

# Early Childhood Development Workforce Productivity Commission Draft Research Report

## QCEC response, August 2011

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### **1. Introduction**

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) submits this response on the Early Childhood Development Workforce Productivity Commission Draft Research Report (November 2010) on behalf of the 23 education authorities representing 290 Catholic schools in Queensland.

The following comments have been made on only those recommendations that are likely to impact on the Queensland Catholic education early childhood education context.

### **Chapter 7: Outside school hours care and occasional care workforces**

#### **Comment:**

With the roll out of kindergartens on government and non-government schools sites across Queensland, there will be increased need for kindergartens to provide after school hours care for children aged 3.5 – 4.5yrs. Parents will be expecting that their young children will be cared for after attending the educational program sessions so they can collect all their children at the same time. Currently, kindergarten children cannot be cared for in Outside School Hours Care services as they not 'school age.'

Children in the kindergarten eligible cohort could be cared for within their kindergarten environment with both Prep and Year 1 children being grouped together.

### **Chapter 8: The ECEC workforce for children with additional needs**

With reference to Recommendations 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 the Australian government can ensure children with additional needs benefit fully from the COAG ECEC reforms by providing funding in the following areas:

- up-skilling of early childhood teachers to support kindergarten children with additional needs;
- providing better access to trained inclusion support workers;
- providing improved access to specialist support in regional/remote areas of Queensland by utilising fly in-fly out models as used in other states.

**Comment:**

The government has promoted universal access to an educational program in the year prior to attending school. It is at this early age that early intervention and specialist support for children with additional needs are of greatest benefit. In North Queensland, parents experience waiting times of at least 18 months to access specialist support and early intervention workers, in particular speech pathologists, inclusion support workers, eye, ear, nose and throat specialists.

**Chapter 15: The integrated ECD services workforce****Comment:**

To be successful, the lead agent of Community Family Centres must broker and establish sustainable partnerships with the existing local and mainland community services in the areas of education, care and health. From the experience of the Townsville diocese in relation to the Goodo Centre on Palm Island, sustaining these partnerships is the key to continuity of services, particularly when funding ceases.

**Conclusion**

QCEC trusts that the feedback provided by QCEC on the Early Childhood Development Workforce, Productivity Commission Draft Research Report (June 2011) will contribute towards positive outcomes for Australia's Early Childhood Development workforce.