



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

NQF Snapshot Q4 2013

A quarterly report from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

February 2014

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Introduction



NQF Snapshot Q4 2013 is ACECQA's fourth national report on children's education and care services assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard (NQS).

It provides analysis and information on the state of the sector, progress of assessment and rating, quality ratings of services and waivers held by services.

The data included in this *Snapshot* has been drawn from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) as at 31 December 2013.

When reviewing the quality rating information in the *Snapshot*, caution should be taken when making comparisons between jurisdictions or making predictions about services yet to be rated. Some jurisdictions have rated only a small number of services and the services rated are not representative of all services.

The figures in this *Snapshot* largely mirror the spread of quality ratings in our previous reports.

As at 31 December 2013:

- there are 14 116 children's services across Australia
- 4508 or 32% of services have received a quality rating
- more than half (59%) of all rated services are rated as Meeting or Exceeding NQS
- 74 645 supervisor certificates have been issued
- 4.9% of services across Australia are operating with waivers.

The individual results for the 4508 children's education and care services already quality rated are available online at <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-registers>.

For further information on this report please email enquiries@acecqa.gov.au or telephone 1300 4 ACECQA (1300 422 327). The next quarterly update will be available in May 2014.

Snapshot highlights

The data presented in this *Snapshot* was taken from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) on 2 January 2014 for the period ending 31 December 2013.



Number of children's education and care services across Australia

Rated
EXCELLENT
by ACECQA



6

Number of Australian services so far rated Excellent



Number of approved providers operating services

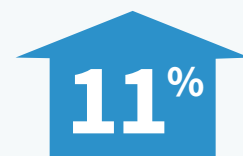
83%



Proportion of operating providers that manage only one education and care service



Proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS overall that were rated Meeting or Exceeding NQS in at least five of seven quality areas.



Percentage increase in family day care services from 1 October - 31 December 2013

Snapshot highlights

74 645 

Number of supervisor certificates have been issued under the NQF

59% 

Proportion of assessed services that are Meeting or Exceeding the National Quality Standard



Services are more likely to achieve Exceeding or Meeting NQS in Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements, Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children and Quality Area 6 - Partnerships with families and communities



Services are less likely to achieve Exceeding or Meeting NQS in Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice, Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety, Quality Area 3 - Physical environment and Quality Area 7 - Leadership and service management

 4.9%

Proportion of approved services with a waiver

 32%

Proportion of services that have received a quality rating

State of the sector

Figure 1: The number of approved services by jurisdiction and service type on 31 December 2013

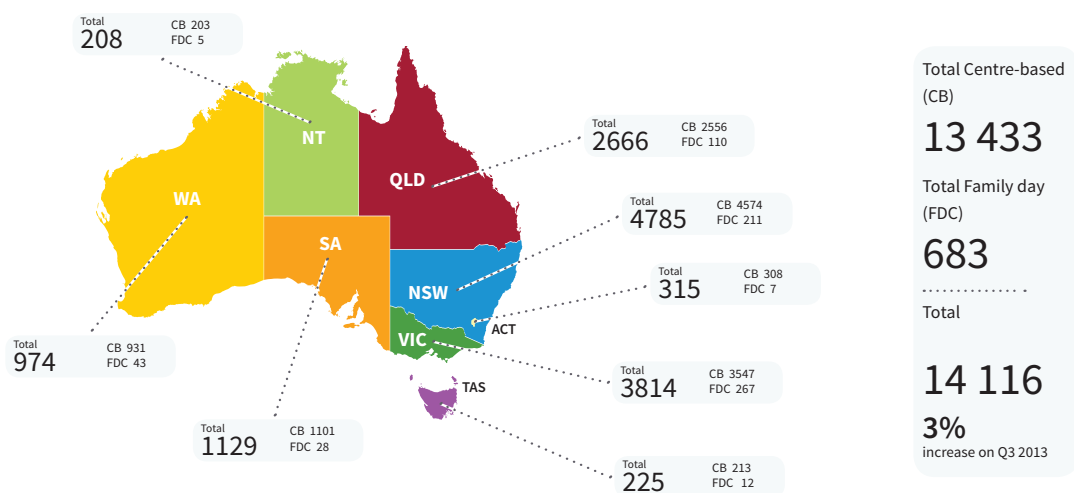


Figure 1 shows the number of centre-based services¹ and family day care services² by jurisdiction. Nationally there are 13 433 centre-based services and 683 family day care services. Centre-based services make up 95% of all services operating under the NQF. There was strong growth in centre-based services in New South Wales, with the number of services growing by 9% compared to 3% nationally. This growth is largely due to moving outside school hours care services into the regulatory environment rather than natural growth in the sector.

The number of family day care services increased nationally by 11% between 1 October 2013 and 31 December 2013, up from 616 to 683. The largest increases occurred in New South Wales (up 21%) and Western Australia (up 16%). This increase is mainly due to natural growth in the sector and is not a result of data cleansing or changes in counting.

Table 1: The proportion of approved services by jurisdiction on 31 December 2013

Jurisdiction	TOTAL PROPORTION
ACT	2%
NSW	34%
NT	1%
QLD	19%
SA	8%
TAS	2%
VIC	27%
WA	7%
TOTAL	100%

¹A centre-based service is an education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool and outside school hours care services that are delivered at a centre. It does not include preschools in Tasmania or Western Australia.

²A family day care service is an education and care service delivered through the use of two or more educators to provide education and care for children in residences, whether or not the service also provides education and care to children at a place other than a residence. They are sometimes known as family day care schemes and they are administered and supported by central coordination units.

State of the sector

There were 74 645 supervisor certificates recorded in the NQA ITS on 31 December 2013. Regulatory authorities issue these certificates to people who are then eligible to be placed in day-to-day charge of an approved education and care service. The number of supervisor certificates has increased by 9% in the three months to 31 December 2013.

Certificates are issued to individuals or to people occupying a position that belongs to a 'prescribed class of persons', such as a principal of a school that provides an education and care service at a school site. Table 2 shows that most (98.6%) supervisor certificates have been issued to individuals.



74 645
9% increase on Q3 2013



98.6%

Number of supervisor certificates recorded in the NQA ITS on 31 December 2013

Proportion of supervisor certificates issued to individuals

Table 2: The number of supervisor certificates by jurisdiction and certification type on 31 December 2013

Jurisdiction	Individual	Prescribed Class	TOTAL
ACT	1259	94	1353
NSW	20 803	62	20 865
NT	647	104	751
QLD	19 630	100	19 730
SA	6710	634	7344
TAS	1212	7	1219
VIC	18 461	51	18 512
WA	4867	4	4871
TOTAL	73 592	1056	74 645

State of the sector

There were 8688 approved providers under the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) on 31 December 2013, of which 7183 were operating services. The number of approved providers operating services has increased by 2.7% since 30 September 2013.

The majority of providers (83%) manage only one education and care service, however, a significant proportion of services (27.7%) are managed by a small number of large providers (providers with 25 or more services). See Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 2: The proportion of approved providers with services by size on 31 December 2013

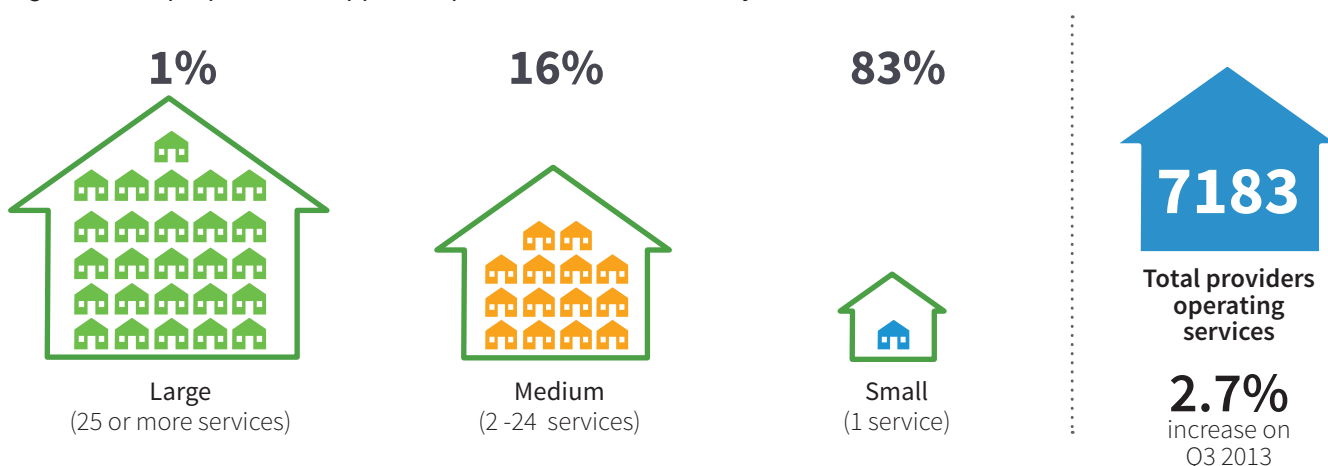


Table 3: The number and proportion of approved providers with services by size of provider on 31 December 2013

Provider size	Number of approved providers with services	% of approved providers
Small	5980	83%
Medium	1159	16%
Large	44	1%
TOTAL	7183	100%

Table 4: The number and proportion of approved services by size of approved provider on 31 December 2013

Provider size	Number of approved services	% of services provided
Small	5980	42.4%
Medium	4223	29.9%
Large	3913	27.7%
TOTAL	14 116	100%

Progress of assessment and rating

All children's education and care services approved under the NQF are working to meet the standards in the NQS. The NQS sets the benchmark for all children's education and care services across Australia. Services are assessed and quality rated against the NQS by regulatory authorities in each state or territory. Services receive an overall quality rating, as well as a rating for each of the seven quality areas in the NQS.

Authorised officers from regulatory authorities in each state or territory visit services to assess and rate their performance against the NQS. Quality rating began in mid 2012 and over time all services will be assessed and rated.

On 31 December 2013, 4508 services were quality rated against the NQS, making up 32% of all approved education and care services (see Table 5). The number of services with a quality rating increased most substantially in Western Australia (56% increase) and South Australia (36% increase).

Some change in the count of quality ratings from one *Snapshot* to the next may be attributed to the time elapsed between a service rating being determined and the rating being completed in the NQA ITS.

Western Australia and South Australia have completed the smallest proportion of quality ratings. The National Law came into effect later in Western Australia, August 2012, while in South Australia a new regulatory authority was set up to do assessment and rating.

Table 5: The number and proportion of approved services with a quality rating by jurisdiction on 31 December 2013

	Number of services with a quality rating	Number of services	Proportion of services with a quality rating
ACT	122	315	39%
NSW	1783	4785	37%
NT	100	208	48%
QLD	783	2666	29%
SA	190	1129	17%
TAS	71	225	32%
VIC	1324	3814	35%
WA	135	974	14%
TOTAL	4508	14 116	32%

Progress of assessment and rating

Table 6 illustrates that the proportion of centre-based services that have been quality rated is slightly higher than the proportion of family day care services.

Table 6: The number and proportion of approved services with a quality rating by service type on 31 December 2013

	Number of services with a quality rating	Number of services	Proportion of services with a quality rating
Centre-based care	4319	13 433	32%
Family day care	189	683	28%
TOTAL	4508	14 116	32%



28% 

increase in completed ratings over Q3 2013

Centre-based services



12% 

increase in completed ratings over Q3 2013

Family day care services

Overall quality ratings of services

The NQS raises the bar on quality for children’s education and care services. Authorised officers from regulatory authorities assess and rate services using the seven quality areas, 18 standards and 58 elements that make up the NQS.

To determine a service’s rating, firstly all 58 elements are assessed as being ‘met’ or ‘not met’. The 18 standards are then rated. If all elements in a standard are met, the standard will be rated as Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS. If one or more elements in the standard are not met, then the standard will be rated as Working Towards NQS.

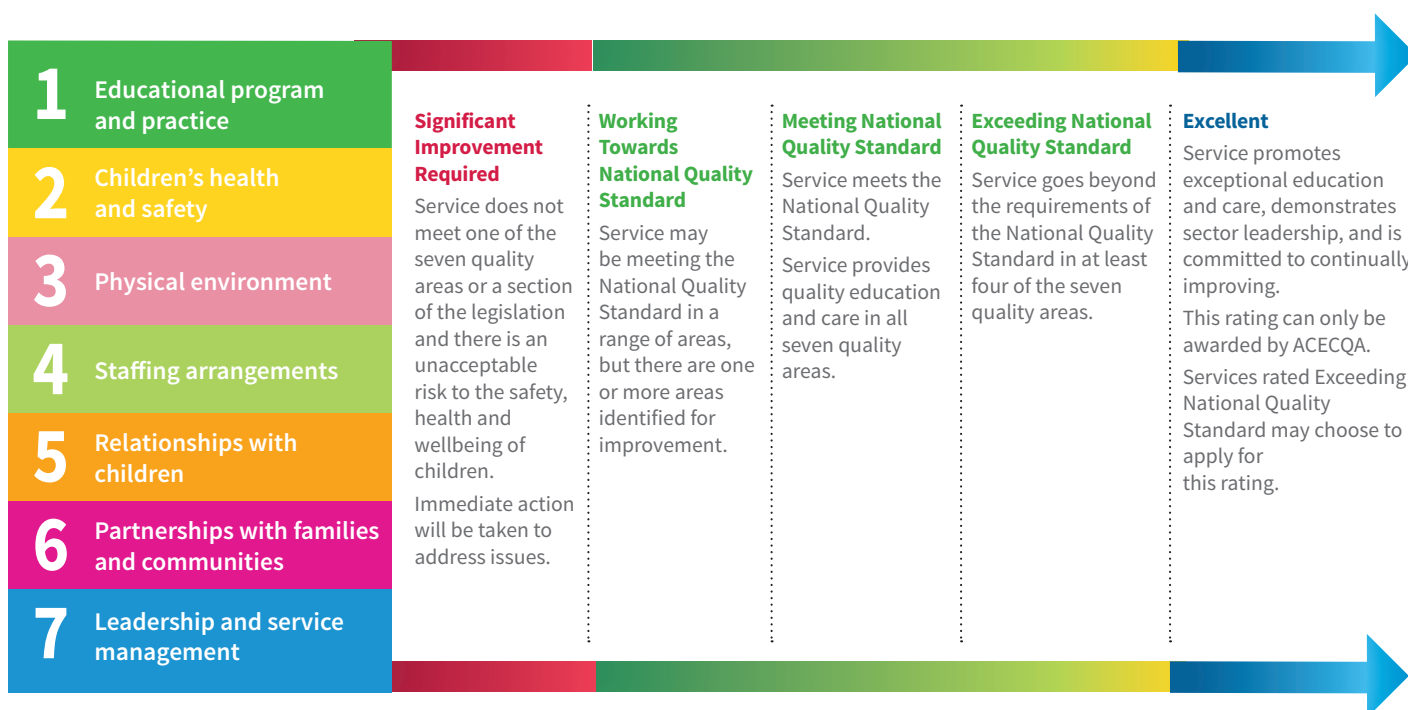
Each quality area is then rated by calculating the rating of all of the standards within the quality area. If a quality area or regulation is not met and poses an unacceptable risk to the health, wellbeing or safety of children, the service will be given a rating of Significant Improvement Required for the quality area and the overall rating. This will usually mean that urgent action is needed to fix the problem.

If one or more standards are rated Working Towards NQS, the service will be given this rating for that quality area and the overall rating. This means that a service could meet all but one of the 58 elements in the NQS and receive an overall rating of Working Towards. This makes it significantly more challenging for services to be rated as Meeting or Exceeding NQS.

If all standards are met, the quality area will be rated as Meeting NQS. If at least two of the standards are rated Exceeding NQS and all other standards are met, the quality area will be rated Exceeding NQS.

Services that receive an overall rating of Meeting NQS can be rated as Meeting in all seven quality areas or have a mix of quality areas rated Meeting and Exceeding. Services receive an overall rating of Exceeding NQS if four or more quality areas are rated as Exceeding, including two of the four following quality areas: Quality Area 1, Quality Area 5, Quality Area 6 and Quality Area 7.

Most services will receive one of the three middle ratings below.



The Excellent rating can only be awarded by ACECQA. Providers with a service that has received an overall rating of Exceeding can apply for this rating. Applications for the Excellent rating opened on 1 May 2013 and six services have been rated Excellent at 31 December 2013.

The services rated are not a representative sample of the total population in each jurisdiction or nationally, so caution should be used when making comparisons between states and territories or drawing conclusions about services yet to be rated. Refer to the technical note at the end of this report for further information.

Overall quality ratings of services

Tables 7 and 8 show that nationally, 59% of assessed and rated services are Meeting (34%) or Exceeding (25%) the NQS. The distribution of overall quality rating results nationally has changed little since the first *Snapshot*. The distribution of ratings suggests the NQS is working as intended for those services that have been quality rated to date, by being achievable and yet still posing a challenge for many providers.

Based on completed quality ratings so far, a greater proportion of services in the Northern Territory (NT), Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Tasmania (Tas) and Western Australia (WA) have received an overall rating of Working Towards NQS. A higher proportion of services in Victoria (Vic) received a rating of Meeting NQS, while higher proportions of services in Queensland (Qld) and South Australia (SA) had more services rated Exceeding NQS. South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales are the only states with services that have been rated as Excellent by ACECQA.

To some degree these differences between jurisdictions will reflect the different approaches that regulatory authorities have taken to scheduling quality rating and the cross-section of services rated. Please see the technical note at the end of this document for further explanation.

Table 7: The number of approved services with a quality rating, by quality rating level and jurisdiction on 31 December 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent rated	TOTAL
ACT	0	77	23	22	0	122
NSW	3	895	578	306	1	1783
NT	0	83	6	11	0	100
QLD	1	253	232	295	2	783
SA	1	71	40	75	3	190
TAS	0	45	11	15	0	71
VIC	1	310	635	378	0	1324
WA	6	77	24	28	0	135
TOTAL	12	1811	1549	1130	6	4508
% of Quality Ratings	0%	40%	34%	25%	0%	100%

Note: Due to rounding, individual values may not add to 100% in all cases, and very small numbers will not be represented in percentages.

Overall quality ratings of services

Table 8: The proportion of approved services with a quality rating by quality rating level and jurisdiction on 31 December 2013

Jurisdiction	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent rated
ACT	0%	63%	19%	18%	0%
NSW	0%	50%	32%	17%	0%
NT	0%	83%	6%	11%	0%
QLD	0%	32%	30%	38%	0%
SA	1%	37%	21%	39%	2%
TAS	0%	63%	15%	21%	0%
VIC	0%	23%	48%	29%	0%
WA	4%	57%	18%	21%	0%
<hr/>					
National Total	0%	40%	34%	25%	0%

Note: Due to rounding, individual values may not add to 100% in all cases, and very small numbers will not be represented in percentages.

Overall quality ratings of services

Tables 9 and 10 show that a significant number of services with a Working Towards NQS rating have only narrowly missed out on being rated as Meeting or Exceeding NQS. A service will receive an overall rating of Working Towards NQS if any of the seven quality areas are rated as Working Towards NQS. A quality area can be rated as Working Towards NQS if just one of the standards within that quality area is rated as Working Towards NQS.

This means that a service can receive an overall rating of Working Towards NQS even though they are Meeting or Exceeding NQS in most standards or quality areas.

For example, Table 9 shows about 35% of all services rated Working Towards NQS are Meeting or Exceeding NQS in at least five of the seven quality areas.

Similarly, Table 10 shows about 76% of services rated Working Towards NQS overall met or exceeded more than half of the 18 standards in the NQS. About 46% of services rated Working Towards NQS met or exceeded all but four of the 18 standards.

This demonstrates that a significant proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS are operating at a high level and are very close to achieving Meeting or Exceeding NQS. It also suggests that the NQS has set a higher benchmark for services and it encourages services to work to continuously improve.

Table 9: The number of approved services with a finalised quality rating of Working Towards NQS by number of quality areas rated Working Towards on 31 December 2013

Number of quality areas Working Towards NQS	Number of services with rating of Working Towards NQS	Proportion of services with rating of Working Towards NQS
1	246	13.6%
2	390	21.5%
3	329	18.2%
4	285	15.7%
5	225	12.4%
6	165	9.1%
7	171	9.4%
TOTAL	1811	100%

Overall quality ratings of services

Table 10: The number of approved services with a finalised quality rating of Working Towards NQS by number of standards rated Working Towards on 31 December 2013

Number of standards rated Working Towards NQS	Number of services with rating of Working Towards NQS	Proportion of services with rating of Working Towards NQS
1-2	420	23.2%
3-4	414	22.9%
5-6	318	17.6%
7-8	222	12.3%
9-10	147	8.1%
More than 10	290	16.0%
TOTAL	1811	100.0%

Overall quality ratings of services

There is a high level of consistency between the distribution of ratings results for centre-based and family day care services, as shown in Table 11.



Working Towards NQS

40%

Meeting NQS

35%

Exceeding NQS

25%

Centre-based care



Working Towards NQS

45%

Meeting NQS

28%

Exceeding NQS

26%

Family day care

Table 11: The number of approved services with a quality rating by quality rating level and service type on 31 December 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent rated	TOTAL
Centre-based care	11	1726	1496	1081	5	4319
Family day care	1	85	53	49	1	189
TOTAL	12	1811	1549	1130	6	4508

Quality area ratings of services

Each education and care service receives an overall rating and a rating for each of the seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard. The seven quality areas are:

- 1** Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice
- 2** Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety
- 3** Quality Area 3 - Physical environment
- 4** Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements
- 5** Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children
- 6** Quality Area 6 - Partnerships with families and communities
- 7** Quality Area 7 - Leadership and service management

Details about each of the seven quality areas can be found on the ACECQA website:

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Quality-Areas>

Tables 12 and 13 display the quality ratings results for each of the seven quality areas at a national level. Nationally, services are more likely to:

- be rated as Meeting or Exceeding NQS in Quality Areas 4 (89%), 5 (86%) and 6 (85%) than Quality Areas 1 (69%), 2 (76%), 3(73%) and 7 (76%)
- be rated as Working Towards NQS or Significant Improvement Required in Quality Areas 1 (31%), 2 (24%), 3 (27%) and 7 (24%) than Quality Areas 4 (11%), 5 (14%) and 6 (15%).

Table 12: The number of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area nationally on 31 December 2013

Rating outcome	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	1058	965	1028	1242	1658	1456	1269
Meeting NQS	2056	2480	2283	2760	2240	2364	2151
Working Towards NQS	1389	1052	1191	502	606	687	1083
Significant improvement required	5	11	6	4	4	1	5
TOTAL	4508	4508	4508	4508	4508	4508	4508

Quality area ratings of services

Table 13: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area nationally on 31 December 2013.

Rating outcome	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	23%	21%	23%	28%	37%	32%	28%
Meeting NQS	46%	55%	51%	61%	50%	52%	48%
Working Towards NQS	31%	23%	26%	11%	13%	15%	24%
Significant improvement required	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note: Due to rounding, individual values may not add to 100% in all cases.

Quality area ratings of services

Tables 14 and 15 show the spread of quality ratings in each quality area for family day care services and centre-based services.

As centre-based services make up the majority of all services, there is little difference between the spread of the quality area ratings for centre-based services specifically and the overall results in Table 11. However, when the spread of the quality area ratings for family day care services are compared to centre-based services, it appears that family day care services are more likely to achieve Meeting or Exceeding NQS in Quality Areas 4, 5 and 6, but less likely to achieve Meeting or Exceeding NQS in Quality Area 1.

Table 14: The number of approved family day care services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	27	41	38	66	71	76	81
Meeting NQS	88	102	92	107	98	83	67
Working Towards NQS	73	45	58	15	20	30	40
Significant improvement required	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	189	189	189	189	189	189	189

Table 15: The number of approved centre-based care services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	1031	924	990	1176	1587	1380	1188
Meeting NQS	1968	2378	2191	2653	2142	2281	2084
Working Towards NQS	1316	1007	1133	487	586	657	1043
Significant improvement required	4	10	5	3	4	1	4
TOTAL	4319	4319	4319	4319	4319	4319	4319

Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA)

SEIFA is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas according to socio-economic advantage and disadvantage based on census data. ACECQA has applied the SEIFA tool to the NQA ITS data on 31 December 2013 to provide insights and analysis on the socio-economic distribution of centre-based services under the NQF. This index has only been applied to centre-based services.

The Index of Relative Disadvantage element of the SEIFA tool has been applied to data, identifying areas with lower educational attainment, people in low-skilled occupations, low employment and other indicators of disadvantage.

The scale of this index runs from one (representing the most disadvantaged areas) to 10 (the least disadvantaged areas).

The number of approved centre-based services that have been quality rated are fairly evenly distributed across socio-economic disadvantage. Table 16 shows that services in more disadvantaged areas are slightly more likely to be quality rated, with quality rated services in the three most disadvantaged areas on the scale making up 37% of all quality rated centre-based services.

Table 16: The number and proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage on 31 December 2013

	Number of centre-based services with a quality rating	Number of centre-based services	Proportion of centre-based services with a quality rating
10 (Least disadvantaged)	332	1217	27%
9	309	1261	25%
8	338	1241	27%
7	414	1263	33%
6	405	1297	31%
5	380	1283	30%
4	499	1413	35%
3	506	1340	38%
2	563	1515	37%
1 (Most disadvantaged)	532	1516	35%
N/A (inc. FDC)	230	770	30%
TOTAL	4508	14 116	32%

Note: The Not Applicable row includes all family day care services, as their educators do not have a single location, plus a small number of centre-based services without an exact location in the NQA ITS.

Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA)

Tables 17 and 18 show the number and proportion of quality rated centre-based services by quality rating and SEIFA index of relative disadvantage. For services rated to date, socio-economic advantage and disadvantage has minimal effect on the spread of quality ratings. When viewed by overall quality level, there is no clear pattern emerging between socio-economic advantage and quality.

Table 17: The number of approved services by quality rating and SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage on 31 December 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent rated	TOTAL
10 (Least disadvantaged)	0	136	99	103	0	338
9	1	119	115	83	0	318
8	1	119	141	89	0	350
7	1	178	126	128	0	433
6	0	162	152	103	1	418
5	1	162	122	108	1	394
4	0	212	188	119	0	519
3	1	231	166	135	0	533
2	3	236	235	119	2	595
1 (Most disadvantaged)	4	233	195	134	2	568
N/A (inc FDC)	0	23	10	9	0	42
TOTAL	12	1811	1549	1130	6	4508

Note: The Not Applicable row includes all family day care services, as their educators do not have a single location, plus a small number of centre-based services without an exact location in the NQA ITS.

Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA)

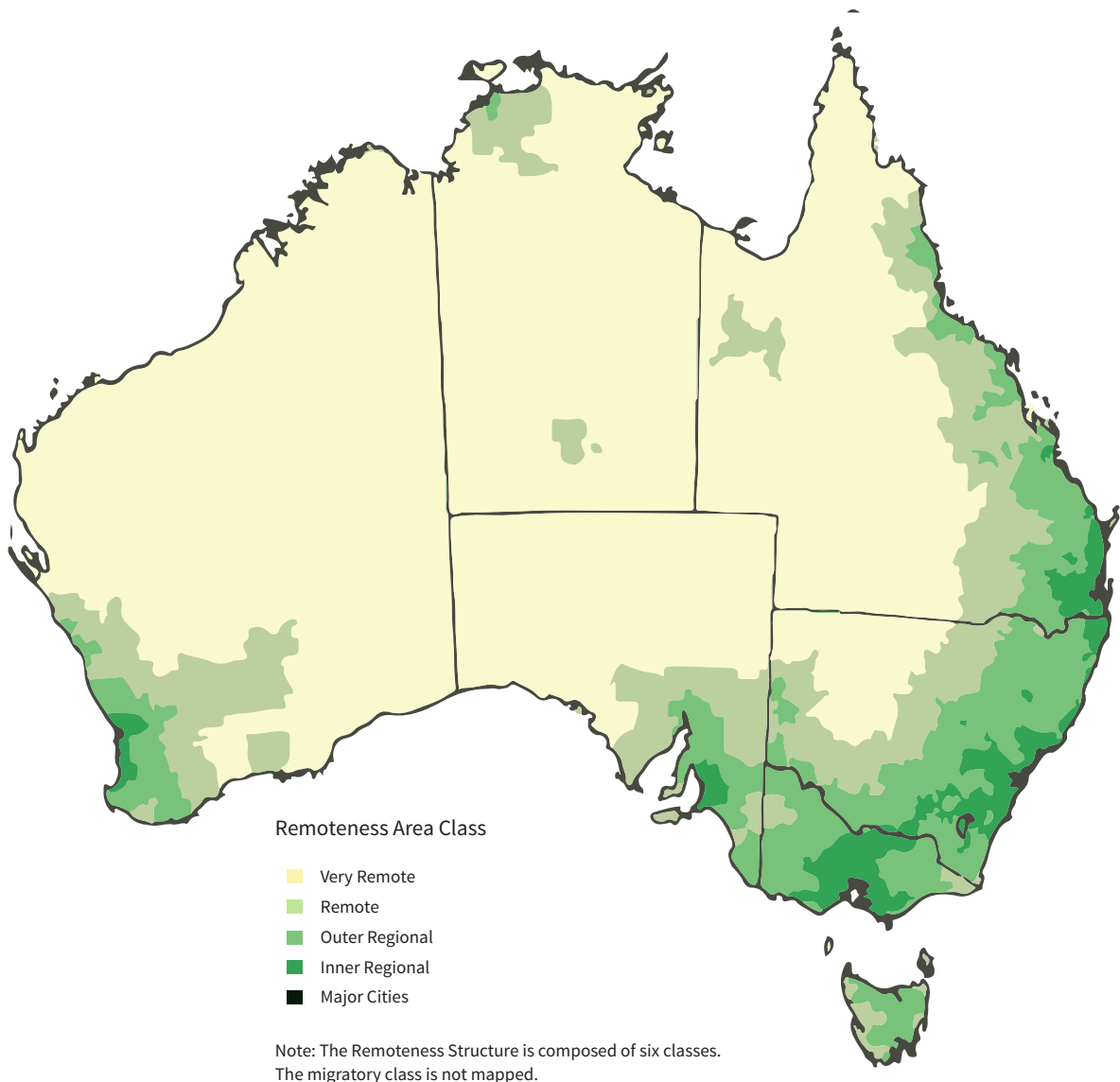
Table 18: The proportion of approved services by quality rating and SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage on 31 December 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent rated	TOTAL
10 (Least disadvantaged)	0%	40%	29%	30%	0%	100%
9	0%	37%	36%	26%	0%	100%
8	0%	34%	40%	25%	0%	100%
7	0%	41%	29%	30%	0%	100%
6	0%	39%	36%	25%	0%	100%
5	0%	41%	31%	27%	0%	100%
4	0%	41%	36%	23%	0%	100%
3	0%	43%	31%	25%	0%	100%
2	1%	40%	39%	20%	0%	100%
1 (Most disadvantaged)	1%	41%	34%	24%	0%	100%
N/A (inc. FDC)	0%	55%	24%	21%	0%	100%

Note: Due to rounding, individual values may not add to 100% in all cases, and very small numbers will not be represented in percentages. The Not Applicable row includes all family day care services, as their educators do not have a single location, plus a small number of centre-based services without an exact location in the NQA ITS.

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)

The ARIA+ index is a geographical approach to defining remoteness in Australia. The index has been applied to NQA ITS data on 31 December 2013 to show the distribution of approved centre-based services with a quality rating by remoteness classification. This index has only been applied to centre-based services.



Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)

Table 19 shows the distribution of approved services with a quality rating by remoteness classification (ARIA+). Almost two-thirds of all quality rated centre-based services are in major cities. However, there has been a substantial increase in the number of centre-based services that have been quality rated in very remote areas. The number of very remote centre-based services to be rated has increased by 57% on the previous quarter (when standardised against actual growth in the number of services).

Table 19: The number and proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by remoteness classification (ARIA+) on 31 December 2013

	Number of services with a quality rating	Number of services	Proportion of services with a quality rating
Major cities of Australia	2774	9433	29%
Inner regional Australia	954	2371	40%
Outer regional Australia	475	1222	39%
Remote Australia	58	209	28%
Very remote Australia	34	154	22%
N/A (inc. FDC)	213	727	29%
TOTAL	4508	14 116	32%

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)

Analysis of the number and proportion of approved services with a quality rating using the measure of remoteness (ARIA+) finds that remoteness may have minimal effect on the spread of quality ratings. With only a small number of services in remote and very remote areas quality rated, it is too early to make comparisons about the spread of ratings between services in remote/very remote locations, major cities and inner and outer regional areas.

Table 20: The number of approved services by quality rating by remoteness classification (ARIA+) on 31 December 2013

	Major Cities of Australia	Inner Regional Australia	Outer Regional Australia	Remote Australia	Very Remote Australia	N/A (inc. FDC)
Significant improvement required	9	1	2	0	0	0
Working Towards NQS	1197	357	194	32	18	13
Meeting NQS	953	389	173	17	12	5
Exceeding NQS	720	256	134	9	5	6
Excellent rated	6	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2885	1003	503	58	35	24

Table 21: The proportion of approved services by quality rating by remoteness classification (ARIA+) on 31 December 2013

	Major Cities of Australia	Inner Regional Australia	Outer Regional Australia	Remote Australia	Very Remote Australia	N/A (inc. FDC)
Significant improvement required	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Working Towards NQS	41%	36%	39%	55%	51%	54%
Meeting NQS	33%	39%	34%	29%	34%	21%
Exceeding NQS	25%	26%	27%	16%	14%	25%
Excellent rated	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Due to rounding, total values may not add to 100% in all cases, and very small numbers will not be represented in percentages.

Waivers

Waivers play an important role in helping providers maintain their level of service to families while adjusting to the NQF or dealing with unexpected events.

There may be situations where, despite the best intentions, providers are unable to meet certain requirements in relation to physical environment or staffing arrangements either on a permanent or temporary basis. Under the National Law education and care providers are able to apply for two types of waivers. Providers apply to the regulatory authority in their state or territory for consideration of a waiver.

Service waivers – service waivers have no specified expiry date. Where a service waiver is in force the education and care service is taken to comply with the element(s) of the NQS and National Regulations specified in the service waiver. A service waiver does not affect a service’s assessment and rating against the NQS and can be revoked by the regulatory authority either at its discretion or on receipt of an application from an approved provider.

Temporary waivers – temporary waivers apply for no more than 12 months. Where a temporary waiver is in force the education and care service is not required to comply with the element(s) of the NQS and National Regulations specified in the temporary waiver. Temporary waivers must specify the period for which the waiver applies and providers may apply to the regulatory authority to extend the period of a temporary waiver by periods of not more than 12 months. A temporary waiver does not affect a service’s assessment and rating against the NQS.

On 31 December 2013, 4.9% (695) of approved education and care services across Australia were operating with waivers. In the previous quarter, 4.8% of services were operating with a waiver.

Table 22 shows of the 432 services with temporary waivers, 95.8% are for staff. For services with a service waiver, 82.8% are for physical environment.

The high percentage of temporary waivers for staffing is indicative of the nature of recruitment as a service may apply for a temporary waiver while they are recruiting to fill a position. In contrast, physical environment standards may involve an ongoing issue that cannot be rectified but can be met by other means.

Tables 23 and 24 illustrate the spread of waiver types between jurisdictions. Overall New South Wales has the most waivers, followed by Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria.

Western Australia has the highest proportion of services with a waiver followed by Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. Although New South Wales and Queensland have issued the highest numbers of waivers, proportionally their jurisdictions have the least amount of waivers in place.

The number and proportion of Tasmania’s waivers have greatly reduced in the last quarter compared to previous quarters. A large proportion of Tasmania’s waivers in previous quarters was due to a transitional regulation (regulation 347 of the National Regulations) that required more qualified educators than the National Law. The number of waivers in Tasmania now align more closely with other jurisdictions as the transitional regulation was superseded by new qualification requirements from 1 January 2014.

A waiver can only be issued if children’s safety, health and well-being is not compromised or at risk.

Table 22: The number of services with waivers by waiver category and waiver type on 31 December 2013

	Service	Temporary	Both	TOTAL
Physical	212	18	1	231
Staff	44	414	0	458
Both	0	0	6	6
TOTAL	256	432	7	695

Waivers

Table 23: The number of approved services with any waiver by jurisdiction and waiver type on 31 December 2013

	Service	Temporary	Both	TOTAL
ACT	3	21	1	25
NSW	119	149	4	272
NT	0	21	0	21
QLD	64	63	2	129
SA	0	39	0	39
TAS	6	11	0	17
VIC	59	20	0	79
WA	5	108	0	113
TOTAL	256	432	7	695

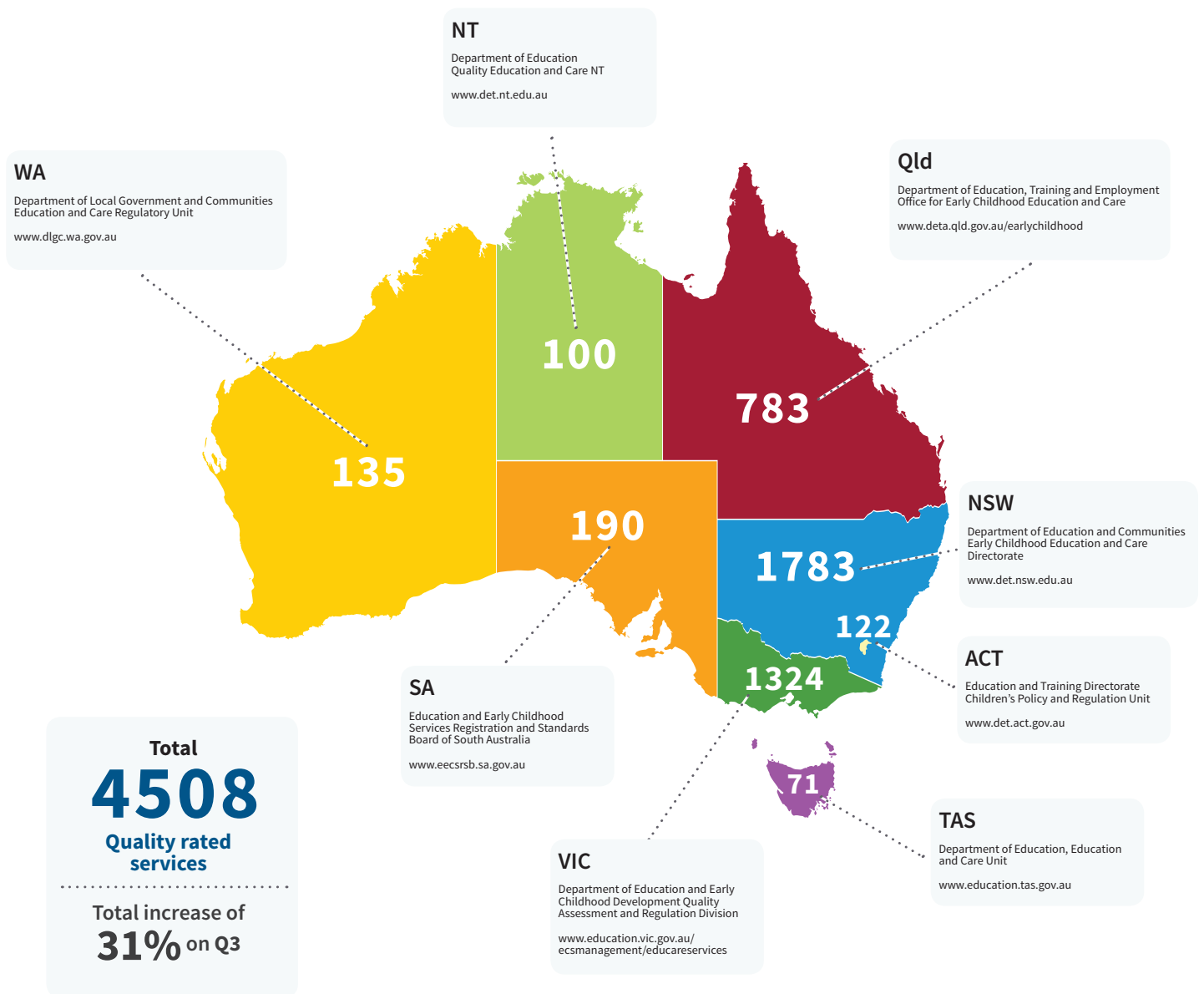
Table 24: The number and proportion of approved services with any waiver by jurisdiction and waiver category on 31 December 2013

	Physical	Staff	Both	TOTAL	Total number of services	Proportion of services with a waiver
ACT	4	20	1	25	315	7.9%
NSW	122	147	3	272	4785	5.7%
NT	0	21	0	21	208	10.1%
QLD	73	54	2	129	2666	4.8%
SA	2	37	0	39	1129	3.5%
TAS	5	12	0	17	225	7.6%
VIC	19	60	0	79	3814	2.1%
WA	6	107	0	113	974	11.6%
TOTAL	231	458	6	695	14 116	4.9%

National summary

A comparison between ratings in quality areas across jurisdictions is presented in Tables 25-32. The figures show some differences between jurisdictions, however, caution should be taken when making any comparisons. Some regulatory authorities have rated only a small number of services and the services rated are not a representative sample of the total population in each jurisdiction or nationally. The way that regulatory authorities have chosen services to assess and rate has also varied between jurisdictions. Refer to the technical note at the end of the report for further information.

Figure 3: The number of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013 (Nationally)



Australian Capital Territory summary

On 31 December 2013 the Australian Capital Territory had:

- 315 approved services, comprising 308 centre-based care services and seven family day care services
- 1353 supervisor certificates issued
- 122 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 77 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 23 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 22 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
- 25 approved services with a waiver

Table 25: The number of ACT approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

- Exceeding NQS
- Meeting NQS
- Working Towards NQS
- Significant improvement required



An increase of **33%** on Q3

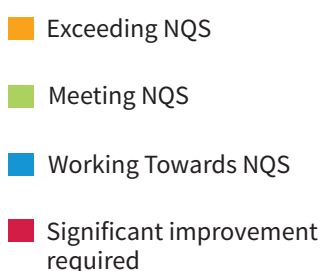
Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	0	73	33	16	122
QA2	0	39	63	20	122
QA3	0	66	39	17	122
QA4	0	16	71	35	122
QA5	0	35	45	42	122
QA6	0	51	45	26	122
QA7	0	37	55	30	122

New South Wales summary

On 31 December 2013 New South Wales had:

- 4785 approved services, comprising 4574 centre-based care services and 211 family day care services
- 20 865 supervisor certificates issued
- 1783 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 3 approved services with a quality rating of Significant Improvement Required
 - 895 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 578 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 306 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
 - 1 approved service with an Excellent rating
- 272 approved services with a waiver

Table 26: The number of NSW approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013



An increase of **27%** on Q3

Quality Area		Quality Area			Total
QA1	1	642	826	314	1783
QA2	2	559	964	258	1783
QA3	1	593	894	295	1783
QA4	2	255	1127	399	1783
QA5	1	281	1017	484	1783
QA6	0	316	1002	465	1783
QA7	1	544	876	362	1783

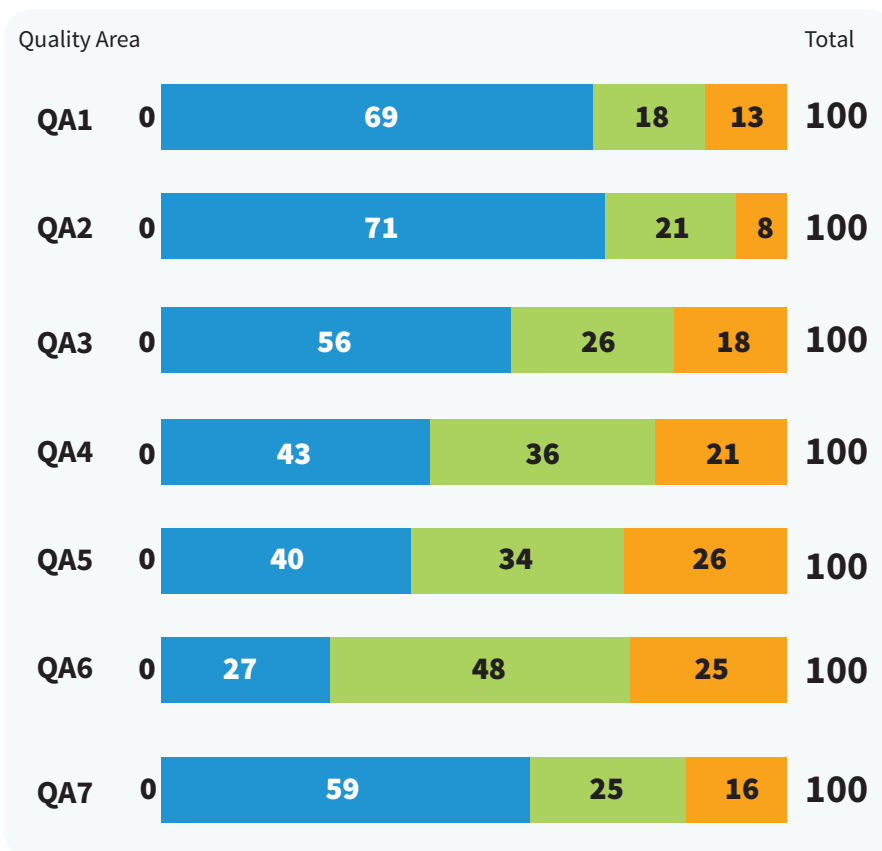
Northern Territory summary

On 31 December 2013 the Northern Territory had:

- 208 approved services, comprising 203 centre-based care services and five family day care services
- 751 supervisor certificates issued
- 100 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 83 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 6 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 11 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
- 21 approved services with a waiver

Table 27: The number of NT approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

- Exceeding NQS
- Meeting NQS
- Working Towards NQS
- Significant improvement required

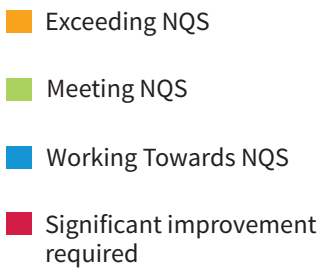


Queensland summary

On 31 December 2013 Queensland had:

- 2666 approved services, comprising 2556 centre-based care services and 110 family day care services
- 19 730 supervisor certificates issued
- 783 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 1 approved service with a quality rating of Significant Improvement Required
 - 253 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 232 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 295 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
 - 2 approved services with an Excellent rating
- 129 approved services with a waiver

Table 28: The number of Qld approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013



An increase of
17% on Q3

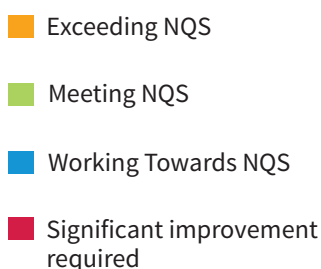
Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	0	210	356	217	783
QA2	1	140	318	324	783
QA3	0	184	363	236	783
QA4	0	63	371	349	783
QA5	0	110	297	376	783
QA6	0	136	329	318	783
QA7	0	149	291	343	783

South Australia summary

On 31 December 2013 South Australia had:

- 1129 approved services, comprising 1101 centre-based care services and 28 family day care services
- 7344 supervisor certificates issued
- 190 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 1 approved service with a quality rating of Significant Improvement Required
 - 71 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 40 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 75 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
 - 3 approved services with an Excellent rating
- 39 approved services with a waiver

Table 29: The number of SA approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013



Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	0	64	53	73	190
QA2	1	35	106	48	190
QA3	0	52	80	58	190
QA4	0	13	122	55	190
QA5	1	15	66	108	190
QA6	0	36	78	76	190
QA7	0	50	67	73	190

Tasmania summary

On 31 December 2013 Tasmania had:

- 225 approved services, comprising 213 centre-based care services and 12 family day care services
- 1219 supervisor certificates issued
- 71 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 45 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 11 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 15 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
- 17 approved services with a waiver

Table 30: The number of approved TAS services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

- Exceeding NQS
- Meeting NQS
- Working Towards NQS
- Significant improvement required



An increase of
29% on Q3

Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	0	34	28	9	71
QA2	0	30	25	16	71
QA3	0	34	25	12	71
QA4	0	13	34	24	71
QA5	0	18	34	19	71
QA6	0	21	25	25	71
QA7	0	30	18	23	71

Victoria summary

On 31 December 2013 Victoria had:

- 3814 approved services, comprising 3547 centre-based care services and 267 family day care services
- 18 512 supervisor certificates issued
- 1324 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 1 approved service with a quality rating of Significant Improvement Required
 - 310 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 635 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 378 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
- 79 approved services with a waiver

Table 31: The number of approved VIC services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

- Exceeding NQS
- Meeting NQS
- Working Towards NQS
- Significant improvement required



An increase of **28%** on Q3

Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	0	229	705	390	1324
QA2	1	127	933	263	1324
QA3	1	143	807	373	1324
QA4	1	74	924	325	1324
QA5	0	76	687	561	1324
QA6	0	59	782	483	1324
QA7	0	173	767	384	1324

Western Australia summary

On 31 December 2013 Western Australia had:

- 974 approved services, comprising 931 centre-based care services and 43 family day care services
- 4871 supervisor certificates issued
- 135 approved services with a quality rating including:
 - 6 approved services with a quality rating of Significant Improvement Required
 - 77 approved services with a quality rating of Working Towards NQS
 - 24 approved services with a quality rating of Meeting NQS
 - 28 approved services with a quality rating of Exceeding NQS
- 113 approved services with a waiver

Table 32: The number of WA approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area on 31 December 2013

- Exceeding NQS
- Meeting NQS
- Working Towards NQS
- Significant improvement required



An increase of **56%** on Q3

Quality Area	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Total
QA1	4	68	37	26	135
QA2	6	51	50	28	135
QA3	4	63	49	19	135
QA4	1	25	75	34	135
QA5	2	31	60	42	135
QA6	1	41	55	38	135
QA7	4	41	52	38	135

Glossary of terms



Approved service

Under the National Quality Framework an approved provider must apply for and be granted a service approval for each education and care service it wants to operate. There are two types of approved services under the National Quality Framework:

- Centre-based service: which includes long day care, preschool or kindergarten and outside school hours care services
- Family day care service: where a number of educators formally linked to an education and care service provide education and care to children in residences or venues.

Approved provider

An approved provider is a person who holds a provider approval. Obtaining a provider approval is a prerequisite to operating one or more approved education and care services and is valid in all jurisdictions.

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)

ARIA+ was jointly developed by the National Centre for the Social Applications of Geographical Information Systems (GISCA) and the Australian Department of Health and Ageing in 1999 as a geographical approach to defining remoteness. Socio-economic, urban/rural and population size factors are not considered for incorporation into the measure. The most widely used ARIA product is ARIA+ based on road distance measurements from over 12,000 populated localities to the nearest Services Centres in five size categories based on population size.

Centre-based service

A centre-based service is an education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services that are delivered at a centre.

Glossary of terms

Education and care service

An education and care service is any service providing or intended to provide education and care on a regular basis to children under 13 years of age other than a service that is excluded under the National Law or Regulations. Education and care services include most long day care, family day care, preschool or kindergarten and outside school hours care services across Australia.

Educator

An educator is an individual who provides education and care for children as part of an education and care service.

Family day care educator

A family day care educator is an educator engaged by or registered with a family day care service to provide education and care for children in a residence or at an approved family day care venue.

Family day care service

A family day care service is an education and care service delivered through two or more educators to provide education and care for children in residences, whether or not the service also provides education and care to children at a place other than a residence. They are sometimes known as family day care schemes and they are typically administered and supported by central coordination units.

Index of Relative Disadvantage

This statistics tool is used to identify areas with lower educational attainment, people in low-skilled occupations, low employment and other indicators of disadvantage. The scale of the index runs from one (most disadvantaged areas) to 10 (least disadvantaged areas).

Jurisdiction

A state or territory in Australia.

Long day care

A centre-based form of children's education and care, operating at least 48 weeks per year and typically at least 8 hours per day Monday to Friday. Most children will be aged 0-6 but some school age care is often provided.

National Law

The National Quality Framework operates under an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschools/kindergartens in Australia.

National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS)

The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) is an online business tool that allows educators and providers to submit application and notification forms online. It is also the national business system that captures data about the National Quality Framework and children's education and care in Australia.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

The National Quality Framework (NQF) raises quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian education and care services. Established in 2012, the NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, preschool/ kindergarten and outside school hours care services. All Australian governments have agreed to implement the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school care services in Australia. As the NQF progresses, every service in the country will be assessed against the new quality standard.

Glossary of terms

National Regulations

The National Quality Framework and associated regulatory system is enacted through legislation establishing the national system. The Education and Care Services National Regulations support the legislation and provide detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Education and care provided for school aged children before and/or after school during the school term. Vacation care may also be included in this category. Vacation care services operates for school children during the school holidays.

Preschool/Kindergarten

A centre based form of children's education and care service, typically operating during school terms and during school hours and attended by children either 1 or 2 years prior to school entry.

Quality areas

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQS consists of seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements that children's education and care services are assessed and rated against. The seven quality areas are:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's Health and Safety
- Physical Environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management.

Quality ratings

Ratings promote transparency and accountability and help parents assess the quality of education and care services available. Every service receives a rating for each quality area and an overall rating. These ratings must be displayed by each service and are published on the ACECQA website. There are five rating levels within the national quality rating and assessment process:

- Excellent rating, awarded by ACECQA
- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required

Region

Regions of Australia are classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2011. This classification divides each state and territory into several regions on the basis of their relative access to services.

Glossary of terms

Regulatory authority

Each state and territory in Australia has a regulatory authority that regulates and assesses children's education and care services. Regulatory authorities in each state and territory are responsible for carrying out the quality rating of services under the National Quality Standard.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

SEIFA is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas according to socio-economic advantage and disadvantage based on census data. The census variables are used to cover a number of areas including household income, education, employment, occupation, housing and other indicators of advantage and disadvantage. The scale of the Index of Relative Disadvantage runs from one (most disadvantaged areas) to 10 (least disadvantaged areas).

Supervisor certificate

A supervisor certificate is an approval issued to a person who is eligible to be placed in day-to-day charge of an approved service.

Waivers

Regulatory authorities may grant waivers to services on a temporary (temporary waiver) or ongoing basis (service waiver). Waivers enable services to gain exemption from certain physical environment and staffing requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

- Service waivers have no specified expiry date. Where a service waiver is in force, the education and care service is taken to comply with the element(s) of the NQS and National Regulations specified in the service waiver.
- Temporary waivers apply for no more than 12 months. While a temporary waiver is in force, the education and care service is not required to comply with the element(s) of the NQS and National Regulations specified in the temporary waiver.



1. Not all approved services which transitioned from former regulatory schemes into the NQF have approvals entered in the NQA ITS, and therefore the total number of approved services in this *Snapshot* is likely to be understated in some jurisdictions.
2. The children's education and care services that have been quality rated and included in this *Snapshot* were selected for quality rating by regulatory authorities based on one, or a combination of the following considerations specific to each jurisdiction:
 - Service type (Long Day Care, Preschool/Kindergarten, Out of School Hours Care, Family Day Care), so that in some jurisdictions some service types have been prioritised for quality assessment ahead of others
 - Last National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) accreditation date of each service (where relevant)
 - Last license renewal or visit date (where relevant)
 - The resources available to regulatory authorities
 - Providers that have been most prepared and engaged with the quality rating process, for example, the first group of services rated in Western Australia volunteered to take part due to the later commencement of the legislation.
3. The implication of quality rating services based on these particular attributes is that quality rating data are not representative of all education and care services nation-wide. Therefore, it is inadvisable to draw conclusions about education and care services that are yet to be quality rated based on those that have been rated to date.



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Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

ACECQA is an independent national authority, based in Sydney. It is led by CEO Karen Curtis and guided by a governing Board whose members were nominated by each state and territory and the Commonwealth. Board members serve three year terms.

As the name suggests, one of ACECQA's many roles is to educate and inform the wider community about the importance of improving outcomes in children's education and care. We also provide governments, the sector and families with access to the most current research to ensure NQF policy and service delivery is in line with best practice across the country.

ACECQA guides the implementation of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care nationally and ensures consistency in delivery.



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