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Senator Sue Lines
Chair, Senate Education and Employment References Committee
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Lines

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Education and Employment References Committee inquiry into *the immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia*.

The National Quality Framework

In 2012, each state and territory introduced laws creating a national system regulating education and care services catering for children aged from birth to 13 years, including long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten, and outside school hours care.

This national system is called the National Quality Framework (NQF) and is underpinned by the nationally applied *Education and Care Services National Law* (the National Law) and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations). The sector regulated by the National Law is referred to as the children's education and care sector.

Through the National Law, the NQF aims to improve quality in education and care services and efficiency and cost effectiveness of regulating education and care services. The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF. It sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care and care services and promotes continuous service quality improvement to ensure children enjoy the best possible educational and developmental outcomes.

ACECQA's submission

ACECQA is an independent national statutory authority established under the National Law to lead the national implementation of the NQF and ensure consistency of approach.

ACECQA's submission seeks to provide the senate inquiry with independent, objective and expert advice on the national regulation of children's education and care based on the experience of implementing the NQF to date.

In particular, the submission focuses on those terms of reference where ACECQA has unique expertise:

- b. administrative burden, including the impact of the introduction of the National Quality Framework
- c. the current regulatory environment and the impact on children, educators and service operators
- d. how the childcare sector can be strengthened in the short term to boost Australia's productivity and workplace participation for parents
- e. any related matters.

The submission is structured to present ACECQA's key messages to the Committee. These include:

Focus on quality education and care (terms of reference items: C and E)

There are well-established individual, economic and societal benefits of quality children's education and care. In order to realise these benefits, all states and territories and the Australian government created the NQF. The ongoing implementation and support of the NQF is essential for Australia's long term prosperity.

Key changes introduced by the NQF (terms of reference item: C)

The NQF regulates for quality, through qualified educators, ratios and approved learning frameworks. It provides for a holistic approach to education and care regulation and sets a higher bar for Australian education and care services. The quality rating activity that is conducted by state and territory governments helps to promote compliance with regulatory standards and continuous improvement in the quality of children's education and care services. Measuring quality also provides a valuable source of information for families and governments. Under the NQF, minimum enforceable standards and quality rating are a unified system, with efficiency benefits flowing to both providers and governments.

Streamlining the NQF (terms of reference items: B, C and D)

The introduction of the NQF has brought efficiencies to the children's education and care sector by replacing former systems of separate state and territory and overlapping national regulations. There are opportunities to further improve efficiency without compromising outcomes for children. ACECQA's research is providing an evidence base to benchmark perceptions of administrative burden in the sector, and to develop red tape reduction measures. ACECQA and regulatory authorities are continuing to identify and implement opportunities to streamline the NQF.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for comment. For any further information, please contact Karen Curtis, Chief Executive Officer on 02 8240 4288.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Hunter
Chair
ACECQA Board



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Inquiry into the immediate future of the
childcare sector in Australia

March 2014

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The National Quality Framework

The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia – TOR item: C

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the *Early Childhood Development Strategy* (ECDS). The ECDS was developed to ensure that ‘by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves, and for the nation’.¹ As part of that strategy, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments agreed to a National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (NPA).

To implement the NPA, each state and territory enacted laws creating a unified national system for regulating education and care services catering for children aged from birth to 13 years, including long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten, and outside school hours care.

This national system is called the National Quality Framework (NQF) and is underpinned by the *Education and Care Services National Law* (the National Law) and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulations). The sector regulated by the National Law is referred to as the children’s education and care sector.

Guiding principles of the National Law

The rights and best interests of the child are paramount

Children are successful, competent and capable learners

The principles of equity, inclusion and diversity underlie this Law Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued

The role of parents and families is respected and supported

Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services

¹ Investing in the Early Years—A National Early Childhood Development Strategy, An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments, 2009

Focus on quality education and care

The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia – TOR item: C, E

Quality in children's education and care is integral to realising individual, and long term economic and societal productivity gains. Parents and families lay the foundation for children's learning and development. This learning and development is further shaped and extended through children's participation in education and care services.

The NQF was designed to realise these educational and developmental outcomes for children, supported by parents and families, and to benefit Australia's long term prosperity.

Children

Supports the learning and development of individual children

There is a vast body of research showing quality early childhood education and care leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life.² Neuroscience confirms that children are born ready to learn, and that they learn best through nurturing relationships and being engaged in their environment; through doing, watching and copying.³ As brain architecture and function develops rapidly during early childhood, this time is critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, and the capacity to learn, all of which are vital to a child's long-term outcomes.

Attendance at high quality early childhood education and care services is shown to contribute to children's learning and development, including their broader health, social and emotional development.⁴ Research shows that service quality is significantly related to higher standardised test scores, increased independence, and decreased anti-social behaviour at entry to primary school.⁵

In particular, evidence indicates that children from disadvantaged backgrounds stand to gain the most from quality education and care. It results in improved developmental outcomes including learning skills and improved quality of life.⁶ These children are also more vulnerable to negative impacts from poor quality services, meaning that the provision of low quality education and care can entrench disadvantage.⁷ A longitudinal study into preschool provision in the United Kingdom found that quality early childhood education ameliorates the effects of social disadvantage and prepares disadvantaged children for success at primary school. The authors

² Elliott A. Australian Council for Educational Research, Early Childhood Education, Pathways to quality and equity for all children, *Australian Education Review*, Volume 50, 2006 (note A Elliot is a member of the ACECQA Board)

³ Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, Engaging families in the early childhood development story, (South Australia: 2010), Pages 15 - 23

⁴ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care

⁵ Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., and Taggart, B. (2004). Technical Paper 12, The Final Report: Effective Pre-school Education. London: Institute of Education.

⁶ A practical vision for early childhood education and care, PricewaterhouseCoopers, March 2011.

⁷ Quality in Children's services, *Centre for Community Child Health*, Issue 2, 2006,

concluded that ‘investing in good quality [early childhood education] can be seen as an effective means of achieving targets concerning social exclusion and breaking cycles of disadvantage.’⁸

Evidence presented in a recent Australian study (E4 Kids)⁹ reiterates that to achieve positive educational and developmental outcomes for individual children, access to early childhood education that involves high-quality interactions for all children is fundamental.

The ongoing implementation and support of the NQF is essential to realising these educational and developmental outcomes for children and to benefit Australia’s long term prosperity.

Rights of the child

Regulating for quality is central to realising each child’s right for education and safety and ensuring that ‘the rights and best interests of the child are paramount.’¹⁰ These rights are recognised under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Australia ratified in 1991.¹¹

The NQF aims to make sure children are supported to learn and develop, that their wellbeing is enhanced, and that they are safe and healthy. Regulatory intervention to ensure high quality services is therefore central for valuing children as citizens in their own right.¹² The rights of the child are reinforced in the approved learning frameworks that are embedded in the National Quality Standard. The learning frameworks emphasise the importance of all children’s self-determination and autonomy.¹³

Participation and access

Quality education and care has the potential to benefit all children and Australia’s future prosperity. Affordability and accessibility are important considerations, however it is the quality of children’s education and care that is essential to provide the desired benefits. The OECD proposes that the role of government is to help ensure that all children have equal opportunities to access quality education and care regardless of geographic location, family income, parental employment status, special educational needs or ethnic/language background.¹⁴

Long term productivity benefits

High quality early childhood education and care improves children’s educational and developmental outcomes and their future life experiences and productivity. In particular, it can lower the costs for society in terms of lost potential and public spending on welfare, health and justice.

⁸ Sylva et al. 2004, Page iii

⁹ Tayler C et al. The quality of early childhood education and care services in Australia, *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* – Volume 38 No 2013 (note C Tayler is the Deputy Chair of the ACECQA Board)

¹⁰ s3 National Law

¹¹ Article 3 (Best Interests of Child) and Article 28: (Right to education)

¹² Towards a national quality framework for early childhood education and care, Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care, 2009

¹³ The Early Years Learning Framework & Framework for School Age Care in Australia, Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity. Children develop their autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

¹⁴ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care

Quality early childhood development is also a major force in helping overcome issues relating to child poverty and educational disadvantage.¹⁵ It also helps all children achieve their full potential, which helps to create a society that is more tolerant and socially inclusive.¹⁶ Attaining higher educational attainment is linked to:

- higher earnings and increased productivity of the labour force
- reduced crime
- reduced welfare reliance
- reduced teenage pregnancy
- improved health.¹⁷

It is important that any regulatory model establishes a benchmark for quality. High quality children's education and care yields a range of benefits including improved educational and developmental outcomes for children, building greater human capital, and helping to ameliorate negative impacts for 'at-risk' children.

Parents and families

Parent preference for quality education and care

Families require assurances about quality, including that their children are safe and that their developmental and educational needs are being met. Research indicates that quality early education and care is an important consideration for parents.¹⁸

It is important to recognise that choice is not always an option for families. Families who use education and care services have to take into account a range of practical considerations including availability, affordability, accessibility, flexibility and the individual child's need. In responding to this inquiry, ACECQA does not comment in detail on considerations such as supply and affordability, as these issues are less directly related to ACECQA's core functions and fields of expertise.

Where parents have the option of early childhood education for their child, analysis by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) of national datasets from the National Survey of Parents' Child Care Choices provides an indication of parents' reasons for choosing their provider in the year before fulltime schooling.¹⁹

The AIFS study by found that 31 per cent of families cited quality/ reputation of education and care as a reason for choosing their provider in the year before fulltime schooling.²⁰ A number of other reasons directly related to quality were also widely selected. For example, friendly/caring

¹⁵ OECD (2006) Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care

¹⁶ D. Willms:2002 'Vulnerable Children'

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Table 21, available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/resreport24/rr24g.html>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid.

staff (42 per cent),²¹ physical attributes of the centre (38 per cent),²² and having a formal structure or early learning program (29 per cent).²³

Findings from the study are shown in the below table.

Table 1: Reasons for choosing main care/preschool provider for children in early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling, by program type, parents' reports, NSPCCC²⁴

Reason	LDC only (%)	Preschool in LDC (%)	Non-government preschool (%)	Government preschool (%)	Total (%)
Friendly/caring staff	54.3	43.1	42.4	37.4	41.9
Physical attributes of the centre	51.4	48.5	31.7	31.4	38.3
Quality/reputation of care	25.3	28.6	31.5	32.5	30.5
Location of the centre	27.9	25.2	24.6	37.7	29.7
Having a formal structure or early learning program	19.9	26.7	35.7	27.6	29.0
Good feeling in the centre	15.3	14.5	20.4	18.3	17.4
Staff qualifications	17.0	11.8	7.5	11.0	10.8
Affiliation of centre	2.5	9.0	14.1	5.4	8.6
Staff-to-child ratio	10.3	10.6	9.5	5.6	8.6
Staff experience	4.1	6.5	6.8	7.8	6.8
Social interaction with other children	3.8	3.4	7.4	6.5	5.6
Opening hours	2.1	6.3	7.4	2.7	5.0
Cost	5.4	5.1	3.5	4.4	4.5
Support for child's special needs or requirements	4.3	2.1	3.8	4.0	3.4
Child happiness/progress/comfort	3.2	2.9	2.9	1.0	2.3
Availability - only choice available	0.3	0.6	1.5	3.0	1.7
Children's activities offered by centre	3.7	0.9	1.8	1.5	1.6
Communication between centre and parents	-	2.3	0.6	0.7	1.1

²¹ NQS Quality Area 5: relationships with children, NQS Quality Area 6: collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

²² NQS Quality Area 3: physical environment.

²³ NQS Quality Area 1: educational program and practice.

²⁴ Table reproduced from Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Table 21, available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/resreport24/rr24g.html>

Reason	LDC only (%)	Preschool in LDC (%)	Non-government preschool (%)	Government preschool (%)	Total (%)
None of these	2.9	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7
Other	17.3	9.9	9.8	7.5	9.7
Sample size	91	289	311	561	1,252

Note: Question asked of parents: "What sort of things did you think were important about the specific provider or centre when choosing main care/preschool for child?" Respondents could give multiple responses, so percentages add to more than 100.

Source: National Survey of Parents' Child Care Choices (NSPCCC) (2009).

The AIFS study also shows that quality factors are key reasons for parent choice of program for children in early childhood education in the year before full time schooling. 'Good for child's social development/ to mix with other children' and 'good for child's intellectual or language development' were selected by 57 per cent and 18 per cent of the sample respectively, compared to parent work or study commitments (23 per cent). These results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Main reason for choosing program for children in early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling, by program type, parents' reports, LSAC²⁵

Main reasons	Total (%)
Good for child's social development/to mix with other children	56.7
Parent's work or study commitments	22.5
Good for child's intellectual or language development	17.8
Total	100.0
Sample size	2,805

Note: Other response categories not shown were "Parent's sport, shopping, social or community activities" (< 1%), "Give parent a break or time alone" (< 1%) and "Other" (2%). Includes children not yet in school whose parents report they are to start full-time schooling next year.

Source: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), 2008.

Anecdotal feedback from family roundtable discussions as part of ACECQA's family research project also indicates that quality and choice are important to families, and that families recognise the importance of learning in an early education and care environment.

A nationally consistent system aims to ensure a higher level of quality education and care for all services, so that parents can be assured of quality, regardless of the choices open to them.

²⁵ Table reproduced from Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Table 20, available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/resreport24/rr24g.html>

Information for families

Quality rating information helps to provide clear, reliable, consistent information for families, in addition to improving public knowledge and access to information about the quality of children's education and care services.²⁶ The National Quality Standard does this by setting consistent benchmarks that allows families to compare service quality across service types and locations.

While quality education and care is a key consideration for families, many families are uncertain about how to make quality judgements. For example, regular parent visits to services tend to be brief, and are generally more limited to picking up and dropping off children. Further, it is difficult to gather information from very young children about service quality. On the principle that an informed consumer is a more effective consumer, a robust regulatory system allows families to have more confidence to make judgements about the quality of services their children attend, or are considering attending.

Under the NQF, services are required to display their rating, and ratings are published on the ACECQA and MyChild websites.²⁷ The ratings provide families, communities and professionals with robust information about a range of aspects of quality known to influence child outcomes. This includes information about the service that may not be obvious to parents. Service engagement with families on quality assessment and rating serves to further increase family awareness of children's learning and development.

In addition to the quality assessment and rating process, the NQF – through the National Law and Regulations – requires services to display information about the service, and provide information about educational programming and child assessments to parents.

Supporting family and community engagement in children's education and care

Research indicates that parental engagement is important to enhance healthy child development and learning.²⁸ It also helps to encourage high-quality children's learning at home and communication with children's education and care staff.

...research has shown that parental engagement...is strongly associated with children's later academic success, high school completion, socio-emotional development and adaptation in society. (OECD 2012)

Quality rating information has the potential to increase parents' engagement with their child's learning and development. The NQS, which sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care and care services, recognises the importance of parents and families in children's development.²⁹

²⁶ S3 National Law, Objectives and guiding principles

²⁷ S160 National Law

²⁸ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care; Education Services Australia (2010), Engaging Families in the Early Childhood Development Story, available at http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/resources/ecd_story-final_project_report_of_stage_1.pdf

²⁹ NQS Quality area 6: collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

Rating information can also promote broader societal awareness and understanding of quality as an important factor in children's education and care. Wider community engagement between families and other children's education and care services can create a network of resources and support, reducing the stress and alienation that some families experience.

The NQS directly recognises the role of families and the broader community in the provision of quality children's education and care.³⁰ For example, the NQS encourages development and maintenance of respectful and supportive relationships with families, and family involvement in decisions about learning programs and service improvement.

ACECQA is required under the National Quality Agenda Implementation Plan³¹ to report to education ministers on the proportion of families that indicate that they know their service's rating and understand its meaning. ACECQA is currently conducting research to inform that report. Once completed, the research will provide more evidence about the impact information provided by quality rating has for families.

³⁰ NQS Quality Area 6: collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

³¹ Multilateral Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Key changes introduced through the National Quality Framework

The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia – TOR item: C

Overview

The NQF regulatory model provides for a holistic approach to quality education and care and sets a higher bar for Australian education and care services. It has brought more focus on outcomes and is generally less prescriptive than the nine regulatory models it replaced. For example, rather than specify the height of a fence, the NQF requires that fences are designed to prevent children of preschool age or under leaving the service unattended.³² The NQF is more concerned with how to best achieve positive outcomes for children, and has less specific and rigid requirements. Compared to former systems, the NQF regulatory design is also more efficient, by offering providers greater flexibility and opportunity to innovate to meet requirements in ways that work best in their particular service and community.

The NQF introduced strengthened and nationally consistent educator to child ratios and qualification requirements for educators. These were based on existing best practice within Australia and international research and practice. In addition, services must deliver a program based on an approved learning framework and engage in ongoing reflection, planning and programming to support each child's learning and development. These requirements support the high quality interactions between educators and children that in turn lead to the positive benefits to children that are attributed to attending a quality education and care service.

Efficiency improvements through a single legislative system

Prior to the start of the NQF, state and territory regulatory authorities administered unique regulatory schemes for licensing and minimum standards, while the Australian Government's NCAC regulated for quality assurance.³³ Regulation of education and care services prior to the NQF is outlined in **Appendix A**. Duplication and inconsistency between the nine regulatory schemes resulted in duplicative and unnecessary burden on providers.³⁴

The NQF came into effect across Australia with the goal of improving quality in education and care services and improving the efficiency and cost effectiveness of regulating education and care services. The goal of improved efficiency was in part achieved by replacing the pre-existing and complex system of eight different state and territory regulatory schemes, plus an overlapping national quality assurance regulatory scheme. Prior to the NQF, requirements such as the safety of a service's physical environment were often duplicated in the licencing and quality assurance processes. Regulation was also inconsistent across states and territories, with

³² Education and Care Services National Regulations, Regulation 104

³³ Excerpt: Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 14.

³⁴ COAG. (2009). Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Quality Reforms, available at http://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/ris_early_childhood_education_care_quality_reforms.pdf; Regulation Taskforce. (2006). Rethinking Regulation: Report of the Taskforce on Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Business. Canberra, available at http://archive.treasury.gov.au/documents/1141/PDF/Reducing_Regulatory_Burdens_on_Business_Final_Government_Response.pdf

differing standards for services, and qualification requirements varying between jurisdictions. Further, there was a complex patchwork of licensing requirements and minimum standards for different service types, depending on which jurisdiction the service operated in.

A single legislative system reduces administrative burden for all education and care providers that were previously required to meet these separate requirements. It also reduces complexity for service providers operating services in multiple jurisdictions. Under the NQF, minimum enforceable standards and quality rating are a unified system, with efficiency benefits flowing to both providers and governments. It also offers consistency for the many families moving across jurisdictions.

Efficiencies gained from the new national system include:

- **Reduced administrative compliance costs.** In particular for providers with a range of service types, or operating across more than one state or territory. For example, a national provider approval under the NQF enables a business to operate services in any jurisdiction. Further, service approvals can be transferred between providers, rather than having to be surrendered and applied for afresh when a service changes hands.
- **Workforce mobility.** National recognition of qualifications supports a national labour market and facilitates migration in areas where there are skills shortages, including early childhood teachers. In 2012–13, more than three-quarters (78%) of applications from individuals wanting their qualifications assessed for equivalence by ACECQA were from individuals with overseas qualifications.³⁵
- **Australian child-focused objectives across children’s education and care services.** The implementation of the first national learning frameworks support a more consistent approach to young children’s learning and development outcomes, practices and principles across service types and jurisdictions. Agreed, consistent terminology and approaches build shared understandings and support transitions between services for children, educators and families. This also builds consistency in vocational and higher education programs for educators with the flexibility to tailor learning to different ages, abilities and needs. The NQF brings Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) into a unified system, ensuring that children attending OSHC have the same structures for safety, wellbeing and quality as children attending other modes of education and care.
- **Coherent support to the sector** – through consistency in requirements from support agencies such as organisations providing professional development, training or recruitment services. For example, having one national requirement for first aid qualifications allows training organisations to deliver one national course instead of tailoring a course to different state and territory requirements. ACECQA has worked with states, territories and the Australian Government to produce a wealth of resources to help guide services, educators, families and governments to navigate the new system. Resources include fact sheets, a range of guides, an Operational Policy Manual and

³⁵ ACECQA Annual Report 2012-2013, *ACECQA 2013* available at <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/acecqa-annual-report-2013>

newsletters for providers and families. In 2012-13, ACECQA's customer service team received a total of 49,566 enquiries.³⁶

- **Greater incentives for innovation.** National requirements create a larger market, relative to the separate markets created by previous regulatory systems. The broader market under the NQF provides greater incentives for innovation that improves the quality and effectiveness of the sector. For example, the Professional Support Coordinator Alliance has developed innovative strategies for sharing resources, such as a national on-line resource library to provide comprehensive, practical information and support to assist in meeting the inclusion and professional development needs of education and care services.
- **National systems and infrastructure.** Providers can now use consistent forms that can be submitted electronically through an online national IT system (NQA ITS) making the process quicker and easier for both services and governments. Regulatory authorities also benefit from national systems including an e-learning portal for quality assessors that is allowing new training to be rolled out quickly, efficiently and consistently across Australia.
- **National collaboration and problem solving.** ACECQA, as the national body established to guide the implementation of the NQF, facilitates national discussion and information sharing about the progress and effective administration of the NQF. This national perspective allows for the identification of issues and brokering of national solutions.

The NQF model would typically be expected to refine and adjust over time as the quality of the services being regulated improves. For example, based on the principle of earned autonomy, services that obtain higher quality undergo assessment and rating less frequently, requiring less monitoring and regulatory resources. Further, the system may evolve to include greater self-regulation for highly rated and compliant services. ACECQA is working across governments to analyse all aspects of the NQF, including unintended consequences or inefficiencies as they arise. Improved efficacy of the NQF needs to be based on the NQF performance evidence and its assurance of better developmental and educational outcomes for children.

NQF components

National Quality Standard

The NQS is a key aspect of the NQF. It sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care and care services. The NQS promotes continuous improvement in quality to promote quality outcomes for children.

The NQS was designed by the Expert Advisory Panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care in 2009. It is informed by Australian and international research and agreed best practice on how high quality education and care contributes to positive outcomes for children. This includes research drawn from the education, health, social, behavioural, psychological and economic sciences as well as comparative research undertaken by the Office for Economic Co-operation

³⁶ Ibid

and Development, which identified the critical aspects of quality for children's education and care services.³⁷ The NQS was developed and refined through consultation with all governments, the early childhood and children's support services fields, and through two national trials.

The NQS is made up of seven quality areas, comprising 18 standards and 58 elements. The quality areas cover educational program and practice, health and safety, physical environment, staffing, relationships with children, partnerships with families and communities, leadership and management. In line with contemporary thinking,³⁸ the standards and elements include structural components (such as facilities, resources, educator to child ratios and staff qualifications) and process components (such as relationships with children and families, service leadership and educator skills) to support positive outcomes for children and families.

Quality rating

The process of quality rating, in conjunction with standards for qualified educators and ratios, promotes quality improvement over time in services. The rating itself is to support effort towards continuous improvement at a service level and is a benchmark of quality for the entire sector over time, benefitting children, families and communities in both the short and long term.

Authorised officers from regulatory authorities in each state and territory assess and rate services against the NQS and related regulatory requirements. Services receive a rating for each of the seven quality areas and 18 standards in the NQS, as well as an overall quality rating well as. A report details the evidence that informed the rating along with suggestions for improving the quality of the service. Providers must display their overall and quality area ratings at the service. They are also published on the ACECQA and MyChild websites.

The quality assessment and rating process is an effective regulatory intervention to measure and drive quality improvement over time by providing both incentives and accountability for providers. Quality assessment and rating data is benchmarking quality and informing policy makers about the quality of children's education and care across Australia. As outlined earlier in this submission, quality rating information is also helping to provide clear, reliable, consistent information for families.

For children who participate in education and care services, quality rating provides policy makers with information about the nature and equity of participation. The data can identify where resources are needed most to reduce risk, such as providing greater support to providers that require it, and works towards a consistent quality of education and care for all Australian children. For example, governments are able to identify whether there is a relationship between remoteness and service quality and whether targeted funding is working to lift quality.

ACECQA publishes quarterly *Snapshots* to provide an overview of quality rating data for services rated against the NQS. In the 18 months to 31 December 2013, 4508 services were quality rated against the NQS, making up 32% of all approved education and care services. Western Australia and South Australia have completed the smallest proportion of quality ratings however, the

³⁷ OECD (2006) *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*.

³⁸ Ishimine K; Tayler C and Bennett J (2010) *Quality and Early Childhood Education and Care: A Policy Initiative for the 21st Century*, International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy (note Collette Tayler is the Deputy Chair of the ACECQA Board)

National Law came into effect later in Western Australia, August 2012, while in South Australia a new independent regulatory authority was set up to regulate across several sectors, including education and care.

While the assessment and rating process takes time, regulatory authorities and authorised officers continue to make efficiency gains as their familiarity and confidence with the NQS and the rating process increase, evidenced by higher processing rates each quarter, to date.

As the National Authority, ACECQA works to support regulatory authorities in the implementation of the quality rating process to ensure effective and consistent regulatory practice. For example, ACECQA has been working to upgrade training and support resources for authorised officers.

Qualifications

The NQF sets nationally consistent requirements for early childhood educator qualifications because they underwrite the quality of experiences children have within programs, assuring both short and long term human capital development. These requirements were informed by research and consultation as part of the development of the NQF.³⁹ Higher educator qualifications are strongly associated with improved child outcomes, as educators are better able to involve children, stimulate interactions, and use a range of strategies to extend and support their learning.⁴⁰ Research shows that early childhood centres that employ staff with higher qualifications also score higher in measures of overall service quality.⁴¹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has reported that ‘children learn best when they are active and engaged; when interactions are frequent and meaningful; and when curriculum builds on prior learning.’⁴²

Staff qualifications, including initial education and professional development, contribute to enhanced pedagogical quality. Better qualified staff are able to create a higher quality pedagogic environment.⁴³ The NQF also encourages educators to continuously reflect on pedagogical practice.

Consistent with the OECD findings, Australian research highlights the importance of a professional children’s education and care workforce to promote improved levels of intentional teaching for all children.⁴⁴ A Melbourne University study found the highest increases in Year 3 nation-wide National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – test outcomes for children whose pre-school teachers had Diploma or Degree level (high) qualifications.⁴⁵ Australian evidence such as the E4Kids study⁴⁶ on the quality of intentional teaching in

³⁹ Towards a national quality framework for early childhood education and care, Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care, 2009

⁴⁰ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care

⁴¹ Sylva et al., 2004

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care

⁴⁴ Warren D. and Haisken-DeNew J.P., Early Bird Catches the Worm: The Causal Impact of Pre-school Participation and Teacher Qualifications on Year 3 National NAPLAN Cognitive Tests*, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne, 2013

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Tayler C et al. The quality of early childhood education and care services in Australia, *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* Volume 38 No 2013 (note Collette Tayler is the Deputy Chair of the ACECQA Board)

education and care services suggests that improved standards support positive outcomes for children. Research shows that having trained teachers working with children in early childhood education and care settings, and in particular leading the curriculum, has a significant impact on quality and is directly linked to improved educational outcomes for children.⁴⁷

Under the NQF, from 1 January 2014 children have access to more highly qualified staff in early childhood education and care services, and more children will have access to early childhood teachers. All educators at a minimum must be working towards a Certificate III qualification, and 50 per cent of educators in each early childhood education and care service must have, or be studying towards, an approved diploma qualification or a degree in early childhood teaching.

The NQF qualification requirements, by establishing this new benchmark for quality, are increasing professionalisation across the education and care services workforce.

Australian governments have supported the sector through a range of initiatives to prepare for the 2014 qualifications requirements. The Australian Government has invested in providing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for existing educators. RPL allows existing educators to have their prior experience and knowledge recognised and credited towards the completion of higher qualifications. The Australian Government has also invested in professional development and support to eligible education and care services through the Inclusion and Professional Support program (IPSP).⁴⁸ State and territory governments have introduced a number of scholarship programs to help with reducing the cost and time taken to complete qualifications. ACECQA also plays a role by providing national assessments of educator qualifications.

The Australian Government Department of Education commissioned a workforce review to inform governments of the progress of the children's education and care sector towards meeting the new qualifications requirements and identify any gaps or areas requiring attention and additional support. That report is expected in early 2014.

ACECQA notes that on 31 December 2013, 4.9% (695) of approved education and care services across Australia were operating with waivers. Of the 432 services with temporary waivers, 95.8% (414) are for staffing requirements. These temporary waivers can be granted for up to 12 months, but many are for shorter periods to bridge gaps while providers conduct recruitment processes and fill vacancies. ACECQA will continue to monitor and report on the number of staffing waivers required by services in our quarterly Snapshot reports.

Educator to child ratios

The NQF introduced improved educator to child ratios to assure improvement to adult: child interactions, a critical component of high-quality programs that underpins improvements in children's outcomes. Setting appropriate ratios is important as the more time an educator can spend with an individual child, the more likely they are able to create a high quality pedagogic environment tailored to each child's needs.⁴⁹ As outlined in the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Regulatory Impact Statement (2009) 'care providers and early childhood

⁴⁷ Sylva et al., 2004

⁴⁸ Australian Government Department of Education (2014). Inclusion and Professional Support Program, available at <http://education.gov.au/inclusion-and-professional-support-program>

⁴⁹ OECD (2006) Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care

educators are able to be more positive and responsive to children when they are directly responsible for fewer children.’⁵⁰

An environment for learning – approved learning frameworks

Delivering an educational program based on an approved learning framework is now a legislated requirement under the National Law because high-quality children’s education and care systems recognise the importance of human learning and development, and the contribution of successful human capital formation to a society over time. ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia’ (EYLF) is a nationally agreed learning framework for children aged birth to five. The EYLF provides a common language clarity of what outcomes Australia seeks for its young children. The EYLF helps educators implement programs that enhance children’s learning and development. The framework sets out five key outcomes that are vital to children’s development, with a specific emphasis on play-based learning. ‘My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia’ builds on these key outcomes and provides guidance for developing and implementing programs for children attending school age care programs.

The benefits of a common framework for children’s education and care are highlighted in numerous OECD publications.⁵¹ These benefits include producing a more consistent and equitable system across different services while allowing for adaptation to local needs and circumstances. A clear and consistent articulation of goals also helps in the development of programs that promote children’s learning and development and foster their wellbeing.⁵² Such articulations can also guide and support staff to facilitate communication between teachers and parents, and ensure continuity between pre-primary and primary school levels.⁵³ Well-defined educational programs not only benefit preschool aged children but also infants and toddlers. In infant-toddler settings with a weak pedagogical framework, young children may miss out on stimulating environments that are of high importance in the early years.⁵⁴

Implementation of the NQF

The National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (NPA) sets out the key milestones for the implementation of the NQF.

The key milestones achieved include:

- 2010** the development and introduction of national applied National Law and National Regulations streamlined regulatory arrangements and state and territory reform of existing regulatory systems.
- 2011** the establishment of ACECQA, the national authority and the wind up of National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC).
- 2012** the introduction of a National Quality Standard, including a new rating system.

⁵⁰ COAG, Regulation Impact Statement, 2009

⁵¹ OECD (2006) Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: Early Childhood Education and Care

⁵⁴ Ibid

2013 the publication of national registers of services and quality rating information.

2014 the introduction of improved ratios and qualification requirements.

The full spectrum of improved educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are being introduced over a 10 year transition period under the NQF. This gives providers time to adjust and to allow educators to undertake further training or study, where necessary. Full implementation of the NQF qualification requirements will not occur until 2020.

Level of support for the NQF

As services continue to be rated and there is increased familiarity and engagement, the sector's support for the NQF grows. ACECQA's research has found providers whose services have been quality rated are among the groups most supportive of the NQF.⁵⁵

The perception survey results from ACECQA's *Report on the NQF and Regulatory Burden* (2013) (Regulatory Burden Report) indicate that providers, nominated supervisors and Family Day Care (FDC) educators are highly supportive of the NQF. For example, 78 per cent of providers indicated that they were either very supportive (42 per cent) or supportive (36 per cent).⁵⁶

As implementation of the NQF is ongoing, the sector is still transitioning and adjusting to the new regulatory framework. Fundamental changes to the NQF at this stage of implementation run the risk of inducing reform fatigue among the sector and regulatory authorities. A significant departure from the current framework also risks undermining the broad sector and community support for the NQF.

The successful implementation of the NQF requires sustained effort and collaboration across governments and with the sector, adequate resourcing and support for service providers.

Role of regulatory authorities

Regulatory authorities in each state and territory are responsible for regulating and monitoring the quality of children's education and care services covered under the National Law.

A key element of the NQF is the introduction of 'authorised officers' who fulfil functions under the National Law in all states and territories. Authorised officers are employed by state and territory regulatory authorities to perform a wide range of regulatory functions, including:

- assess and rate services for quality
- monitor and enforce compliance
- assess applications for an approval
- investigate incidents and complaints
- provide advice and guidance.

⁵⁵ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx,Part> 1, pg. 11

⁵⁶ Ibid

ACECQA's role

ACECQA is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the efficient and consistent implementation of the NQF. This involves working together with the sector and governments, through various forums and working groups to support and ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

ACECQA provides national leadership on the implementation of quality children's education and care through the facilitating national discussion and information sharing about the administration of the NQF. Liaising with regulatory authorities gives ACECQA a national perspective, which allows us to identify issues and broker national solutions.

ACECQA provides a central information point for the education and care sector, governments and families including through its enquiries line, ACECQA newsletter, website and social media and speaking engagements at sector events. In addition, a key component of building consistency is the delivery of comprehensive training and testing programs for authorised officers' quality rating of services. ACECQA is also responsible for revising and streamlining the content and delivery of these programs and identifying additional training needs. ACECQA also manages the NQA ITS, which is a business management tool for regulatory authorities.

ACECQA's key functions include publishing national guidance material such as the Guide to the National Quality Standard and Operational Policy Manual, auditing regulatory authority functions, conducting second tier reviews, awarding the excellent rating and assessing educator qualifications and training programs. These types of functions are carried out more efficiently and consistently by a national body and give ACECQA an overview of practices around Australia.

ACECQA provides biannual national reports to joint meetings of education ministers, conducts data analysis and original research, such as ACECQA's longitudinal research on regulatory burden which has benchmarked administrative burden in the sector. As such, ACECQA is well placed to drive improvements to the NQF to ensure it is providing the intended improvements in quality of education and care services in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Streamlining the NQF

The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia – TOR items: B, C, D

Overview

ACECQA leads work to identify and describe operational impediments to the successful implementation of the NQF. This involves investigating operational issues to determine whether they are impediments to NQF implementation, and working with stakeholders and the sector to identify solutions. For instance, the supervisor certificate processes were identified (May 2013) as an operational impediment for the sector and for governments, and referred by SCSEEC to the Early Childhood Development Working Group (ECDWG) for refinement of the proposed policy solution.

ACECQA, in consultation with the Australian and state and territory governments, is currently reviewing the efficiency of the quality assessment and rating process for areas that can be improved. This intent is to facilitate the speed and efficiency of rating services, including the reduction of paperwork for providers and governments (for example, simplifying operational practice on the notice period for assessment visits and the structure of assessment reports may be improved).

This work highlights options to streamline the NQS while maintaining the benefit of the NQS to children, families and to service quality, reducing complexity so as to reduce paperwork and compliance costs for both providers and governments. Further consultation with the sector is required to inform this process. This could occur as part of the 2014 COAG Review into the NPA.

Administrative burden research

Research overview and background

The NQF aims to reduce burden for education and care providers through a nationally streamlined system that meets COAG's Principles of Best Practice Regulation.⁵⁷ The Implementation Plan for the NPA requires ACECQA to report regularly to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) until January 2016 on the 'experience of services under the NQF, with respect to the level of regulatory burden'.

⁵⁷ COAG. (2007). Best Practice Regulation – A Guide for Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies, available at http://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/coag_documents/COAG_best_practice_guide_2007.pdf

ACECQA's recent *Report on the National Quality Framework and Regulatory Burden* (2013) (Part I and Part II Regulatory Burden Reports) presents findings and recommendations from the first stage of this research.⁵⁸ The research was conducted using a longitudinal perception survey and a Standard Cost Model (SCM) assessment. Information on the research methodology is contained in the report.

The focus of the research is the sector's experience of administrative burden since the introduction of the NQF in January 2012.⁵⁹ Quantitative comparisons between the level of administrative burden under former regulatory systems and the NQF cannot be drawn because there is no data on the level of administrative burden before the commencement of the NQF. The first wave of research, produced in 2013, therefore serves as a benchmark for the three remaining years of the survey. As such, findings from the first stage of the perception survey on the level of administrative burden in the sector should not be interpreted in isolation, but relative to findings from the next stages of the perception survey. Findings from the next stage of this survey will be available to Ministers by June 2014.

Findings and recommendations⁶⁰

Transitional burden

At the time of the survey in the first quarter of 2013, the sector was still transitioning to the new framework (since its commencement in January 2012). The majority of perception survey respondents indicated a perception of unchanged burden over 2012 compared to 2013.⁶¹ For the remainder, the majority indicated a perception of reduced burden over the period.⁶² The SCM assessment findings suggest that the cost of compliance is reducing with improved familiarity with the Framework.⁶³

It is therefore too soon to make a full assessment of the level of ongoing administrative burden (as opposed to transitional burden or one-off costs) of the NQF, although the research findings suggest that a decrease in administrative burden relative to the benchmark 2013 data, perceived and experienced, could be observed over the later stages of the longitudinal study.

Overall burden

Providers and nominated supervisors reported varying degrees of overall burden with the ongoing requirements under the NQF. 'Overall burden' is a measure of how burdensome participants consider the ongoing administrative requirements of the National Law and Regulations at the time of the study. It is not a measure of the level in 2013 relative to previous years.

⁵⁸ The scope of the study 'administrative burden' is outlined in section 3 of the Part I report: *Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden*, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 16.

⁵⁹ From August 2012 in Western Australia.

⁶⁰ Adapted from *Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden*, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pp. 11-12.

⁶¹ *Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden*, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 82.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Deloitte Access Economics (2013). *Measuring the administrative burden of the NQF*, p. i, in *Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden*, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>

There are some groups who perceive a reduction in burden. In particular, providers whose service/s formerly operated under the NCAC regulatory system are more inclined to indicate that administrative burden has reduced, compared to providers only under other regulatory systems.⁶⁴ Further, Providers whose services have been quality rated are among the groups most supportive of the NQF and perceive a lower level of administrative burden.⁶⁵

Administrative activities – with recommendations

In November 2013, Ministers agreed to a number of actions and recommendations for the Australian, state and territory governments and ACECQA to reduce administrative burden for the sector. These actions and recommendations, outlined below, are currently being implemented.

Reducing the volume of requirements

The research found that the volume of administrative requirements is, in aggregate, contributing to regulatory burden.⁶⁶ Further, the report found examples of unnecessary duplication between administrative requirements under the NQF and other legislative requirements. Reducing the aggregate number of administrative requirements can reduce paperwork, compliance costs, and administration overheads for providers and state and territory governments.⁶⁷ As set out in the Part II Regulatory Burden Report, further work will be undertaken by the Australian and state and territory governments and ACECQA to reduce the volume of administrative requirements.⁶⁸

Setting clearer expectations

Documenting children's learning is perceived by providers and FDC educators as a more burdensome ongoing administrative activity.⁶⁹ Providers also perceive Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and quality assessment and ratings visits as more burdensome.⁷⁰ These requirements are cornerstones of the quality improvement objectives of the NQF.⁷¹

Providers who operated under the former NCAC regulatory system were required to provide high levels of documentation for quality assurance. Consultation with regulatory authorities suggests that because these providers were used to heavy documentation requirements, they

⁶⁴ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 12.

⁶⁵ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pp. 38, 51.

⁶⁶ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 11.

⁶⁷ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 2, pg. 11.

⁶⁸ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 2, pg. 6-7.

⁶⁹ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

may be more inclined to assume that a similar amount of documentation is required under the NQF. This view is supported by the perception survey findings.⁷²

The research found that uncertainty over the level of detail required for compliance with more broadly defined requirements adds cost for some providers.⁷³ Importantly, the majority of participants in the SCM study considered that the increase in time and cost of documenting educational programs and assessments of children's learning 'generated at least an equivalent increase in the quality of service being delivered.' Further, 'many of the services surveyed thought that QIPs contribute significantly to the quality of the service.'⁷⁴ Providers reported that the time and cost was reducing and will continue to reduce with more familiarity with the framework and processes.⁷⁵

ACECQA is continuing to provide guidance to the sector to improve confidence and certainty about obligations. ACECQA is also working with regulatory authorities and the Australian Government to provide additional guidance to assist in understanding ambiguous legislative terms where this can reduce costs without reducing flexibility for providers.

The Australian Government, in consultation with regulatory authorities and ACECQA, will collaborate with sector support agencies such as the Professional Support Coordinator (PSC) Alliance to prioritise training on the areas highlighted by ACECQA's research, and ensure consistent training and other professional development is delivered through the PSC network and other training organisations nationally.

Improving accessibility

The research found that a significant proportion of FDC educators surveyed speak a language other than English at home.⁷⁶ This reflects the large proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds among FDC educators. The report recommended additional, plain-English materials to make familiarisation and compliance easier for educators.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was translated into 10 languages in 2013.⁷⁷ The translations provide an opportunity to ensure educators have a deeper understanding of the EYLF through access to a document in their native language.

ACECQA will work with the Australian Government, regulatory authorities and peak bodies to improve communication to FDC educators in the interests of children and families, and educator's compliance with the National Regulations.

⁷² Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 2, pg. 17.

⁷³ Deloitte Access Economics (2013). Measuring the administrative burden of the NQF, p. ii, in Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden, ACECQA July 2013 available at <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Publications.aspx>, Part 1, pg. 11.

⁷⁷ Australian Government Department of Education. (2013). Early Years Learning Framework translated into ten languages. Available from <http://education.gov.au/news/early-years-learning-framework-translated-ten-languages>

Appendix A: Regulation of education and care services prior to NQF commencement

Jurisdiction	Long day care	Preschool / kindergarten	Outside School Hours Care	Family Day Care	Comments
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School education system/ territory licensing and standards regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	N/A
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation/ school education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	N/A
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School education system/ territory licensing and standards regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAC 	N/A
Qld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State licensing and standards regulation • NCAC 	N/A

Jurisdiction	Long day care	Preschool / kindergarten	Outside School Hours Care	Family Day Care	Comments
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation/school education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<p>Licensing and standards regulation for OSHC services applied only to services provided on a school site</p> <p>Family day care educators in SA were sponsored by the Government and subject to conditions of approval, but were not within scope of the children's services regulations</p>
Tas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<p>Preschools in Tasmania are not in scope of the NQF</p>
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<p>The NQF commenced in WA on 1 August 2012</p> <p>Preschools in WA are not in scope of the NQF</p>
Vic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State licensing and standards regulation NCAC 	<p>N/A</p>