are being phased in from January 2012 to allow time for education and care services to adjust to the new requirements.

Educator to child ratios

The NQF introduces new, nationally consistent educator to child ratios for early childhood education and care services. This includes approved long day care, family day care and preschool services as well as outside school hours care.

The Act requires that services must maintain the minimum educator-to-child ratios based on the age range of children being educated and cared for at the service.

The following tables provide the agreed minimum educator-to-staff ratios for centre-based and family day care services and when these ratios come into effect. Jurisdictions are able to maintain their existing educator-to-child ratios above these minimum ratios.

CENTRE-BASED SERVICES		
Age Group	Educator to child ratios	Compliance Timeframe
Birth to 24 mths	1:4	1 Jan 2012
25 to 35 mths	1:5	1 Jan 2016
36 mths up to (but not including over preschool aged children)	1:11	1 Jan 2016
School aged children	No national standard has been agreed for the National Quality Framework	

FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICES

Educator to child ratios - all ages	1:7 with a maximum of 4 children not yet attending school (this ratio includes family day care educator's own children).	1 Jan 2014
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In relation to family day care services, the Act requires an approved provider to ensure that there is a family day care coordinator to assist with the operation of the service and support, monitor and train the family day care educators of that service.

Qualifications and training

The Act requires that services must meet the minimum qualification requirements for educators. The NQS sets out the minimum educator qualification requirements for centre-based and family day care services, based on the number of children being educated and cared for at the service, and when these qualification requirements come into effect.

From 1 January 2014, the following qualifications will apply:

CENTRE-BASED SERVICES			
Age Group	No. of Children	Qualification Requirements	Compliance Timeframe
All early childhood services (Excluding OSHC)		At least 50% of educators must have (or be actively working towards) a Diploma level education and care qualification. Other educators must have (or be actively working towards) a Certificate III level education and care qualification.	1 Jan 2014
Preschool aged and under	< 25	The service must have access to an early childhood teacher for some of the time that the service is being provided to less than 25 children.	1 Jan 2014
Preschool aged and under	25-59	An early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 25 children or more at any point in the given day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service operates for 50 or more hours in a week, for at least 6 hours on the day in question; • If the service operates for less than 50 hours a week, for 60% of the operating hours of the service on the day in question. 	1 Jan 2014

Preschool aged and under	60-80	<p>An early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 60 children or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service operates for 50 or more hours in a week, for at least 6 hours on the day in question; • If the service operates for less than 50 hours a week, for 60% of the operating hours of the service on the day in question. <p>A second early childhood teacher or another suitably qualified leader must be in attendance at the service for at least half the time the service is provided to 60 children or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service operates for 50 or more hours in a week, for at least 3 hours on the day in question; • If the service operates for less than 50 hours a week, for 30% of the operating hours of the service on the day in question. 	<p>1 Jan 2014</p> <p>1 Jan 2020</p>
Preschool aged and under	> 80	<p>An early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 80 children or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service operates for 50 or more hours in a week, for at least 6 hours on the day in question; • If the service operates for less than 50 hours a week, for 60% of the operating hours of the service on the day in question. <p>A second early childhood teacher or another suitably qualified leader must be in attendance at the service whenever there are more than 80 children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service operates for 50 or more hours in a week, for at least 6 hours on the day in question; • If the service operates for less than 50 hours a week, for 60% of the operating hours of the service on the day in question. 	<p>1 Jan 2014</p> <p>1 Jan 2020</p>

Over preschool aged children	Any number	No national standard has been agreed for the National Quality Framework.	
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FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICES		
Age group or No. of children	Requirements	Compliance Timeframe
Educator qualification requirements - any number	All family day care educators must have (or be actively working towards) a Certificate III level education and care qualification.	1 Jan 2014
	All family day coordinators have a Diploma qualification.	1 Jan 2014

The National Partnership provides that a review will commence at the beginning of 2013 on progress towards the qualification requirements due to come into force on 1 January 2014, particularly in relation to requirements for an early childhood teacher and for those jurisdictions in which there are significant rural and remote workforces.

The National Partnership Agreement is available on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

There will be a new national body to oversee the NQF, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). From 1 January 2012, ACECQA will work with state and territories to guide and promote consistency in the implementation and administration of the NQF.

Services will deal with one organisation for regulation. Currently, State and Territory regulatory agencies have responsibility for licensing early childhood education and care services. The National Childcare Accreditation Council, funded by the Australian Government, has responsibility for accrediting long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services. Under the new system, State and territory government Regulatory Authorities will administer and enforce the NQF in their jurisdiction.

ACECQA will be responsible for approving educational qualifications and determining equivalent qualifications (e.g. early childhood teacher qualifications or diploma level education and care qualifications). ACECQA will also specify the qualifications which are acceptable under the NQF and publish a national register of these qualifications.

Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), agreed by COAG in July 2009 is a key component of the NQF. It underpins universal access to early childhood education and will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery

of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The EYLF is Australia's first national framework for early childhood education which is delivered across a range of early childhood services types. It outlines the desired outcomes for children in early childhood education and care settings across the birth to five age range and as they make the transition to school.

The EYLF can be found at:

www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx

Closing the Gap

Under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap), signed by COAG in November 2008, COAG has agreed to the following targets to address Indigenous disadvantage

- a) Closing the life expectancy gap within a generation;
- b) halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade;
- c) ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years;
- d) halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade;
- e) halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and
- f) halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

COAG recognises that overcoming Indigenous disadvantage will require a long term generational commitment that sees major effort directed across a range of strategic platforms or 'building blocks' (Early Childhood, Schooling, Health, Economic Participation, Healthy Homes, Safe Communities and Governance and Leadership) which support the reform agenda.

The National Indigenous Reform Agreement can be found on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au.

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

Many Indigenous families miss out on early childhood services even though they stand to benefit most. Early childhood experts advocate integrated delivery of services, including antenatal services, child and maternal health services, parenting and family support services, and early learning and child care, as the best delivery platform to ensure families actually receive the support they need.

Governments recognise that a shared commitment to improvements in Indigenous child mortality requires better access to antenatal care, teenage reproductive and sexual health services, child and maternal health services and integrated child and family services which focus on quality early learning, child care and parent and family support.

On 3 July 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to sustained engagement and effort by all governments over the next decade and beyond to achieve the Closing the Gap targets for Indigenous people. As a first step, COAG agreed in principle to the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development with joint funding of around \$564 million over six years.

At the COAG meeting on 2 October 2008, Australia's first National Partnership Agreement, the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement, was signed as the next step to achieve the COAG Closing the Gap targets for Indigenous children. On 2 July 2009 a revised National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development was agreed which superseded the previous version of the National Partnership Agreement.

The National Partnership is split into three elements:

1. Integration of Early Childhood Services through the establishment of at least 35 Children and Family Centres across Australia (38 Centres are being established).
2. Increased access to Antenatal Care, Pre-Pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health by Indigenous young people.
3. Increased access to and use of maternal and child health services by Indigenous Families.

The Children and Family Centres will provide a dynamic mix of services, responsive to community needs, and include child care, early learning and parent and family support services. The operations of the Children and Family Centre will be underpinned by integration of their management, governance and service systems. Community engagement with the Children and Family Centres is integral to their successful implementation.

A copy of the National Partnership Agreement is available on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au.

Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery was signed by the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory in January 2009.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery is a five year agreement between the governments that puts into place a new approach for delivering services to Indigenous Australians living in 29 locations in remote

Australia. The new model requires agencies to work closely with Indigenous Australians to determine what services are needed and how services will be provided.

The Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement requires a two-way commitment:

- From governments and their staff – to cooperate to put in place the resources and planning for better infrastructure and services and to develop the capacity of individuals, communities and local service providers
- From the community and community members – to work with government to improve the community and to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, in particular the health, safety and education of their children.

The National Partnership can be found on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au.

Remote Service Delivery Local Implementation Plans

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (RSD), governments will progressively deliver facilities and services comparable to those which would be expected in any Australian town of similar size, location and need, to an initial set of 29 priority remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

Governments and community members are developing Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) to guide future investment and government-community co-operation and partnerships in those communities. LIPs set out agreed priorities, actions, responsibilities and commitments. They also detail what services are required and how these will be delivered. Government agencies will commit to resources and timeframes to implement actions identified in the plans, with a particular focus on harnessing potential investment from the other COAG National Partnerships and Agreements.

The LIPs are living documents which will evolve over time as the various agreed actions are carried out and commitments delivered. So there will be continuing discussion and negotiation with each community about local people's vision for their future and how to achieve it, which will be expressed in further iterations of the LIPs.

The need for the development of early childhood workforce development strategies is being considered by the RSD Boards of Management in each of the 29 communities. This work will be undertaken as part of the Local Implementation Plan process and will include consultation with service providers.

Fourteen LIPs are currently in place. Further information about the agreed Local Implementation Plans can be accessed at:

www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/communities/lips/Pages/default.aspx

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009-2020)

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009-2020), agreed by COAG on 30 April 2009 proposes that Australia needs to move from seeing child protection as a response to abuse and neglect to promoting the safety and wellbeing of all children. This paradigm shift has workforce implications, such as the need to develop core competencies for early childhood professionals, that will require responses in the short, medium and longer terms.

The Framework consists of high level and supporting outcomes, strategies to be delivered through a series of three-year action plans and indicators of change that can be used to monitor the success of the Framework.

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children is available at:

www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/framework_protecting_children/Pages/default.aspx

CHAPTER 3: INFORMATION ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

Staff numbers and growth

In August 2010, the Early Childhood sector (which comprises the Child Care Services and the Preschool Education industry sectors) employed approximately 159 200 workers.

Over the past five years (November 2005 to November 2010) the Early Childhood Sector experienced an average growth of 5.5% per annum while over the past year (November 2009 – November 2010) there was an increase of 13.6%. This growth rate is above the 2.5% per annum average for all industries¹.

Over the five years to May 2010, employment for child care workers rose strongly with an increase of 19.8% to reach 105 500. Employment for early childhood teachers also rose over this period with an increase of 7.7% (or 1200) to reach 17 400.²

Staff qualifications, ongoing development and tenure

The ECEC Workforce, outside of the traditional preschool sector, has had a significant proportion of unqualified staff. While the need for more qualified workers remains high, in recent years there has been an increase in staff qualifications.³

- 2004 – 54.6% primary contact staff had a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate III
- 2006 – 54.8% primary contact staff had a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate III
- 2008-09 – 63.4% primary contact staff had a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate III
- 2010 – 66.2% primary contact staff had a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate III.

¹ Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (cat 6291.0.55.003) seasonally adjusted and trended by DEEWR. The ABS Labour Force Survey trend time series is subject to revision each quarter following the release of more recent data.

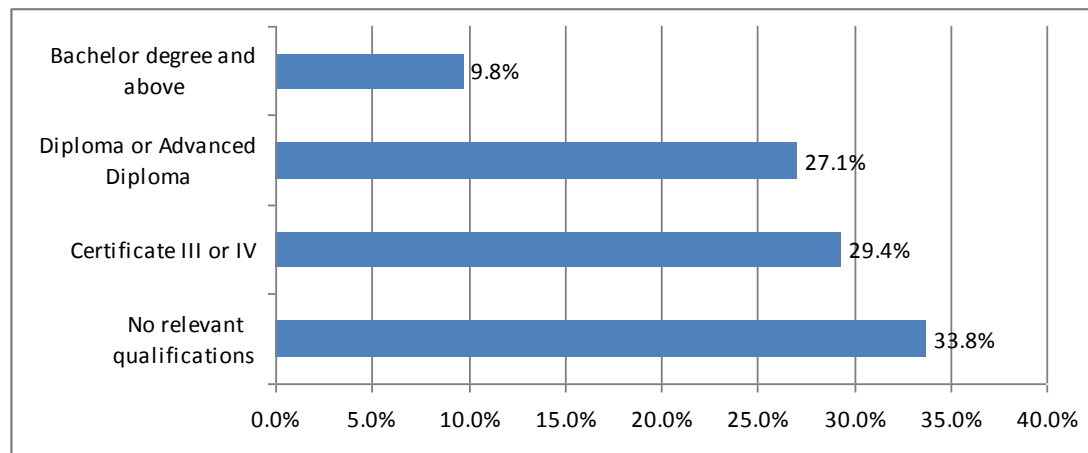
² Source ABS Labour Force Survey, DEEWR trend data to May 2010.

³ Report on Government Services 2011, Chapter Three: Children's Services .

Data for 2004 and 2006 are weighted from the AGCCCS (Australian Government Census of Child Care Services). Data for 2008-09 are weighted data drawn from the AGCCPS (Australian Government Child Care Provider Survey). Data for 2008-09 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the change in the source for data collection. Data for 2010 are weighted data drawn from the National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census.

The following figure provides a summary of the Qualifications of contact staff in approved child care services in 2010.

Qualifications of contact staff in approved child care services

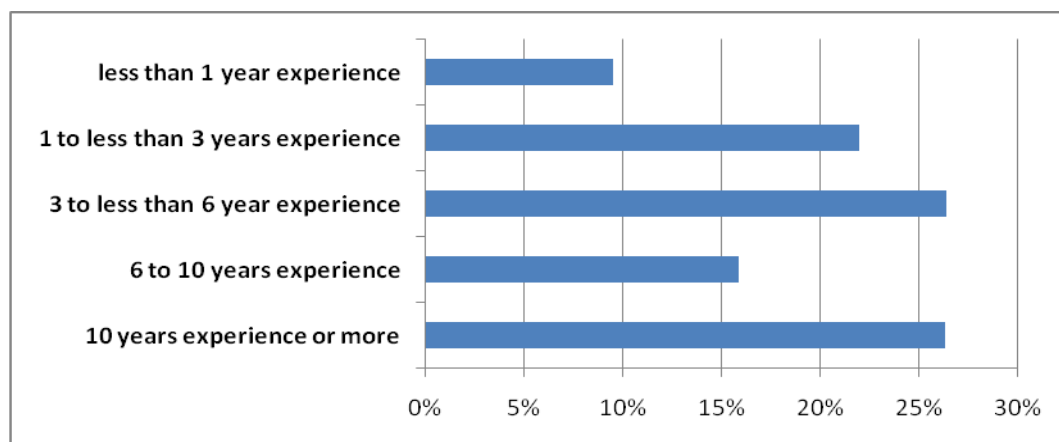


Source: 2010 ECEC workforce census - preliminary weighted data

Along with the increase in the number of qualified staff, there has been an increase in the proportion of staff undertaking ongoing staff development in children's services. Ongoing staff development is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure staff in government funded or provided children's services are able to provide services that meet the needs of children. Nationally in 2009-10, 80.6 per cent of paid primary contact staff in Australian Government approved child care services undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months.⁴

Information on child care staff tenure data in Australian Government approved child care services has also been reported for the first time. The majority of primary contact staff/carers (57.9%) have less than 6 years experience although 26.3% have 10 years experience or more.

Tenure of primary contact staff/carers in approved child care services



Source: ROGS 2011

⁴ ROGS 2011.

Staff turnover and vacancy levels

The proportion of workers leaving the early childhood sector (and needing to be replaced) is 15.7% (annually) which is higher than the average for all occupations at 13.1%.

DEEWR's Job Outlook website rates job prospects for child carers as 'good' and reports that the (internet) vacancy level for child care workers is 'high'. Vacancies arising from job changing (changing employers) are expected to provide 47.8% of vacancies, compared with 45.1% from job openings (leaving the occupation) and 7.1% from new jobs (employment growth).

More information on the Job Outlook website is available from:
www.joboutlook.gov.au/pages/occupation.aspx?search=alpha&tab=prospects&cluster=&code=4211

Employment pay and conditions

Early childhood workers working in different early childhood settings (e.g. long day care centres and preschools) may be employed under a range of different industrial arrangements, including awards and enterprise agreements. These arrangements vary across states and territories and may involve non-monetary remuneration.

In some jurisdictions there could also be differences in salary and conditions of employment for early childhood teachers according to the sector in which they are employed (e.g. in stand-alone preschools, early childhood centres, long day care or similar operations attached to private or public schools).

The Australian Government's workplace relations reforms included the establishment of a national workplace relations system. Through the *Fair Work Act 2009* a new legislated safety net of 10 National Employment Standards (NES) was put in place, complemented by a suite of 122 modern awards.

The NES and modern awards commenced operation from January 2010. The introduction of modern awards removes a number of complexities in the system and enables more consistency among minimum wages for employees performing the same or similar duties across Australia in the national workplace relations system. Modern awards do not cover wages for employees in the public sector and covered by State awards or agreements.

The award modernisation process, undertaken by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC), included the creation of two modern awards applicable to the early childhood sector. These are the Children's Services Award 2010 (CSA) and the Education Services (Teachers) Award 2010 (Teachers Award):

- The CSA applies to children's services employees, such as child care workers and childcare centre directors, employed in the private sector throughout Australia;
- The Teachers Award applies to private sector Teachers, including those working in preschools, childcare centres and long day care centres.

The AIRC, when handing down the final Teachers Award, concluded that early childhood teachers working in stand-alone preschools and long day care centres were more appropriately aligned with their counterparts working in primary and secondary schools.

Under the Teachers Award, teachers working in preschools, early childhood centres and long day care are entitled to receive an additional 4 per cent pay in recognition of the fact that they work over 48 weeks per year as opposed to working schools terms like their counterparts working in primary and secondary schools.

The CSA and the Teachers Award set out the minimum conditions of employment for children's services employees and Teachers working in the early childhood sector in the national workplace relations system. This includes minimum wages for particular classifications as set out below.

Minimum wages as set out in the Children's Services Award 2010 – as at 1 July 2010

Unqualified (entry level) Children's Services Employee	Unqualified Children's Services Employee with 2 years experience	Children's Services Employee with Cert II Qualifications	Children's Services Employee with Cert III Qualifications	Children's Services Employee with Diploma Qualifications
\$583.00 (CSE 1.1)	\$626.20 (CSE 2.2)	\$605.30 (CSE 2.1)	\$663.64 (CSE 3.1)	\$747.24 (CSE 3.4)

Salaries based on the Education Services (Teachers) Award 2010

Year	Beginning		End	
	1-Jan-10	1-Jul-10	1-Jan-10	1-Jul 10
3 year	\$38,283	\$39,640	\$53,493	\$54,850
4 year	\$40,201	\$41,558	\$53,493	\$54,850
5 year	\$41,701	\$43,058	\$53,493	\$54,850

Notes:

1. The Teachers Award provides that teachers working in early childhood setting are entitled to receive an additional 4 per cent pay on top of the above specified pay rates.
2. Pay rates in the CSA and the Teachers Award are subject to transitional provisions, which are designed to facilitate the transfer of employees from their pre-modern award rates of pay to the modern award standard, over a 5 year transitional period (ending 1 July 2014). The Fair Work Ombudsman can provide advice on the specific rate applicable to each award.

Future Workforce Data

There are a range of Australian government initiatives designed to improve the quality of information used in developing and measuring the outcomes of early childhood policy and programs.

2010 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census

In partnership with state and territory governments, DEEWR undertook the National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census in 2010. This Census was specifically developed to address information gaps in existing administrative data sources with respect to children with additional needs in child care, access to preschool programs and the ECEC workforce. The Census will provide more comprehensive and nationally consistent data on the ECEC workforce than has been previously available and will establish a robust base line for future workforce studies.

Information was collected from all approved child care, preschool and kindergarten providers and their staff to get a better idea of the qualifications and experiences of Australian ECEC workers. Part one focused on information about service usage, children with additional needs and access to preschool programs Part two, for individual staff members, was distributed to services in mid 2010. It sought information about staff roles, qualifications, employment status, training activities, pay and conditions and career intentions.

While some preliminary data from the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census 2010 is available through the Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2011, more detailed information will be available in mid 2011.

National ECEC Data Collection

On 6 November 2009, a *National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care* (NIA ECEC) was endorsed by MCEECDYA. The NIA ECEC was established to provide a framework for cooperation between the Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions and information agencies, and supports the performance information requirements for the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE) and other relevant Agreements under COAG. Among other aspects, it commits all jurisdictions and the Commonwealth to comprehensive data coverage on children's participation in preschool programs.

One of the main activities under the NIA ECEC work program has been the development of a National ECEC Data Collection. This collection is being compiled by the ABS and draws on administrative data provided from all states and territories. It will also draw on data to be provided by DEEWR from the Child Care Management System (CCMS). States and territories have agreed to collect and provide data for the National ECEC Data Collection according to nationally comparable standards and protocols through the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS). Please note that this collection is in its inaugural year and is

transitory, which is reflected in the publication title *'Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia'*.

The National ECEC Data Collection and ECEC NMDS currently focus on supporting the performance information requirements under the NP ECE. One of the six performance indicators under the NP ECE is *'the number of teachers delivering preschool programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified'*. To support this performance indicator associated standards have been developed (please see link above to the ECEC NMDS) and data in line with these standards will be collected (as described above) for the National ECEC Data Collection. Please note that this data is not available in the first year of the *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia* publication (data to support this indicator in 2010 can instead be accessed from the National ECEC Workforce Census), but is expected to be available in future iterations.

As part of the 2011 National ECEC Data Collection, CCMS data capturing preschool activity in Long Day Centres (LDCs) will be included. A preschool program in the CCMS relates to an educational program provided by a qualified teacher. The CCMS will enable information to be reported on:

- the number of children attending a preschool program in an LDC, and each child's hours of attendance
- the number of LDC services offering a preschool program delivered by a qualified teacher.

CCMS data on preschool program activity is expected to be available in the second half of 2011.

The ECEC NMDS is available on the AIHW website:

www.meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/396792

CHAPTER 4: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE WORKFORCE – KEY CHALLENGES

The Australian Government's early childhood reform agenda, in particular the introduction of the National Quality Standards for early education and care and the Universal Access to preschool initiative, will stimulate demand for additional, qualified, early childhood workers.

A qualified workforce is essential to delivering high quality early education and care services and to achieving the best outcomes for children. Young children thrive in nurturing and safe environments where they are exposed to stimulating play-based learning experiences. Vulnerable children in particular benefit from high quality early childhood education programs. There is increasing recognition that the work of caring for and educating young children is complex and requires enhanced qualifications.

ECEC workforce – key challenges

Given the value and significance of early childhood education and care, attracting and retaining qualified staff to this sector will continue to be important. Achieving this will require all stakeholders, governments, services, training providers and unions to consider their role in delivering this outcome.

Some immediate challenges exist. These include:

The shortage of staff – Although the early childhood education and care sector has grown significantly over the past five years, there are current shortages of staff, varying across jurisdictions and influenced by local labour market conditions. In particular, there are shortages in remote, regional and disadvantaged areas, and in Indigenous communities. The Skill Shortage List, Australia (2010) which is published by DEEWR for a range of skilled occupations, indicates that there are shortages in Child Care Managers, Early Childhood (Pre-Primary School) Teachers and Child Care Workers. More information on Skills Shortages is available from:

www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LMI/SkillShortages/Pages/Overview.aspx

Lifting the qualification levels, knowledge and skills of the workforce – The need for qualified staff in the sector remains high. While qualification levels for early education and care staff have increased in recent years, there is still a need to raise the level of qualifications. As noted in chapter 2, the *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (NQS)* outlines that from 1 January 2014 services must have, as a minimum, child care educators qualified, or working towards a qualification, which reflects their occupational role.

Workforce modelling undertaken by Access Economics in the context of the development of the Regulation Impact Statement on Early Childhood Education and Care quality reforms, found that in order to deliver universal access to preschool and

meet the National Quality Standard requirements, the number of qualified early childhood education and care workers will need to grow from around 38,000 full time equivalent workers in 2010 to an estimated 80,000 by 2020 (a growth of 110%). More information can be found at: www.coag.gov.au

The Access modelling shows that the workforce growth can be achieved by 2020, assuming that a number of announced policy scenarios will have a positive impact on the labour force. These initiatives include additional early childhood education university places, the TAFE fee waiver (for Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in Children's Services) as well as the numbers of teachers assumed to be delivered to the preschool sector under the Universal Access commitments, and HECS-HELP Benefit for Early Childhood Teachers, and the Productivity Places Program. More information on these initiatives is included in Chapter 5.

Increasing the professional status of the early childhood education and care sector – Factors contributing to low professional standing include the public perception of the early childhood education and care sector as merely providing a 'child minding' service, inconsistent teacher registration practices across jurisdictions and the demographic profile of the workforce.

Need for greater capability to meet the needs of vulnerable children - Vulnerable children need a higher level of support which can sometimes be lacking due to training, time and staff availability constraints. There are opportunities to develop greater skills in working with vulnerable children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In particular, there is the potential for greater targeted skills development in working with Indigenous children and building and supporting the Indigenous workforce.

Retention and staff turnover – The proportion of workers leaving the child care sector is higher than the average for all occupations. To ensure that the workforce meets increased demand, there is a need to support workers and promote the sector as a worthwhile career path.

Achieving Integration - There is also a significant challenge in supporting the sector to work in an integrated way with other early childhood development professionals. Integration can cover a range of services including early childhood education and care, health services, parent and family support services, as well as child protection services. Integration can include network/referral services and can involve co-location of services as is anticipated in the Children and Family Centres being established under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership (noting that co-location does not always equal integration). There can be different levels of integration between different service types and in different locations. There is a particular need to ensure that managers of integration services have the skills to provide the leadership to assist professionals from a range of backgrounds to work together effectively.

CHAPTER 5: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

The Australian Government recognises that a well trained workforce is essential in delivering high quality early childhood services and achieving the best outcomes for children. In this context, the Government is committed to supporting, training and retaining experienced and qualified early childhood education and care professionals.

Existing Australian Government workforce initiatives

Higher Education

The Government provided \$53.9 million in the 2008 Budget (2008-09 to 2011-12) to increase the supply of early childhood teachers through the allocation of 500 additional commencing Commonwealth supported early childhood education places in each of 2009, 2010 and 2011. The 1500 places allocated in those years are ongoing from 2011. All 1500 places have been allocated. The majority of the graduates from 2009 extra places will be ready to join the workforce in 2013.

The Government also provided \$12.4 million in the 2008-09 Budget to reduce by about half the HECS-HELP debt of early childhood teachers who work in areas of high need as determined by postcode. The benefit provides a reduction in an eligible early childhood teachers' compulsory annual HELP debt repayment, or HELP debt where no payment is required due to low income, of up to \$1600 in 2008-09 (indexed to \$1662.40 in 2009-10) for up to 260 weeks of eligible employment.

In addition to these specific early childhood initiatives the Australian Government has provided \$83 million over four years to reduce HECS-HELP debts of education and nursing graduates, including early childhood education graduates.

Early childhood teachers working in areas of high need may be eligible for both benefits. This would give a maximum lifetime benefit of around \$16,100.

In response to the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education, the Australian Government announced that from 2012, public universities will be funded on the basis of student demand. The Government will fund a Commonwealth supported place for all undergraduate domestic students accepted into an eligible higher education course at these higher education providers. Under the demand driven funding system, providers will decide how many places they will offer and in which disciplines. Providers will be able to increase the number of Commonwealth supported places they offer in particular disciplines, including in early childhood education, in response to employer and student demand.

Clear and strong public interest oversight will underpin the implementation of the demand driven funding system. The Government will have an ongoing role in ensuring Australia's skill needs are met by the higher education system.

Skills Australia's role has been expanded to advise the Government on the effectiveness of the higher education system in meeting skill needs.

Vocational Education

The Government has provided \$115 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14 to remove regulated course fees for child care diplomas and advanced diplomas of Children's Services delivered by TAFE institutes or other government training providers. This will support over 8 000 people per year, including existing child care workers to gain a vocational education and training qualification in early childhood.

TAFEs have been providing fee free courses from January 2009. Data received from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) shows that in the first year of this initiative (2009) there was a significant increase in the enrolments for these courses when compared to 2008 enrolments. An additional 5,500 people are studying for a Diploma or Advanced Diploma since the introduction of this initiative. This represents a growth of around 60% between 2008 and 2009. Data is not yet available for 2010 enrolments.

The Australian Government is also supporting qualification attainment among early childhood workers through the Productivity Places Program (PPP). The PPP is being delivered in an industry-driven system, to ensure that training is responsive to the needs of businesses and participants; it supports both job seekers (the Commonwealth contributes 100 per cent of the training costs) and existing workers (costs are shared between the Commonwealth, states and territories and the employer).

Between April 2008 and June 2009, Certificate III in Children's Services was the top qualification for job seekers under the PPP.

Professional Training as an element of the IPSP Program

The Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), under the Child Care Services Support Program, funds Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs) and Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) in each state and territory. In the 2010-11 financial year, funding of \$16,570,000 has been allocated for PSCs and \$3,491,920 for IPSUs.

The PSCs and IPSUs provide professional development, advice and resources to assist child care services to provide quality child care and to be inclusive of children from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous children, children with disability and children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. IPSUs provide professional development and support to eligible Indigenous child care services to enable them to provide quality child care. IPSUs also provide advice to the PSCs (as subcontracted Professional Support Service Providers) and Inclusion Support Agencies on culturally appropriate professional development and support for mainstream child care services.

Professional development is provided in a variety of formats:

- Accredited and non-accredited courses
- Conversations and informal sessions
- Events, forums, hubs and networks
- Collaborative projects
- Mentoring and coaching
- Advice and information
- Access to resources.

Where feasible, new technologies such as teleconferencing, electronic mail, satellite television and other developments in information technology may be used.

The Bicultural Support Program (BSP) is funded under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) and provides a resource to eligible child care services to assist with the inclusion of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugee children, and Indigenous children. A worker engaged by the BSP can offer time-limited support from either off-site consultants or an on-site casual bilingual or bicultural worker.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Initiatives

It is expected that the number and proportion of Indigenous children entering early childhood facilities will grow over the next ten years. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is relatively young compared to the wider Australian population, with nearly 57 per cent of the current Indigenous population being under 25 years of age, compared to 33 per cent of the wider Australian population. It is estimated that 139 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people will enter the workforce age population between 2008 and 2018. Considering the comparatively high fertility rates of Indigenous women, particularly young women, there will be an increased demand on early childhood services by Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership

DEEWR will continue to work with states and territories to accelerate the roll out of Children and Family Centres in 9 of the 29 remote service delivery communities, where this is possible. The Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership provides almost \$293 million for the establishment of Children and Family Centres. Locations for 38 Centres across Australia have been determined.

All jurisdictions are implementing workforce initiatives intended to increase the early childhood teacher workforce under this National Partnership as outlined in [Attachment C](#).

2010-11 Budget Measure to raise BBF services to National Quality Standards

Budget Based Funding (BBF) ensures access to a range of different types of early childhood services based on the needs of the communities in which they operate. While the majority of Budget Based Funded services have an Indigenous focus, all children in the relevant community are welcome to attend.

Budget Based Funded services are funded to address the following issues:

- the failure of the market to deliver mainstream child care (for example, in regional and remote areas) and
- the need for culturally competent services, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed child care services (across all geographic areas, from metropolitan to remote).

The objectives of all BBF services are to provide:

- quality child care that enhances the cultural, physical, social, emotional, language and learning development of all children
- flexible early childhood education and child care services that meet the needs of all families in the community and
- developmentally and culturally appropriate play and learning experiences which fosters individual children's strengths, abilities and interests.

BBF services are generally not approved for the purposes of administering Child Care Benefit (CCB) so families using these services are not eligible to claim CCB or the Child Care Rebate (CCR). The cost to families in using these services, however, is usually minimal as the Australian Government meets the majority of the costs involved in providing these services through operational funding grants.

As part of the 2010 Budget, the Australian Government announced \$59.4 million over four years (from 2010-11) to support existing centre-based long day care type BBF services (approximately 142 services) to meet key elements of the National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care. In particular it aims to increase the number of qualified and culturally competent staff in BBF services at Certificate III in Children's Services and Diploma of Children's Services.

Under the Budget Measure ('the Measure') \$15.2m was allocated over 4 years to :

- support BBF services to meet the staff qualification requirements at Certificate III in Children's Services and Diploma of Children's Services and staff-to-child ratios;
- build a more highly skilled, culturally competent and sustainable early childhood education and care workforce; and
- provide the foundations for, and facilitate future workforce development.

The funding allocated under the workforce element also includes components to support:

- services to meet the higher wage costs associated with the new qualifications requirements; and
- the recruitment of additional staff to meet the increased staff to child ratios under the NQF.

The funding is intended to support a number of workforce initiatives, including:

- incentives for Regional Training Organisations to deliver training at Certificate III and Diploma levels in remote communities;
- additional funding to services to ensure staff are able to be released to attend face to face training sessions;
- funding to support the development and delivery of flexible training options in remote locations, including appropriate support and mentoring; and
- funding for the establishment of linkages with, and field visits to, high quality early childhood services.

Ongoing administered funding, beyond the four years of the Measure, has also been approved to continue to meet the increased staffing costs (\$4 million per year) and to maintain access to training for staff (\$1.46 million per year).

Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Traineeships (traineeships)

This measure is part of the Indigenous Remote Workforce Strategy which was announced by the Australian Government in 2008. Funding of almost \$23 million (from July 2010 to June 2013) has been allocated for the delivery of the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Traineeships program.

This program aims to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees in eligible schools and Indigenous child care services in remote areas. Traineeships in child care services will be targeted at centre-based Indigenous focussed Budget Based Funded child care services in locations that have been identified as Remote Service Delivery locations under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. It also targets Children and Family Centre locations in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

The traineeships have been developed in recognition of the significant barriers to employment and training in remote communities. Service Delivery Providers (schools and Indigenous child care services) who deliver a service on behalf of the Government will receive assistance, via Group Training Organisations, to create structured, supported and sustainable pathways to work and training for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these communities.

The traineeships will combine practical work with structured training to give trainees a nationally recognised qualification and the work experience they need to access

sustainable work opportunities in areas where there are otherwise limited job opportunities.

Indigenous Employment Program

The Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) has funded a variety of small projects that support Indigenous Australians to enter the early childhood/childcare industries. In addition, a small number of projects have endeavoured to increase the skills level and qualifications of Indigenous Employees in this industry.

One example of an activity funded under the IEP, supported four disadvantaged Indigenous participants to complete a Certificate III in Children's Services whilst working at a Child Care Centre.

Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership Agreement (IEP NP)

The COAG National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Economic Participation was signed in February 2009. This National Partnership will contribute towards halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The National Partnership involves complementary investment and effort by the Commonwealth, states and territory governments to significantly improve opportunities for Indigenous people to engage in private and public sector jobs through four key initiatives:

1. Creating jobs in areas of government service delivery that have previously relied on subsidies through the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program
2. Strengthening government procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment
3. Incorporating Indigenous workforce strategies into implementation plans for all COAG reforms contributing to the closing the gap targets and
4. Increasing public sector employment to reflect Indigenous working age population share by 2015.

More information can be found on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website <http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au>.

Element 3 of the IEP NP: Incorporating Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major COAG reforms contributing to the Closing the Gap targets

The Commonwealth and the States and Territories are investing significantly in capital development, procurement and service delivery through the full range of COAG reforms. Incorporating Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major COAG reforms emerging from the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation, the reform agenda, including in infrastructure construction

projects agreed through the COAG Infrastructure Working Group, will leverage this investment to drive employment outcomes.

Workforce strategies will have as core components the acquisition of recognised and accredited mainstream qualifications and articulated training pathways for Indigenous Australians. In particular, those reforms targeted specifically at the Closing the Gap targets should also support achievement of the target to halve the gap in employment outcomes.

Progress to date includes:

- *A Guide to embedding an Indigenous Workforce Strategy into new National Partnership Agreements* has been published on the DEEWR website and distributed to Commonwealth, State and Territory government stakeholders.
- COAG templates related to developing a National Partnership Agreement have been amended to include the Indigenous Workforce Strategy principle. The Indigenous workforce principle has been embedded in National Partnership templates and central agencies have agreed to play a key role in referring agencies developing new agreements to DEEWR for further advice.
- In Western Australia, Indigenous workforce strategies are being piloted through early start projects such as the East Kimberley Development Project National Partnership (EKDP NP) and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH).
- Under the EKDP NP, a bilateral Indigenous Workforce Development Plan has been developed. As part of this process, a local Indigenous employment group has been established to support Indigenous workforce development, which includes relevant government and non-government representatives.

Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2010-2018

The Australian Government has developed a draft *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2010-2018*. This strategy aims to increase the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians by supporting greater economic participation and self reliance. The Strategy, now in its final stages of development following a national consultation process, identifies priority areas for action. These include:

- education and individual capabilities
- jobs
- business and entrepreneurship
- financial security and independence and
- strengthening the foundations of legal, welfare and taxation systems.

For most Australians, engagement with the economy begins with a job. For this reason, jobs are central to success in increasing Indigenous wellbeing through economic participation. Within the priority area of jobs, the draft Strategy highlights the following specific focus areas:

- ensuring welfare and government programs do not discourage Indigenous Australians from joining workplaces across the country
- improving employment services to better match Indigenous Australians' job aspirations with employer business needs
- increasing public sector employment and showing best practice in Government employment of Indigenous Australians
- building the skills of the Indigenous labour force through high achievement in school and improving literacy, numeracy and other skills of Indigenous adults
- creating partnerships to build private-sector employment and retention and
- recognising and rewarding best practice to promote successful Indigenous Australians in the workforce.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 was endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs on 15 April 2010. A National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy will be established under Action 33 of the Plan. Specific strategies to improve the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the early childhood learning and development workforce and related administration will be pursued through this. This work will also investigate strategies to improve the skills and pathways of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the early childhood learning and development workforce.

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs supports the development of a national Early Years Workforce Strategy. This Strategy (currently being developed) will address the skills and capacity of the

current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children's workforce, including the early childhood educational and care sector in rural and remote areas. Connections will be made with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy (Action 33).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Universal Access Strategy

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Universal Access Strategy has been developed to support the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

Its four key focus areas are:

- increasing access to early childhood education;
- positive community awareness and engagement;
- quality early childhood programs and activities; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness of teacher and support staff.

States and Territories have included specific strategies and actions against these four key focus areas which in some states includes the development of workforce strategies and workforce development plans.

Other Australian Government workforce measures

National Early Years Workforce Strategy

While the measures outlined above are assisting to build the workforce, workforce development remains critical to the success of the early childhood reform agenda.

The Australian Government is committed to working with states and territories to develop a national Early Years Workforce Strategy (the national Workforce Strategy). The Strategy will complement and build upon existing Commonwealth, state and territory government measures aimed at improving the supply and quality of the early childhood education and care workforce.

National Professional Standards for Teachers

In December 2010, MCEECDYA endorsed the 'National Professional Standards for Teachers' which describe what teachers should know and do. The Standards are managed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

The AITSL Letter of Expectation provides the scope for the inclusion of early childhood teachers at a later date in the new National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Vocational Education and Training - Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC)

The CS&HISC is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Community Services Training Package (which includes Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications in Children's Services) and the Health Training Package. A Training Package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills. Training packages are a key feature of Australia's national vocational education and training (VET) system. They are used as the basis for most of the programs delivered in the VET system, including Australian Apprenticeships, training courses offered by TAFE and private training organisation, VET in schools programs, recognition of existing skills, and occupational licensing.

Recognition of Prior Learning: The COAG RPL Program

In February 2006, COAG agreed to key initiatives to improve the VET system take-up of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). These initiatives were:

- the introduction of a contractual obligation for all RTOs and assessment centres in receipt of public funding from 1 January 2007 to offer a quick and simple process to recognise the existing skills of all workers entering training and
- the establishment of a joint three year Australian Government, State and Territory program from 1 July 2006 to build the training system's capacity to deliver quality RPL and drive good practice.

The Australian Government provided funding of \$11.1m over 3 years, which was matched by states and territories. As part of the program, states and territories undertook a series of projects with the aim to:

- assist RTOs to provide streamlined and simplified recognition processes and to ensure that the process is structured to minimise the time and cost to applicants and
- assist state and territory governments to set up sustainable systems and remove impediments and blockages to the take up of RPL.

The Final Report, finalised in November 2009, provides a useful analysis of project activity. While most of the projects have sought to overcome barriers to the take up of RPL recognised by jurisdictions, the report identified barriers that might still be impeding take-up. These include:

- Lack of confidence and inadequate skills of assessors;
- Outmoded processes where RTOs are insisting on unrealistic quantities of evidence (this is often referred to as the "wheelbarrow approach")
- Gap training, where some applicants are forced to wait several months to participate in scheduled training
- Cost to candidates – this varies both within and across jurisdictions and,

- Access and equity issues not being considered, particularly in the case of Indigenous applicants and in areas where low levels of language, literacy and numeracy exist.

Early Childhood Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Project

To further inform development of the National Early Years Workforce Strategy, the Department established in 2009 the Early Childhood Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Project to provide one-off modest seed funding for exploring best practice and/or innovative models for up skilling and retaining the early childhood and care profession.

Particular consideration was given to those projects which supported models of best practice that could be built upon or adapted to the early childhood education and care profession in regional and remote locations, disadvantaged and Indigenous communities, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous early childhood education workplaces, and projects between early childhood education workplaces, primary schools, TAFEs and other registered training organisations, and universities. Funding was available for one off projects only. Projects requiring recurrent or ongoing funding were not funded.

The outcome of these projects have proved highly valuable in informing the early childhood education and care sector in three key areas: management input; information and communication technology; and Indigenous, rural and remote communities. The projects have also been useful in informing future directions to support workforce development and the development of the national Early Years Workforce Strategy.

The current 2010 Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Projects have a strong focus on the National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework, which guides early childhood educators in developing quality, early childhood education programs.

Initiatives to support the ECEC workforce

To support the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework, the Australian Government is providing training and mentoring services for early childhood educators through the Australian Government-funded Professional Support Coordinators program, Indigenous Professional Support Units and Inclusion Support Agencies.

In addition, Early Childhood Australia is contracted to provide a suite of professional development training initiatives including training workshops, an interactive online forum, an e-Newsletter, online e-learning videos and a series of short professional learning vignettes.

Australian Government departments' responsibilities for ECD

Three portfolio departments have principal carriage of the government's ECD agenda – the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), through the Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, has the lead role in the Australian Government on the National ECD Strategy and portfolio responsibility for early childhood education and care, a key component of ECD. Since its election in November 2007, the government has committed to providing Australian families with high quality, accessible and affordable early child for early childhood education and care. The agenda has a strong emphasis on connecting with schools to ensure all Australian children are prepared for learning and life.

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) plays an important role in helping to improve service delivery for families across Australia through a universal health service platform, alongside targeted and intensive services for children and families with an identified health or development need. It is important to note that maternal, child and family health services are currently the responsibility of state and territory governments.

At the national level, DoHA delivers a number of initiatives to support the physical health and well-being of children, including:

- the National Immunisation Program
- the Healthy Kids check (ensuring every Australian 4 year old has a basic health assessment to see if they are fit, healthy and ready to learn when they start school);
- supporting the mental health of young children through the Early Intervention Services for Parents, Children and Young People measure (including extending the KidsMatter Primary School program to preschool and long day care centres);
- nutrition and physical activity initiatives such as 'Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings'; and
- strategic reform of Australia's health care system which include initiatives commencing in early childhood (through the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, and the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development).

DoHA also manages a number of early childhood programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families including: *New Directions: An Equal Start in Life for Indigenous Children*; *Healthy for Life*; The Australian-Nurse Family Partnership program, funded under 'Health@Home Plus'; *Strong Fathers Strong Families*; and the *Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians for Better Education and Employment Outcomes measure*.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is responsible for delivering initiatives supporting vulnerable children and their families (through the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children). FaHCSIA also:

- supports a range of services under the Family Support Program, delivering streamlined and accessible support services to families and their children;
- supports children with a disability, through initiatives such as the Helping Children with Autism package and the National Disability Agreement and from 1 July 2011 the Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative; and
- focuses on early interventions for children and families at risk of homelessness through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

National Partnership on Early Childhood Education (universal access) workforce information

Under the [National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education](#), the Australian Government has entered into Bilateral Agreements with all State and Territory governments. These Agreements specify the actions and strategies to be undertaken by each jurisdiction to achieve universal access to early childhood education. The early childhood education program is to be delivered by a university-trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, in the year before formal schooling (often referred to as 'preschool' or 'kindergarten'). The commitment is to be fully implemented by 2013.

State/territory	Bilateral agreement	Progress to Date
NSW	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: in 2008, NSW reported 4,680 teachers with university degrees or equivalent in Government preschools, community preschools, and long day care services delivering a preschool program. Data was not available to distinguish 3 year or 4 year duration of study. The number of early childhood teachers in other sectors was not known.</p> <p>2013 Target: 5,624</p> <p>Deliverables: From July 2011 NSW will introduce a Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme, through which community preschools, mobile preschools and long day care centres will be able to access \$6,000 annually per three year trained early childhood</p>	<p>In their 2009 annual report, NSW reported that there were 4532 (degree or equivalent) 3 or 4 year university trained teachers and 1209 Diploma trained staff. As this breakdown could not be provided in the baseline, it is not possible to determine the exact extent of NSW's progress against this benchmark.</p> <p>A small NSW DOCS and stakeholder working group was set up during 2010 to consider workforce issues, especially the design of the new Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme.</p>

	teacher and \$8,000 annually per four year trained early childhood teacher. An additional \$1000 is payable for remote services. Funds may be used to offset the costs of employing qualified staff, to provide recruitment and retention bonuses, or to invest in professional development.	
VIC	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: in 2008, approximately 39% of teachers (806 teachers) in Victorian state funded kindergarten programs had at least a four year Early Childhood Teaching qualification.</p> <p>2013 Target: 1000 teachers</p> <p>Deliverables: Victoria will develop and implement a comprehensive Workforce Strategy to support universal access to kindergarten that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention; • Qualifications and skills; and • Workforce integration 	<p>In their 2009 annual report, Victoria reported that, as at April 2009, a total of 829 four year early childhood university trained individual teachers were employed across all Victorian state funded kindergarten services.</p> <p>The Victorian Early Childhood Workforce Strategy was launched on 27 November 2009. Actions that have commenced as part of that Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employment Incentives for Early Childhood Educators</i> commenced in April 2010 and will enable licensed children's services to advertise the availability of financial incentives for early childhood teachers and Diploma qualified staff to attract early childhood educators to take up work in hard-to-staff positions, including in long day care. 58 teachers received employment incentives in 2009/10. • The <i>Early Childhood Qualifications Fund</i> supports existing early childhood educators and Primary teachers to upgrade or attain an early childhood qualification. The second round of the incentive fund was available from 1 April – 27 Aug 2010. The level and type of support will vary according to the qualification undertaken. At the completion of their qualification recipients will be required to work in a licensed children's service for a minimum period of time. <p>The Strategy also includes actions to support early childhood educators</p>

		to develop their skills and knowledge. There is a focus on developing the leadership capacity in the workforce through the delivery of two customised leadership programs for early childhood professionals. Research into best practice in integrated, collaborative service delivery will inform how to support early childhood professionals to develop the necessary skills to deliver integrated services. Shared professional learning opportunities for all early childhood professionals will also be provided to support the implementation of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.
Queensland	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.⁵</p> <p>Baseline position: 600 teachers</p> <p>2013 Target: 1570-2180 teachers</p> <p>Deliverables: Provide scholarships to encourage ECEC staff to upgrade to teacher qualifications. Up to 200 scholarships, Over four years commencing 2010.</p> <p>Queensland will work with the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, the Australian Government and other key stakeholders to develop</p>	<p>In their 2009 annual report, QLD reported 892 teachers.⁶</p> <p>A number of Early Childhood Teacher Scholarships valued upwards of \$12,000 have been announced. These scholarships will support existing early childhood education and care staff who currently hold a three-year university qualification and who are not registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), to upgrade their qualifications and gain teacher registration in Queensland so they can deliver an approved kindergarten program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 scholarships were awarded in 2010. • Eligible early childhood education and care staff will only need two years part-time study to upgrade their qualifications at university. To assist early childhood education and care professionals to

⁵ To be eligible for kindergarten funding, Queensland will require services to employ a four year qualified early childhood teacher or registered teacher with an early childhood qualification to directly deliver the program to the cohort. In Queensland, teachers are registered through the Queensland College of Teachers which may recognise some three year qualified teachers with experience as equivalent to a four year qualification. The teacher number estimates are presented as an upper and lower range as the method of delivery of a kindergarten program may differ depending on the setting and the number of children per teacher (e.g. long day care or a standalone kindergarten). The teacher estimates are head count and hence includes part-time teachers.

⁶ This figure is a head count of actual staff working in the census week who were reported as holding a 4 year qualification in early childhood and/or are registered teachers with a minimum of 3 year qualifications, and who were reported as working in the kindergarten group in census week

	<p>strategies to encourage qualified teachers to work in ECEC settings (particularly long day care). Consult with stakeholders (by end 2009); develop strategies (by end 2009); implement strategy (from 2010).</p>	<p>achieve this upgrade, the Queensland Government is providing scholarships that meet the costs of course fees and providing a study allowance each semester to cover the added cost of study such as text books, internet access and resource materials.</p> <p>Other progress includes QLD introducing amendments to the <i>Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005</i> to recognise teachers in non-school settings, such as early childhood services, for purposes of teacher registration.</p>
WA	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: 470 in public schools.</p> <p>2013 Target: 569 in public schools.</p> <p>Deliverables: (1) Audit of all kindergarten teachers to confirm qualifications in public and non-government kindergarten programs, including through participation in the proposed national workforce survey and clarification of definitions regarding teacher qualifications.</p> <p>(2) Establish Workforce Development policies and support mechanisms (including upgrade scholarships, collaboration with universities for possible RPL arrangements and provision of further early childhood conversion courses as required).</p> <p>(3) Increase teacher and teacher assistant FTE in public schools.</p> <p>(4) Increase teacher and teacher assistant FTE in</p>	<p>In their 2009 annual report, WA reported 584 teachers in public schools.</p> <p>Early childhood scholarships were offered to current students in their third year of study; either as a 1 year contract for \$15 000 or a 2 year contract for \$30 000. In 2009, the Meerilinga scholarship for Education Assistants funded 78 Education Assistants for the six month course. Department of Education (DoE) has contributed \$140 000 for these scholarships.</p>

	participating non-government schools.	
SA	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: 300 Full-time equivalent (FTE)</p> <p>2013 Target: 596 FTE (Base 507 + New 69 +Upskill 20)</p> <p>Deliverables: South Australia will increase the number of four year early childhood trained teachers delivering early childhood education. South Australia will recruit new four year trained early childhood teachers needed to deliver 15 hours of early childhood education in government preschools, while upgrading the qualifications of teachers in government preschools with three year early childhood degrees to four year standard. Non government providers of early childhood education will be required to employ four year trained teachers as a condition of funding under this Agreement.</p>	<p>In their 2009 annual report SA reported 225 ECE staff, which has adjusted their baseline position due to a headcount rather than FTE. SA also redefined the qualifications in the annual census ensuring that it only captured four year qualified rather than those with three year degrees.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the national partnership SA has gone out to tender to find a higher education provider to upskill three to four year degrees. The university of South Australia will be providing this post graduate qualification, and scholarships. 75 scholarships have been awarded to date.</p>
Tasmania	Target: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year	In their 2009 Annual Report, Tasmania reported 351 teachers delivering early childhood education programs who are four year

	<p>university trained and early childhood qualified. Baseline position: There are 355 kindergarten teachers in Tasmania.⁷ 2013 target: To be provided Deliverables: (1) Numbers of early childhood trained teachers in kindergartens increase over the timeframe which will be set over next two years. Kindergarten in all settings is currently taught by four year degree qualified and registered teachers. The percentage of these teachers who are early childhood trained will be increased (based on the availability of training and the gap in numbers involved). Increase each year the % of early childhood trained teachers teaching kindergarten by 2013.⁸ (2) Participation in the proposed national workforce survey. All schools and child care services will participate in the survey. Dependent on survey availability.</p>	<p>university trained and early childhood qualified. The figures provided for the baseline and 2009 were an estimate. As indicated in their DCR, they do not have any numerator or denominator. It is based on the number of enrolments and therefore likely number of classes with kindergarten children in each school. Therefore their figure can vary easily both because of the number of children enrolled overall but also because of the spread of enrolments between schools. Accurate information to enable progression towards meeting this performance indicator is being developed as part of the national ECEC data work. This will be assisted through analysis of data collected as part of the workforce census and Tasmania are also working closely with their HR branch and the Teacher Registration Board to see how they can link to their existing data collections for this purpose. Benchmarks will be set following analysis of the Workforce Census. The University of Tasmania is preparing course options for those 4 year qualified teachers without an early childhood qualification who wish to (continue to) teach in kindergartens. Options for existing kindergarten teachers with significant kindergarten teaching experience who have a 4 year Kindergarten to Grade 6 qualification (which was the only relevant qualification offered by UTas for many years) including RCC, are being considered. Action in this area will be consistent with national workforce discussions. During this time and because of school staffing changes, an unknown number of teachers have specialised in kindergarten teaching for a number of years who may not have any</p>
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⁷ All kindergarten teachers in Tasmania are four year degree qualified and registered teachers. The baseline position is an estimate using 2008 figures. The proportion of these with an early childhood qualification is not known but may be clarified through the national workforce survey. Appropriate benchmarks will then be set.

⁸ Actual increases will be dependent on the actual shortfall which will be established during 2009-2010.

		<p>degree elements in the early childhood area in their degree, although they would have participated in significant in-service professional learning.</p> <p>The new Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Course has commenced at UTas and a Pre-Service Course Advisory Committee and a Professional Experience Advisory Group (both with ECEC reps). They will also advise on post graduate qualifications to meet the NQA requirement as well as the pathways for child care qualifications to degree status. Under a partnership with the University, all government teachers can obtain any further qualification necessary without charge.</p>
ACT	<p>Target: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: 60 per cent</p> <p>2013 target: 95 per cent</p> <p>Deliverables: Ensure preschool programs in the ACT are delivered by four year university trained and qualified early childhood teachers.</p> <p>The ACT only employs four year degree qualified teachers however there are a small number of staff who were employed prior to the introduction of the four year degree qualification requirement. The proportion of preschool teachers with early childhood qualifications is not known, but may be clarified through ACT data collection and the proposed national workforce survey. The</p>	<p>During 2009-10, 28 teachers have taken up study as part of the ACT Department of Education and Training Early Childhood Graduate Certificate scholarship program targeted at current Department employees with a four year university primary qualification to convert to an early childhood qualification. Further scholarships will be offered in 2011.</p>

	<p>Department has an ageing workforce that potentially represents uncertainty in terms of early childhood qualified teachers. To address this concern a scholarship initiative has been put in place as a strategy to increase the number of early childhood trained teachers. All recruitment practices in the ACT are affected by the actions of NSW and in this instance the rate at which the Universal Access is rolled out in that jurisdiction will be a factor for the ACT.</p>	
NT	<p>Targets: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.</p> <p>Baseline position: Of an estimated 140 teachers delivering a preschool program in the government preschool system and Catholic remote schools, an estimated 50 have four year early childhood qualifications.</p> <p>2013 target: 57 per cent</p> <p>Deliverables: Ensure preschool teachers are four year early childhood trained</p> <p>To maintain NT Government policy requiring four year university training for all teachers, and progressively increase the proportion of ECE trained teachers that meet this standard.</p> <p>An estimated 36% of teachers who are delivering preschool programs are 4 year trained with early childhood qualifications.</p>	<p>Since 30 June 2009 negotiations have commenced with training providers Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and relevant DET divisions to provide incentives to teachers and increase the number of four-year trained early childhood qualified teachers. Employment of a workforce development officer was finalised for commencement in January 2010. A preschool staff survey in 2009 established that 42.3 per cent of preschool teachers in government schools are four year trained, which exceeds the 2009 target.</p> <p>Scholarships for teacher qualification upgrades established.</p> <p>Housing for ECE teachers in remote communities remains a concern.</p>

	Progressively close the gap to 100% coverage through workforce replacement and qualifications upgrading.	
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Approach to Centre Operation and Workforce Issues – Children and Family Centres

In July 2008, a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to sustained engagement and effort by all governments over the next decade and beyond to achieve the Closing the Gap targets for Indigenous Australians. As a first step, COAG agreed in principle to a National Partnership Agreement with joint funding of around \$564 million over six years to address the needs of Indigenous children in their early years. The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development (IECD NP) has three Elements:

- Element One: establishing 38 Children and Family Centres across Australia to deliver integrated services that offer early learning, child care and family support programs;
- Element Two: increasing access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy, and teenage sexual and reproductive health programs by Indigenous young people; and
- Element Three: increasing access to, and use of, maternal and child health services by Indigenous families.

The information contained below is workforce initiatives identified by jurisdictions in their Element One Implementation Plan to support early childhood services.

Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian Government aims to ensure that each CFC has an appropriately qualified and culturally competent staffing mix (including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff), with joint professional development. An Aboriginal recruitment and training strategy will be developed in partnership with the Victorian Advisory Council on Koori Health and the IECD NP Advisory Group. • The Victorian Government aims to ensure that each CFC has an appropriately qualified and culturally competent staffing mix (including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff), with joint professional development. An Aboriginal recruitment and training strategy will be developed in partnership with the Victorian Advisory Council on Koori Health and the IECD NP Advisory Group.
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Housing and Community Services (DHCS) is committed to developing an Aboriginal and Torres

	<p>Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy to recruit and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the CFC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHCS is working to ensure staff employed at the CFC will be qualified and culturally competent by providing appropriate training and development opportunities. • The ACT Government has committed additional recurrent funding for staff at the CFC and staff recruitment processes have commenced.
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New South Wales is tendering for a service provider for each of the CFC locations. Tender documentation will require service providers to detail a recruitment and training strategy that includes an Indigenous recruitment and training component, as well as cultural competence training for non-Indigenous staff. • In addition to the employment of staff in the construction and operation of the CFCs, some centres will include family literacy programs and other initiatives to improve the work-readiness of parents and other adults in the community.
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Northern Territory Implementation Plan acknowledges that the Early Childhood Workforce Action Plan for the Northern Territory will provide the framework for accredited training. • It is proposed that a community engagement model will be used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ determine urgent unmet workforce training demands; ○ develop an optimum model to respond; and ○ recruit or tender for service delivery and capacity building. • A workforce recruitment, retention and development plan incorporating Northern Territory Indigenous workforce policies will be developed and implemented for each CFC location.
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA Department of Education and Childrens Services (DECS), relevant South Australian Government agencies,

	<p>community enabling groups and the South Australian State Workforce Development Taskforce will work together to provide opportunities to increase the employment of Aboriginal people in early childhood development, including at the CFCs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal community development coordinators and family services coordinators will be recruited through the Aboriginal Employment Register. • SA DECS will provide opportunities for parents and community members to engage in supported development activities, such as peer programs and governance roles, at the Centres which may lead to increased employment opportunities.
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical mass of skilled workers will be developed to work in each location, and where practical, positions at the CFCs will be filled by competent Indigenous staff. A workforce plan will include strategies such as flexible training opportunities and establishing key linkages with universities and TAFE that are developing remote training and professional development support services.
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania will develop a CFC Indigenous workforce strategy to be implemented across Bridgewater, Geeveston and the state funded CFC sites. Further it will provide professional development for non-Indigenous staff in Indigenous cultural competence. • Tasmania will provide appropriate workplace professional development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.