

**Response from the
Queensland Children's Activities Network
(QCAN) Inc
ON
Productivity Commission Draft Report
Into Early Childhood Development Workforce**

Information about the Submission

This submission is provided by the Queensland Children's Activities Network
as the Queensland Delegate of the National Out of School Hours Services
Association

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Our Interest.

QCAN endorses the submission provided by NOSHSA and further provides
recommendation to workforce issues for School Age Care impacting on our
jurisdiction.

Key Points.

In addition to the key points raised in the NOSHSA submission, QCAN promotes the urgency for Government to undertake further research and regulatory impact statement for ratios and qualifications to be implemented Nationally. This research should be considerate of:

- Non- contact time for all educators in these settings to undertake the planning and evaluation of programs. What constitutes better quality care...more educators or better prepared educators?
- Ratio setting is typically inclusive of contact educators, however other approaches to ratio setting could be considerate of circumstances where non-contact educators such as the Coordinator or Director are present during operational hours to undertake tasks such as managing and supporting the staff team, administration and meeting with families.
- Different management models should be considered, particularly where a centralized administration model reduces the day to day burden of administrative tasks on contact educators.

Comments on draft recommendation, findings and information requests.

Draft recommendation 3.6

- Regulators should have mandatory qualifications and sector experience equivalent at least to the most senior position required within the service.

Draft recommendation 7.1

QCAN support the recommendations of NOSHSA and further add that:

- Queensland school age care services have had a regulatory regime including qualifications which was transitioned between 2003 and 2005. The provisions in the Queensland Regulation have been effective, particularly in the breadth of disciplines that can be drawn from for appropriate sector educators. These include qualifications in sport and recreation, health, education, child care and arts. This breadth of qualification enables the sector to engage educators with a variety of skills to meet the diverse leisure needs of school age children. While we agree further research is required, we believe that the model in Queensland has worked effectively and could be strengthened by assuring that a determined skill set is required as a minimum and that this skill set is not the Certificate III when educators are enrolled in recreation, health, education or arts qualifications. For example a first year education (or other discipline) student working in OSHC may be required to undertake a range of professional development opportunities in their first year of work that are essential core skills for working in school age care. (These could be aligned to

competencies.) They may include: Learning about My Time, Our Place (including theoretical knowledge); Workplace Health and Safety, Child Protection, National Quality Standards and Regulations etc as they relate to their role.

Draft recommendation 8.1 / 8.2 / 8.3

There is support for the contents of recommendation 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 and the comments from NOSHSA with further consideration to:

- Federal government funding to support OSHC services on Special School sites where the model is not necessarily inclusive in terms of meeting the current ISS funding model. The client base for school age care services is often determined by the school on which they are situated and therefore schools for children with additional/special needs will have services for these children. The client base determines who participates and while inclusion is desirable, there are many ways of approaching inclusions appropriate to the context of the community. Transport arrangements for children from other schools (who potentially have their own service on site) are difficult to arrange and expensive as are transport arrangements for children with high support needs.
- Higher levels of funding for services that have higher numbers of children with additional needs because of their client base e.g. schools with special education units may have a more significant client base eligible for support and therefore the more additional workers that a service employs, the greater the financial impact on the service through the contribution to the hourly rate for not just one additional worker but 4 or 5 additional workers. This is a financial burden on a service which results in either higher fees for families or stretched resources for the service.

Draft Recommendation 10.8

In addition to the comments made by NOSHSA, QCAN also endorse:

- A minimum annual requirement for all educators to participate in professional development relative to their positions and education.

Conclusion

QCAN support further inquiry and recommendation by the Productive Commission to undertake rigorous research for the sector.

END