



# NQF Snapshot

## Q1 2020



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority

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

May 2020

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# Overview

NQF Snapshot Q1 2020 is ACECQA's 29<sup>th</sup> national report on children's education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

It provides analysis and information on the profile of the sector and the quality ratings of services against the National Quality Standard (NQS).

A revised version of the NQS commenced on 1 February 2018. The number of quality standards has reduced from 18 to 15, and the number of quality elements has reduced from 58 to 40.

The changes streamline the NQS and reduce overlap between elements and standards. Analysis at the standard and element level uses quality ratings against the 2018 NQS only, while analysis at the overall and quality area level uses all current quality ratings against both the 2012 and 2018 NQS.

An [interactive online version of the Snapshot](#), which includes additional analysis, is available on the ACECQA website.

The data presented in this Snapshot was taken from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) on 1 April 2020 for the period ending 31 March 2020.

Due to rounding, individual percentages in the tables and figures may not add up to 100%.

**Note:** The majority of data in this report covers the period prior to the escalation of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Australia.

On 2 April 2020, Education Ministers [announced](#) four critical areas for time-limited regulatory action including the suspension of assessment and ratings.

Other changes include waiving fees and charges for COVID19-related applications, fast-tracking qualification waivers, and making rapid operational adjustments as required. Regulatory Authorities will continue to apply child safety as the primary consideration in regulatory decisions. Ministers noted that fast-tracking qualification and operational requirement waivers is subject to there being no increased risk to the safety of children and staff.

Up-to-date information about services that are open during the COVID-19 outbreak and information for families is available on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://www.startingblocks.gov.au).

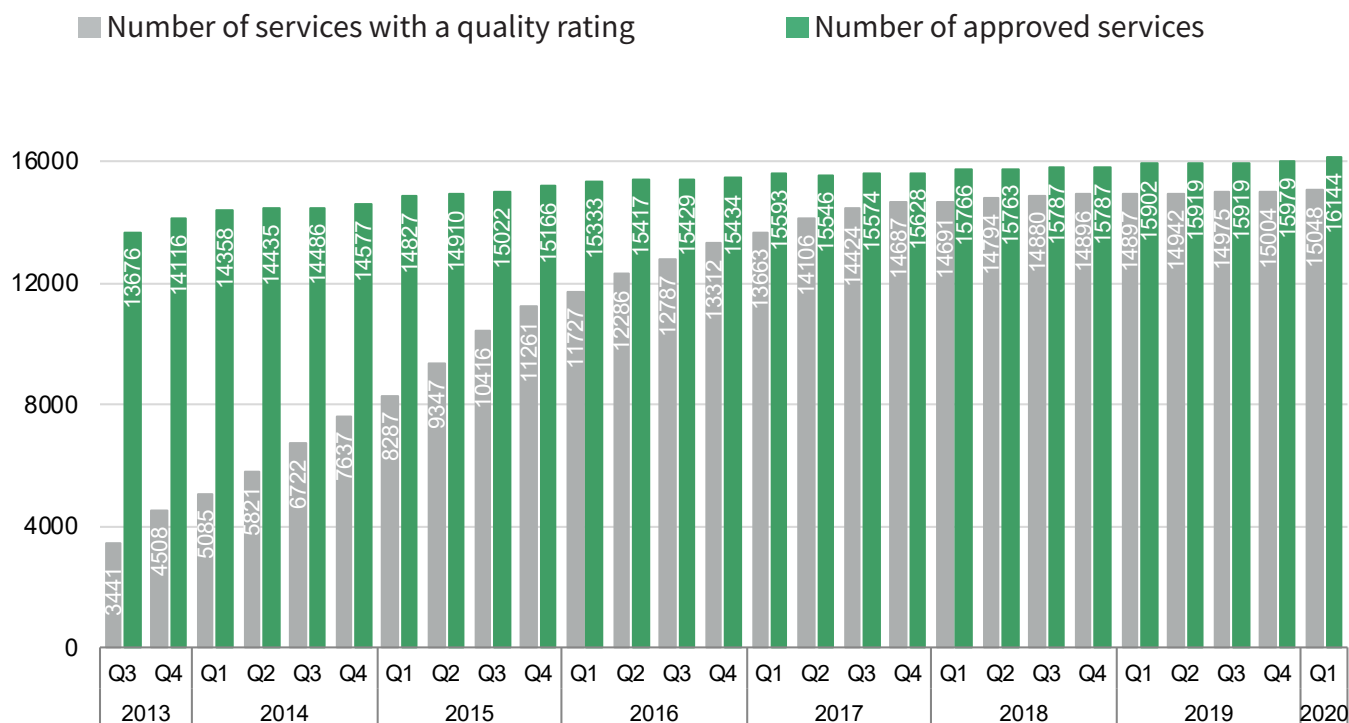
Information, support and guidance about COVID-19 for the children's education and care sector is available on the [ACECQA website](#).



# Snapshot highlights

<b>16,144</b>	children's education and care services approved to operate under the NQF
<b>15,048 (93%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>12,099 (80%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b> of Meeting NQS or above
<b>7279</b>	<b>providers</b> approved to operate
<b>5924 (81%)</b>	<b>providers</b> approved to operate only one service
<b>42</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA <sup>1</sup>
<b>10,583</b>	<b>quality rating reassessments</b> completed
<b>65%</b>	of services rated Working Towards NQS improved their overall <b>quality rating at reassessment</b>
<b>7351 (46%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b> against the 2018 NQS

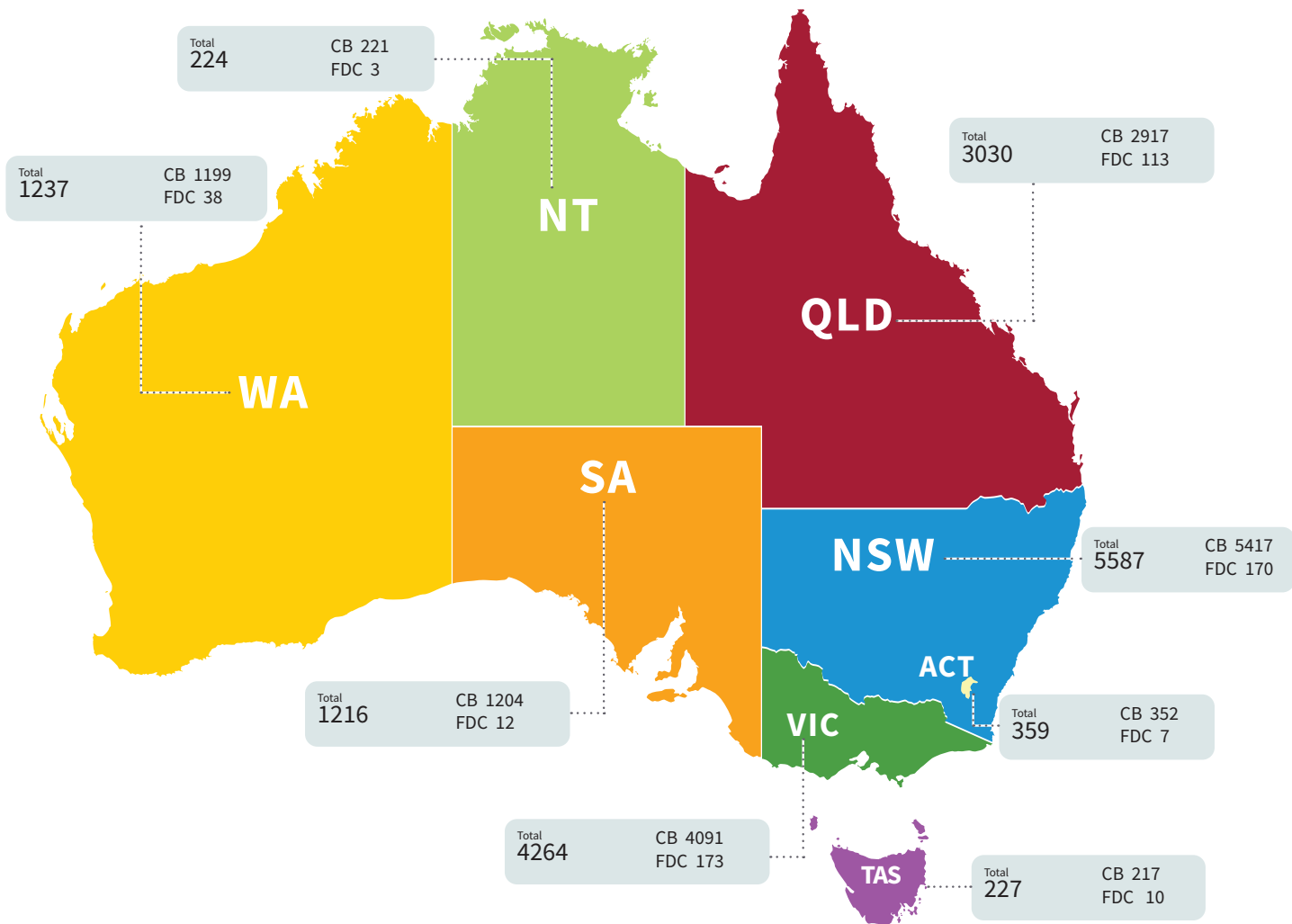
Figure 1: Number of approved services and number of services with a quality rating by quarter



<sup>1</sup> The Excellent rating is awarded for a period of three years. Unless a reapplication for the Excellent rating is received, a service's rating will revert back to Exceeding NQS after this three year period. The Snapshot includes the current number of Excellent rated services.

# Profile of the sector

Figure 2: Number of approved services by jurisdiction and service type



<p>Total Centre-based (CB) <sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>15,618 (97%)</b></p> <p>2% Increase on Q1 2019</p>	<p>Total Family day care (FDC) <sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>526 (3%)</b></p> <p>15% Decrease on Q1 2019</p>	<p><b>Total</b></p> <p><b>16,144</b></p> <p>2% Increase on Q1 2019</p>
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<sup>1</sup> A 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 out of scope of the NQF, as well as other services that aren't regulated under the National Law.

<sup>2</sup> A family day care service is an education and care service delivered through a network of educators operating from residences and other approved venues. They are sometimes known as family day care schemes and they are administered and supported by central coordination units.

Figure 3: Proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above by overall rating and quality area

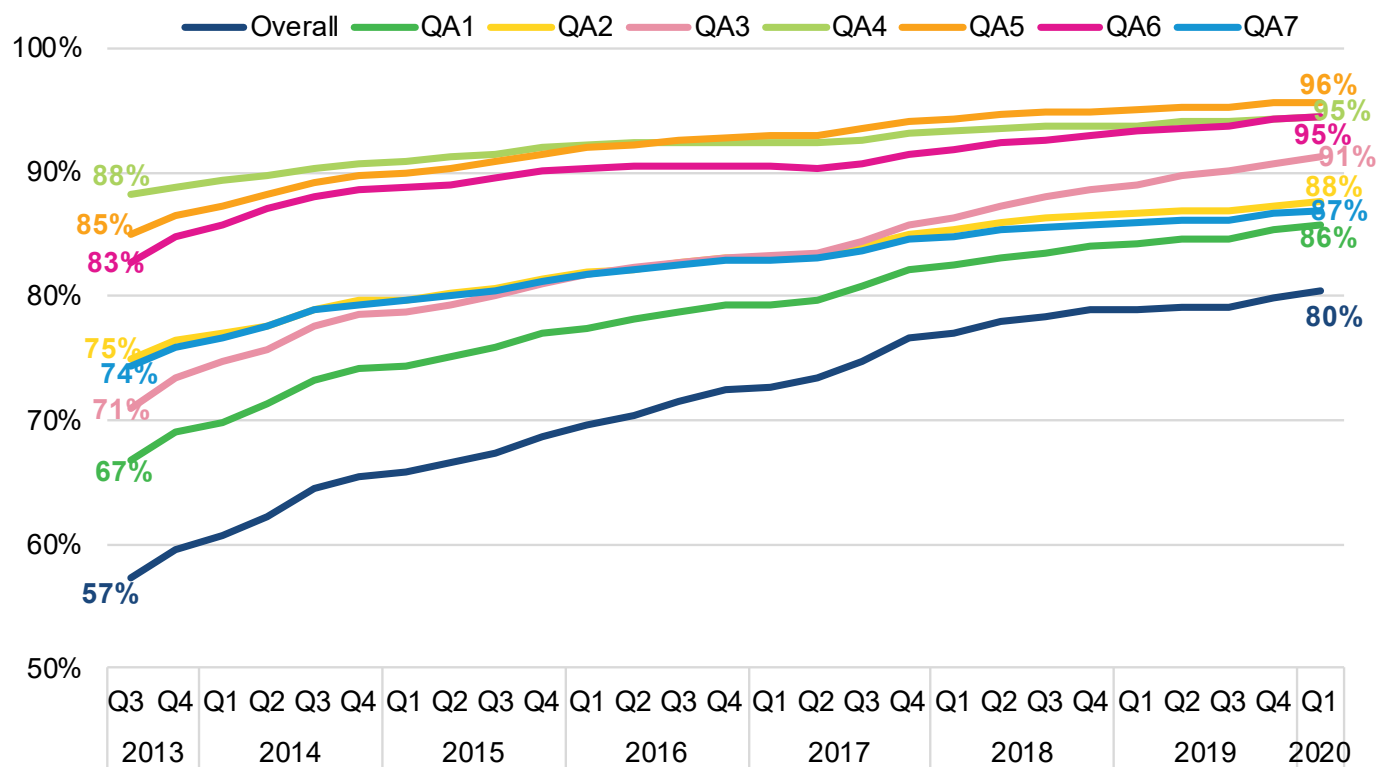


Figure 4: Proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS or above by overall rating and quality area

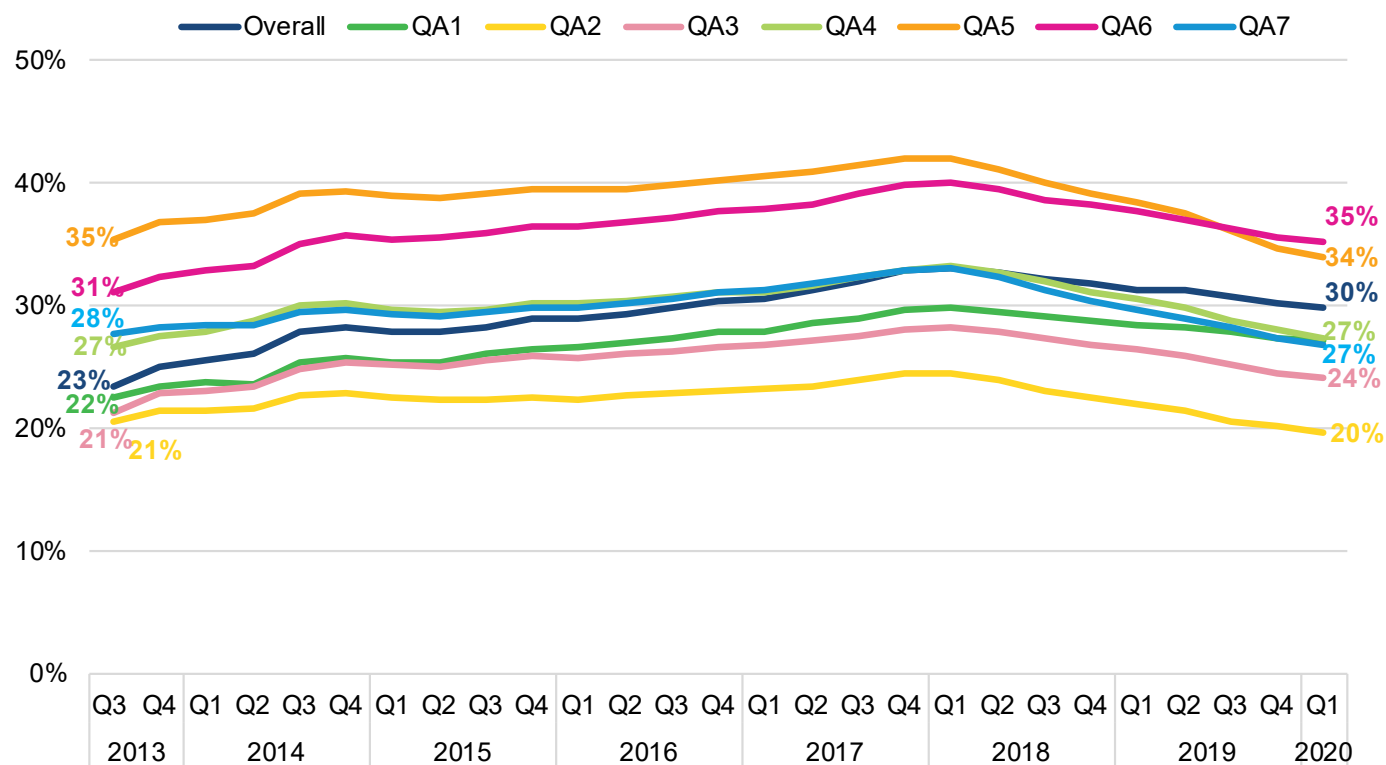


Figure 5: Proportion of services by service sub-type and jurisdiction <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

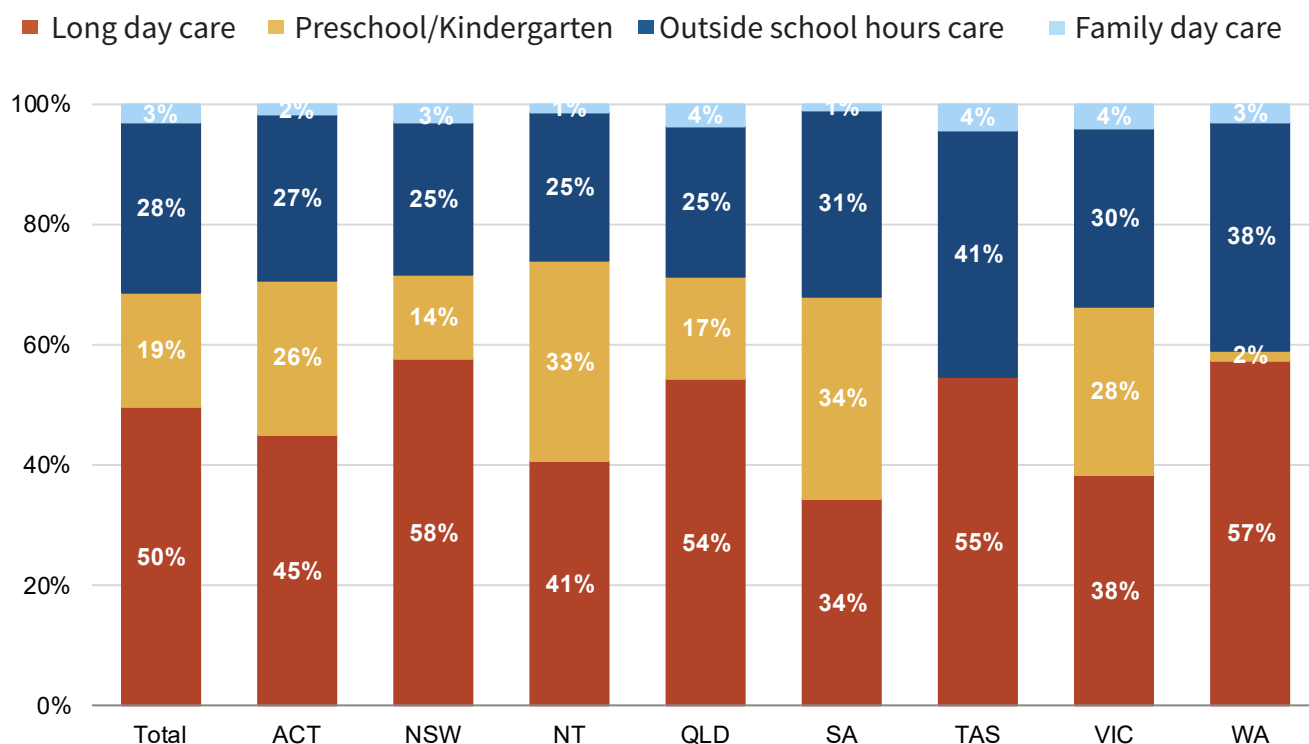


Table 1: Number of services by service sub-type and jurisdiction

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/ Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	7	162	92	98	0	359
NSW	170	3226	771	1420	0	5587
NT	3	90	74	55	2	224
QLD	113	1643	517	756	1	3030
SA	12	417	410	377	0	1216
TAS	10	124	0	93	0	227
VIC	173	1639	1184	1268	0	4264
WA	38	710	20	468	1	1237
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>8011</b>	<b>3068</b>	<b>4535</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16,144</b>

1 NQA ITS data collected on service sub-type is self-reported by providers when applying for service approval, and providers may choose multiple service sub-types. For example, a service providing both long day care and outside school hours care, or one providing both long day care and preschool/kindergarten.

2 Providers are not required to notify changes to this information, and therefore this NQA ITS information may not be current.

3 Centre-based services offering more than one type of service are classified as follows: services which provide long day care in addition to any other service type are classified as long day care services; services which provide preschool/kindergarten as well as outside school hours care are classified as preschool/kindergarten services; services which provide outside school hours care only are classified as outside school hours care services.

4 Excludes preschool/kindergarten services operating in Tasmania and Western Australia that are out of scope of the NQF, as well as other services that aren't regulated under the National Law.

5 Four services categorised as 'Other' excluded for graphical purposes.

Figure 6: Proportion of services by provider management type <sup>1,2,3</sup>

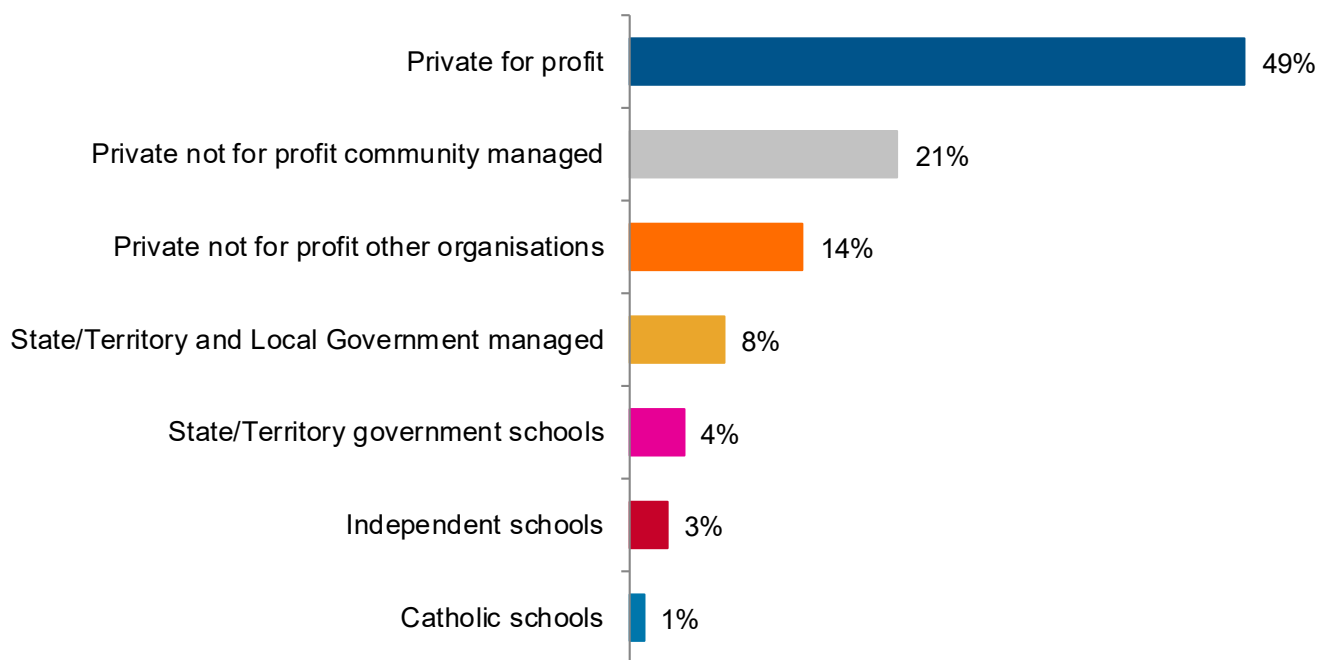


Table 2: Number and proportion of services by provider management type

Provider management type	Number of services	Proportion of services
Private for profit	7862	49%
Private not for profit community managed	3433	21%
Private not for profit other organisations	2214	14%
State/Territory and Local Government managed	1226	8%
State/Territory government schools	707	4%
Independent schools	496	3%
Catholic schools	191	1%
Not stated/Other	15	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,144</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> NQA ITS data collected on provider management type is self-reported by providers when applying for provider approval. Providers are not required to notify changes to this information, and therefore this NQA ITS information may not be current.

<sup>2</sup> Provider management type classifications are available at Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) [National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Data Collection Guide, 2013](#) (Cat. No. 4240.0.55.002).

<sup>3</sup> 15 services categorised as 'Not stated/Other' excluded for graphical purposes.



Figure 7 shows that 81% of approved providers operate a single service while 1% of approved providers operate 25 or more services.

**Figure 7: Proportion of approved providers by size**

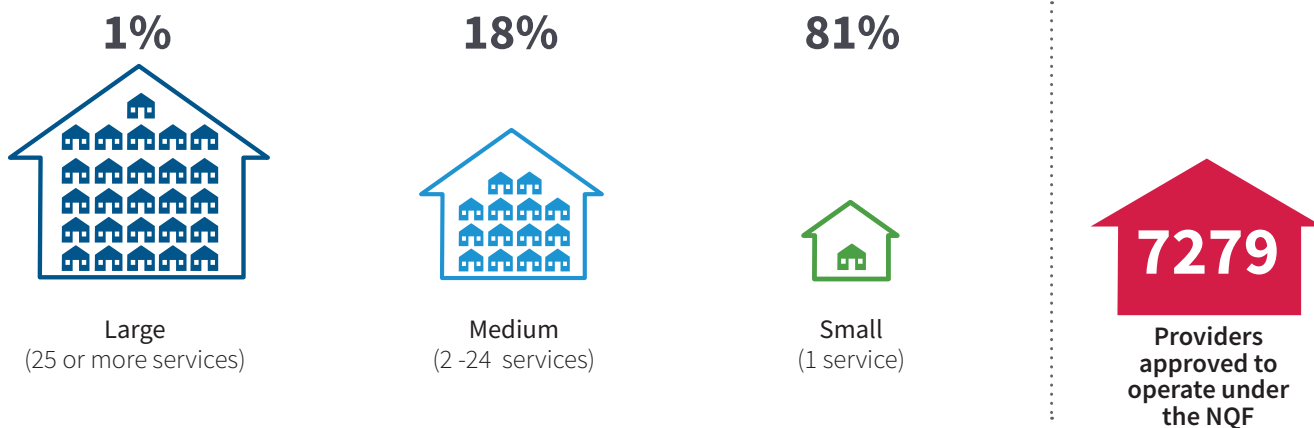
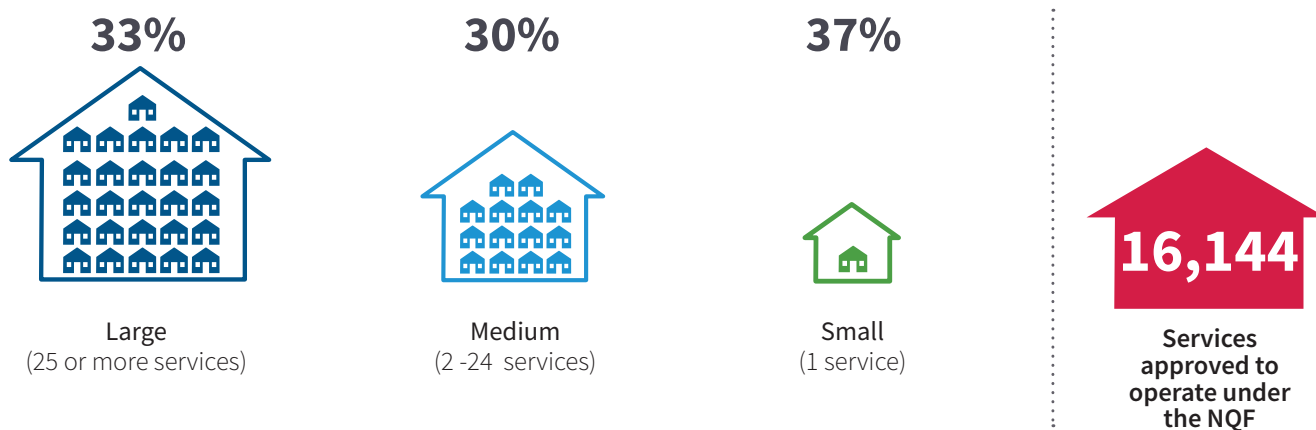


Figure 8 shows that 37% of approved services are operated by small approved providers while 33% of approved services are operated by large approved providers.

**Figure 8: Proportion of approved services by provider size**



# Progress of assessment and rating

Table 3 includes all approved services. The proportion of services with a quality rating will not reach 100% at any one time because a small proportion of services will only recently have been approved and may not have started operating or may have only been operating for a short period of time. In general, state and territory regulatory authorities will not assess and rate newly approved services which have been operating for less than 9-12 months.

**Table 3: Quality ratings by jurisdiction**

	Number of services	Proportion of all services	Number of services with a quality rating	Proportion of services with a quality rating
ACT	359	2%	324	90%
NSW	5587	35%	5161	92%
NT	224	1%	215	96%
QLD	3030	19%	2848	94%
SA	1216	8%	1146	94%
TAS	227	1%	218	96%
VIC	4264	26%	4025	94%
WA	1237	8%	1111	90%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,144</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,048</b>	<b>93%</b>

**Table 4: Number of services with a quality rating by service sub-type and jurisdiction**

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/ Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	5	144	89	86	0	324
NSW	154	2994	753	1260	0	5161
NT	3	87	73	50	2	215
QLD	102	1538	488	719	1	2848
SA	12	372	401	361	0	1146
TAS	10	120	0	88	0	218
VIC	143	1530	1162	1190	0	4025
WA	31	643	20	416	1	1111
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>7428</b>	<b>2986</b>	<b>4170</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15,048</b>

# Quality improvement

Table 5 presents a service's previous overall rating alongside its reassessed overall rating. For example, 2403 services previously rated Working Towards NQS improved their rating to Meeting NQS after reassessment. While 1610 services previously rated Working Towards NQS received the same rating again after reassessment.

**Table 5: Reassessments by overall quality rating<sup>1</sup>**

		Rating after reassessment				Total
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	19	56	11	0	86
	Working Towards NQS	28	1610	2403	678	4719
	Meeting NQS	3	711	2355	628	3697
	Exceeding NQS	1	236	795	1049	2081
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2613</b>	<b>5564</b>	<b>2355</b>	<b>10,583</b>

		Rating after reassessment				Improvement rate
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	22%	65%	13%	0%	78%
	Working Towards NQS	1%	34%	51%	14%	65%
	Meeting NQS	0%	19%	64%	17%	17%
	Exceeding NQS	0%	11%	38%	50%	-

<sup>1</sup> Reassessments include the following processes described in the National Law: i. Partial reassessment and re-rating requested by provider; ii. Partial reassessment and re-rating instigated by the regulatory authority; iii. Full reassessment and re-rating requested by provider; iv. Full reassessment and re-rating instigated by the regulatory authority.

# Overall quality ratings

Authorised officers from state and territory regulatory authorities assess and rate services using the seven quality areas, 15 standards and 40 elements that make up the NQS. Services are given a rating for each of the seven quality areas and an overall rating.

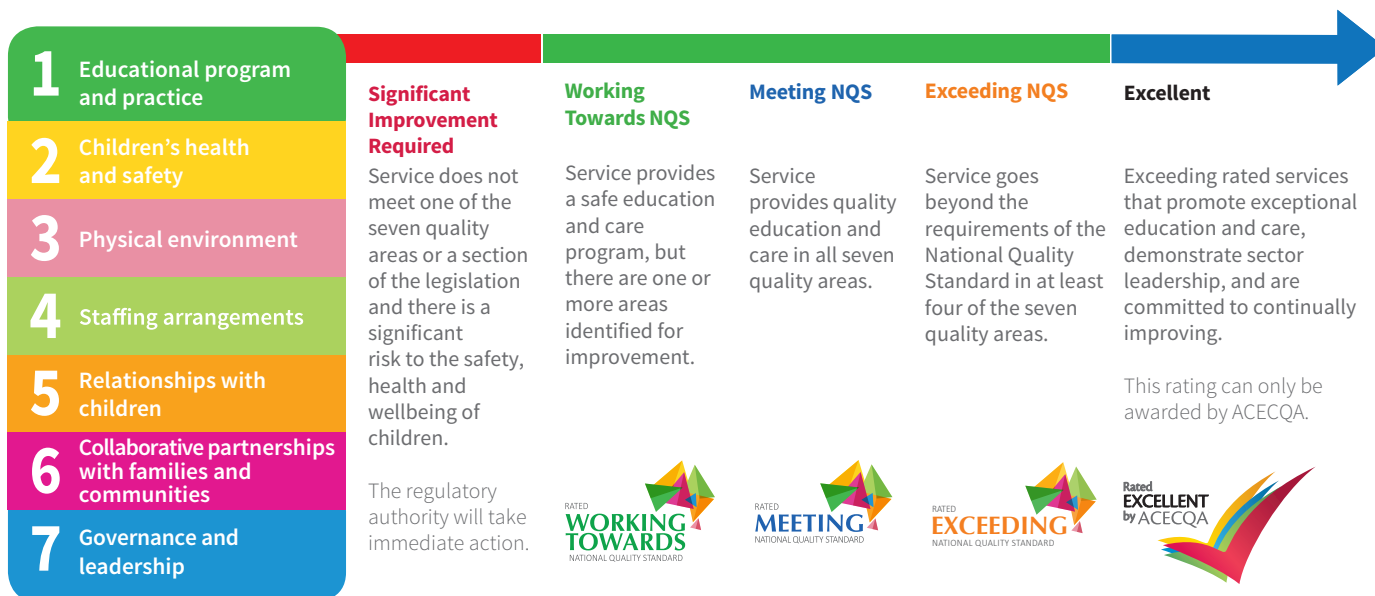


Table 6: Overall quality ratings by jurisdiction

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total
ACT	1	77 24%	88 27%	156 48%	2	324
NSW	4	1271 25%	2565 50%	1307 25%	14	5161
NT	0	61 28%	117 54%	36 17%	1	215
QLD	1	393 14%	1599 56%	848 30%	7	2848
SA	0	172 15%	416 36%	550 48%	8	1146
TAS	2	61 28%	87 40%	68 31%	0	218
VIC	1	588 15%	2153 53%	1273 32%	10	4025
WA	0	317 29%	591 53%	203 18%	0	1111
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2940 20%</b>	<b>7616 51%</b>	<b>4441 30%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>15,048</b>

Figure 9: Overall quality ratings by service type

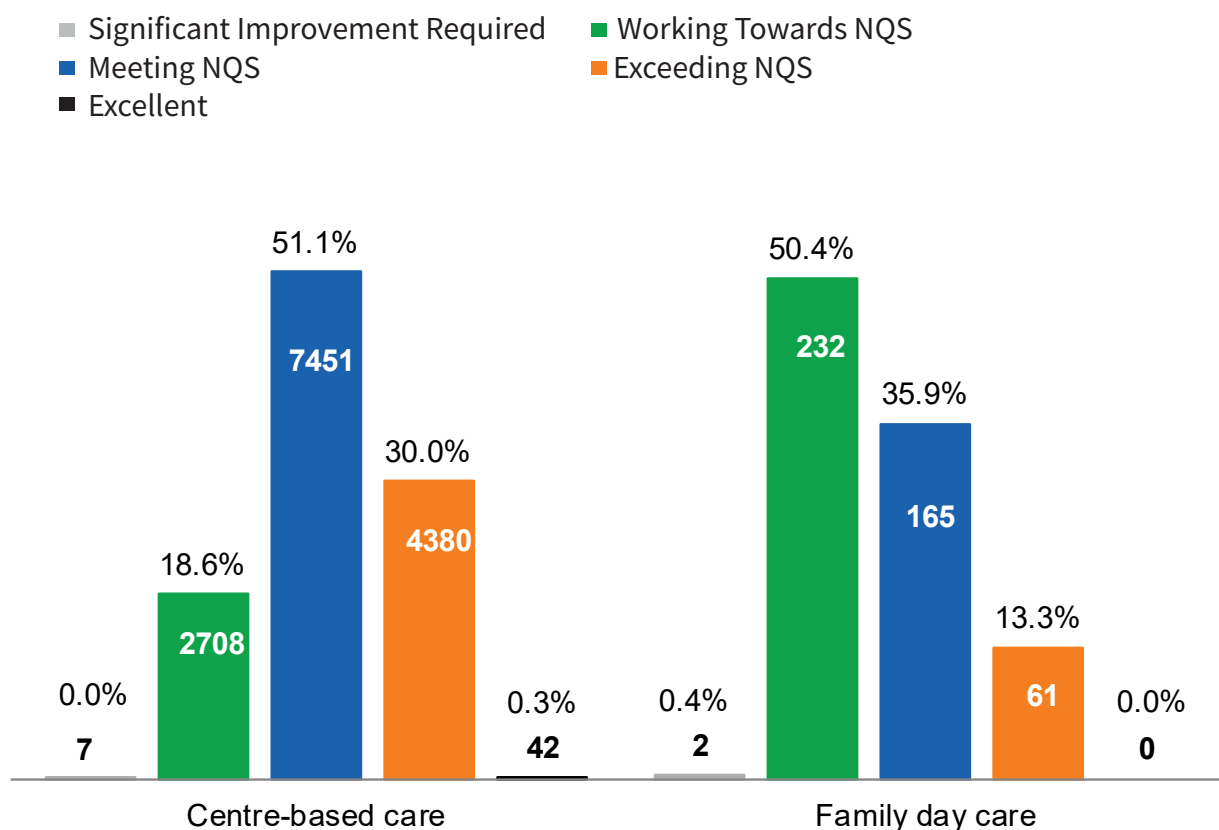


Figure 10: Overall quality ratings by centre-based service sub-type

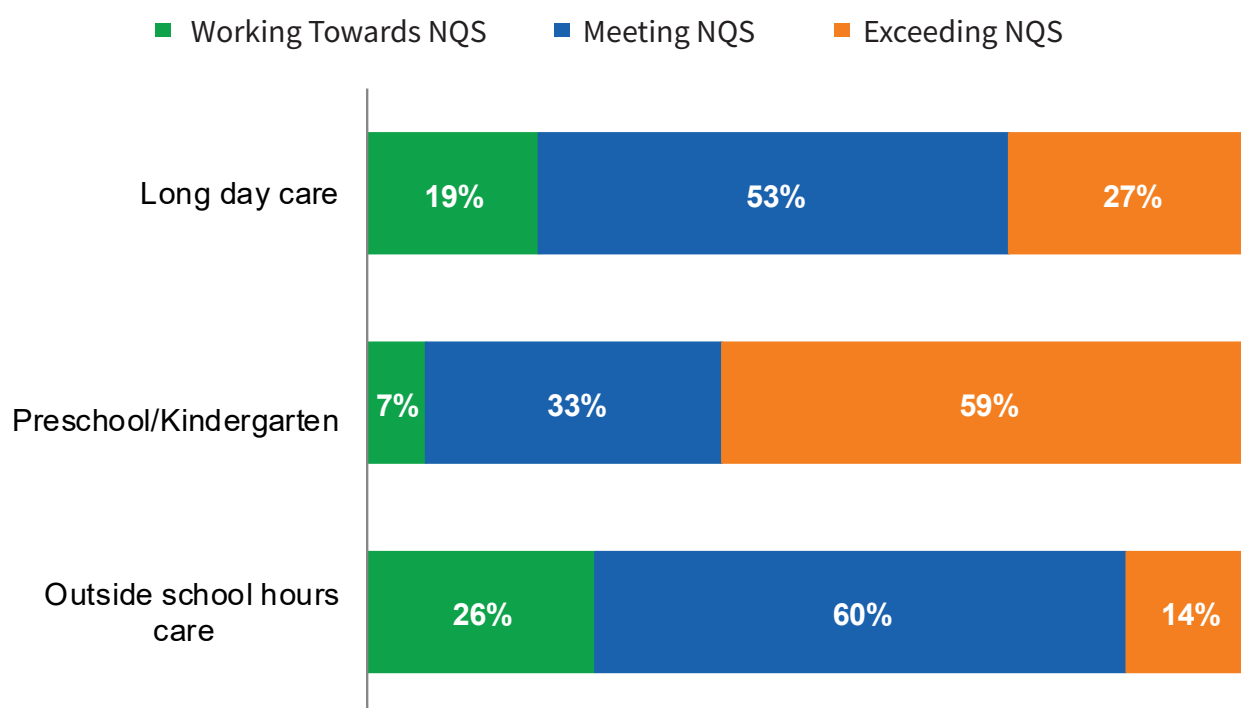
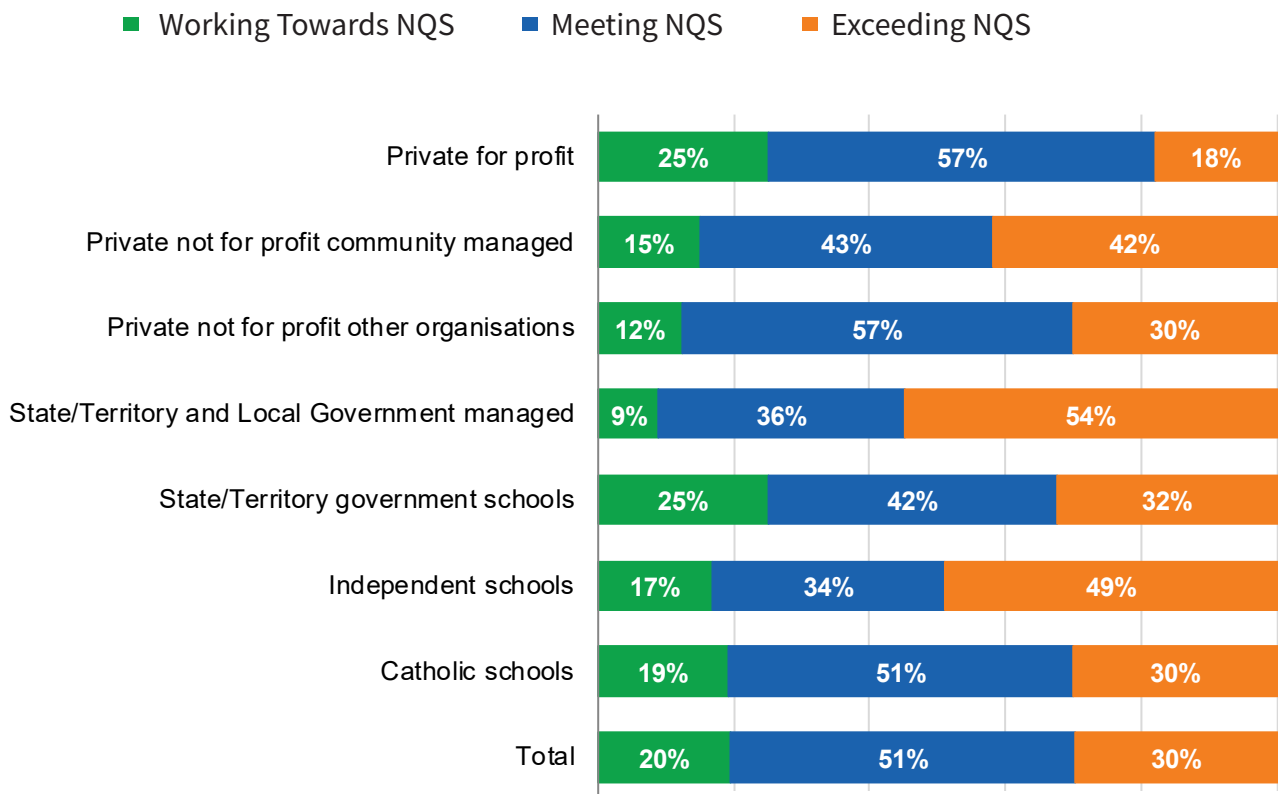


Figure 11 shows the variation in spread of quality ratings between provider management types.

These differences can reflect a range of contextual factors, such as the service profile of these provider types. For example, half of all 'State/Territory and Local Government managed' services are preschools/kindergartens, with preschools/kindergartens performing better against the NQS than other service types (see Figure 10). In contrast, preschools/kindergartens make up only 1% of 'Private for profit' services.

**Figure 11: Overall quality ratings by provider management type<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> 15 providers categorised as 'Not stated/Other' excluded for graphical purposes.

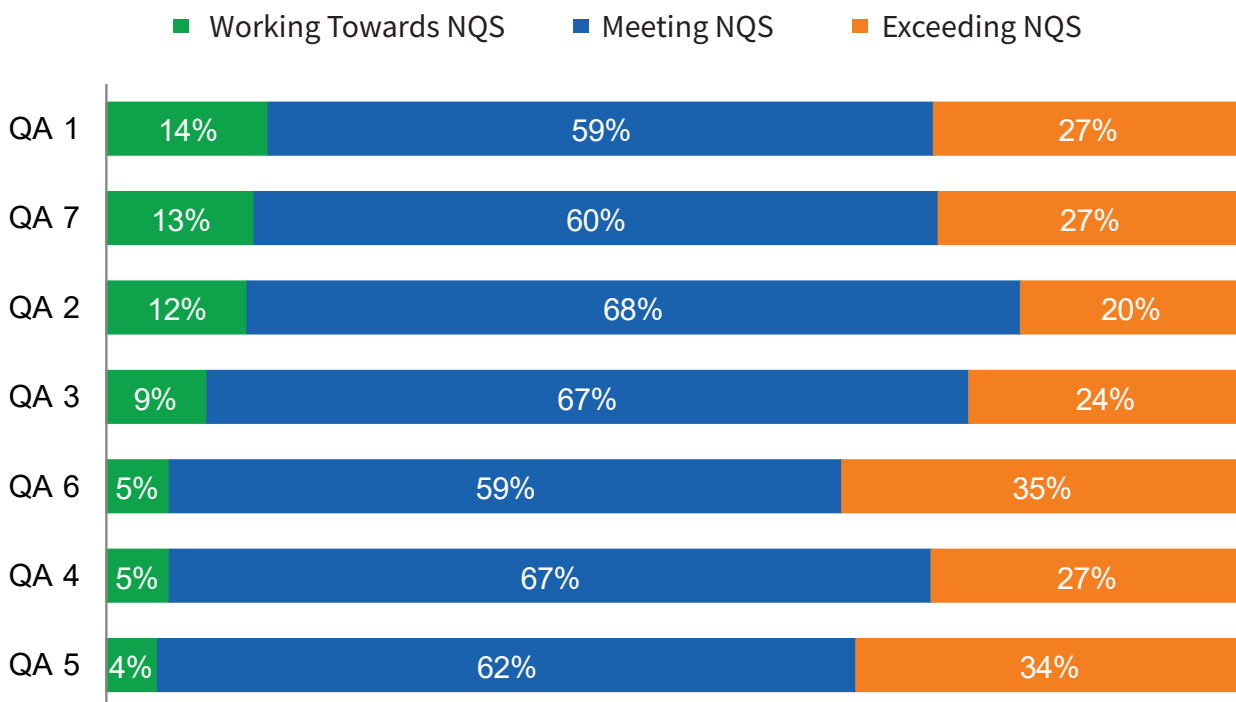
# Quality area ratings

Table 7 and Figure 12 rank the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the number and proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Table 7: Quality area ratings

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS
Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice	0	2145	8816	4087
Quality Area 7 - Governance and leadership	9	1958	9043	4038
Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety	8	1854	10,236	2950
Quality Area 3 - Physical environment	2	1313	10,105	3628
Quality Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	0	826	8917	5305
Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements	0	826	10,103	4119
Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children	1	661	9279	5107

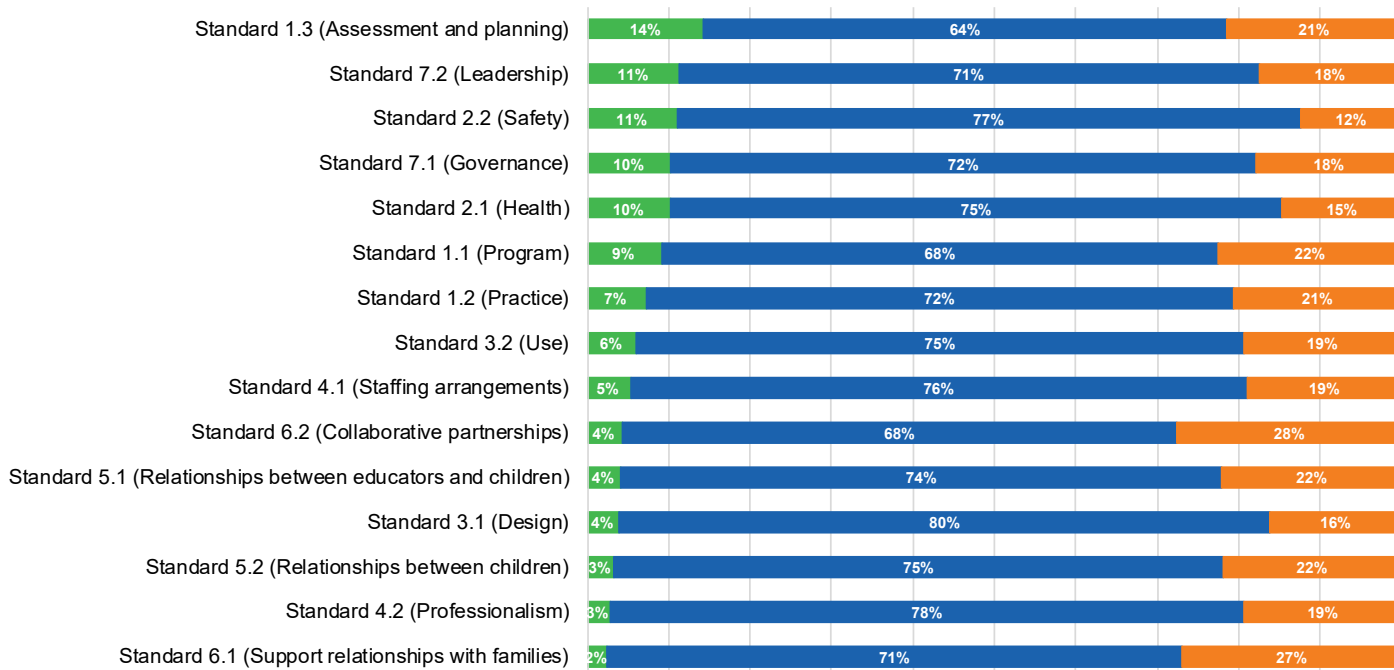
Figure 12: Quality area ratings



# Standard level ratings under the 2018 NQS

Figure 13 ranks the 15 standards of the 2018 NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each standard.

Figure 13: Standard level ratings under the 2018 NQS





# Element level results under the 2018 NQS

Table 8 ranks the 40 elements of the 2018 NQS in descending order, based on the proportion of services that do not meet each element.

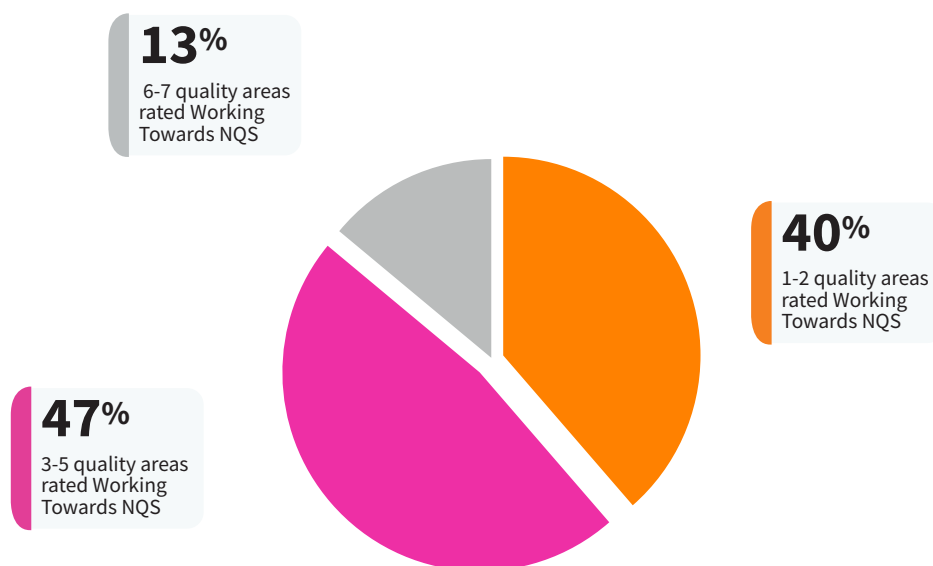
**Table 8: Element level results under 2018 NQS**

	% Not Met		% Not Met
1.3.1 (Assessment and planning cycle)	11.9%	5.2.2 (Self-regulation)	3.1%
1.3.2 (Critical reflection)	11.4%	3.1.2 (Upkeep)	3.1%
7.1.2 (Management systems)	8.9%	6.2.3 (Community engagement)	3.1%
2.1.2 (Health practices and procedures)	8.4%	7.1.1 (Service philosophy and purpose)	2.9%
7.2.2 (Educational leadership)	7.4%	2.1.3 (Healthy lifestyle)	2.8%
2.2.1 (Supervision)	7.3%	7.1.3 (Roles and responsibilities)	2.7%
7.2.3 (Development of professionals)	7.0%	3.2.2 (Resources support play-based learning)	2.7%
1.1.3 (Program learning opportunities)	6.8%	2.2.3 (Child protection)	2.5%
2.2.2 (Incident and emergency management)	5.4%	5.1.1 (Positive educator to child interactions)	2.4%
4.1.1 (Organisation of educators)	4.9%	4.2.2 (Professional standards)	2.1%
1.2.2 (Responsive teaching and scaffolding)	4.3%	2.1.1 (Wellbeing and comfort)	1.9%
1.1.1 (Approved learning framework)	4.3%	6.2.2 (Access and participation)	1.9%
7.2.1 (Continuous improvement)	4.3%	3.1.1 (Fit for purpose)	1.7%
1.1.2 (Child-centred)	4.2%	6.2.1 (Transitions)	1.4%
1.2.3 (Child directed learning)	4.2%	4.2.1 (Professional collaboration)	1.4%
3.2.3 (Environmentally responsible)	3.9%	6.1.3 (Families are supported)	1.4%
1.2.1 (Intentional teaching)	3.8%	6.1.1 (Engagement with the service)	1.2%
1.3.3 (Information for families)	3.5%	6.1.2 (Parent views are respected)	1.1%
5.1.2 (Dignity and rights of the child)	3.2%	5.2.1 (Collaborative learning)	1.0%
3.2.1 (Inclusive environment)	3.1%	4.1.2 (Continuity of staff)	1.0%

# Services rated Working Towards NQS

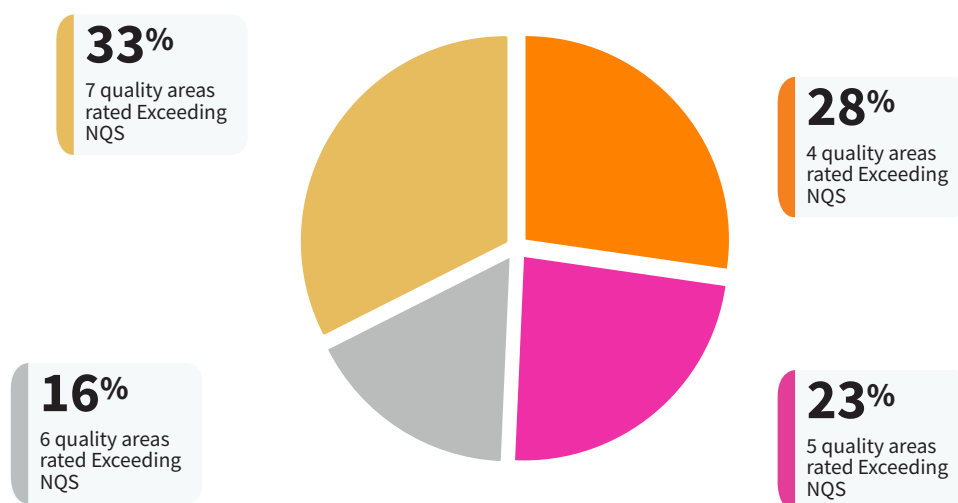
A service receives an overall rating of Working Towards NQS if any of the seven quality areas are rated Working Towards NQS. A quality area is rated Working Towards NQS if any of the standards within that quality area are rated Working Towards NQS.

Figure 14: Proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS by number of quality areas rated Working Towards NQS



# Services rated Exceeding NQS

Figure 15: Proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS by number of quality areas rated Exceeding NQS



# Australian Capital Territory summary

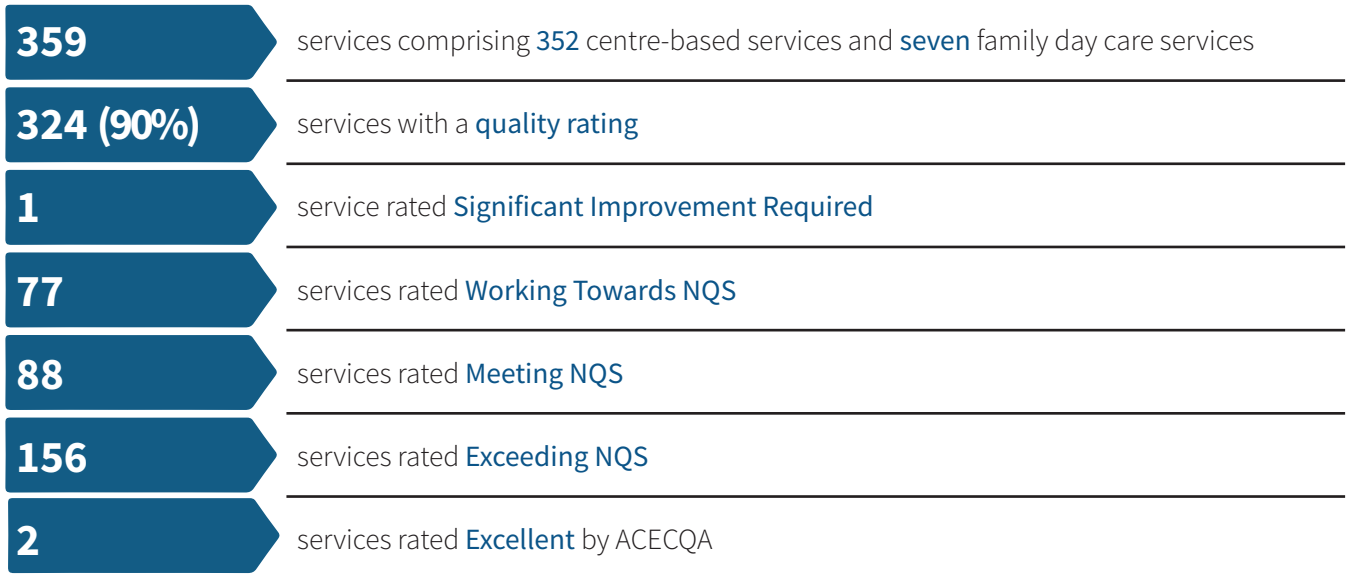
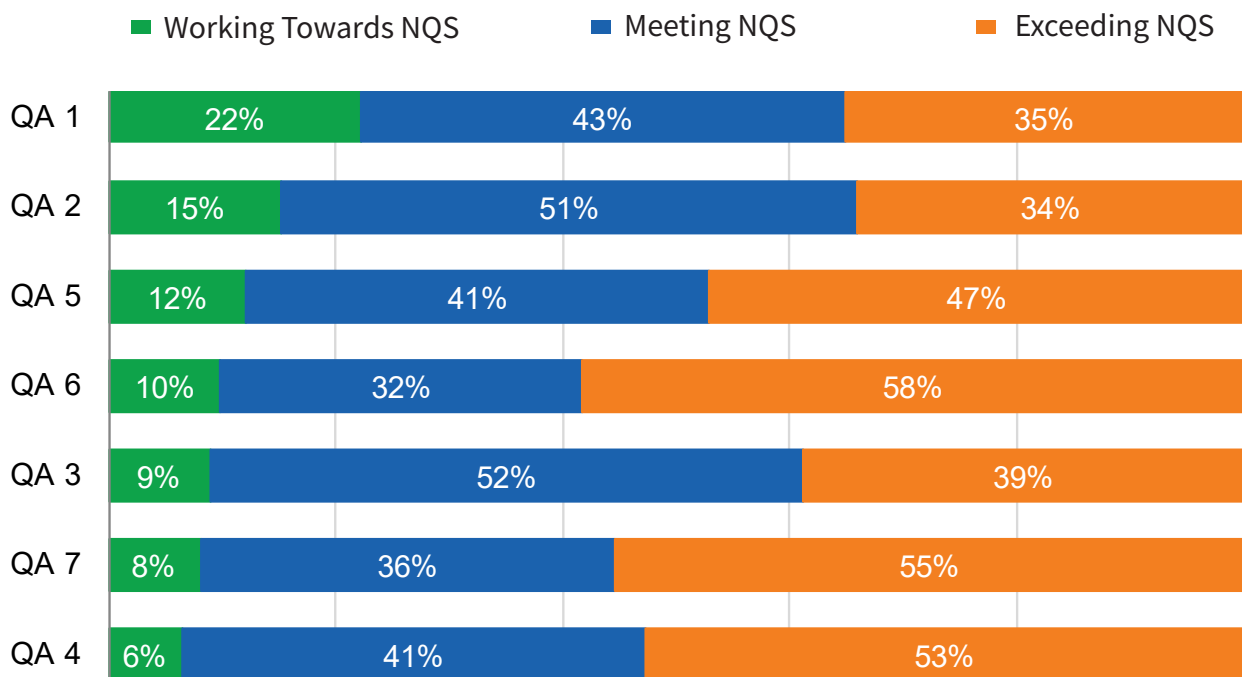


Figure 16 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 16: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

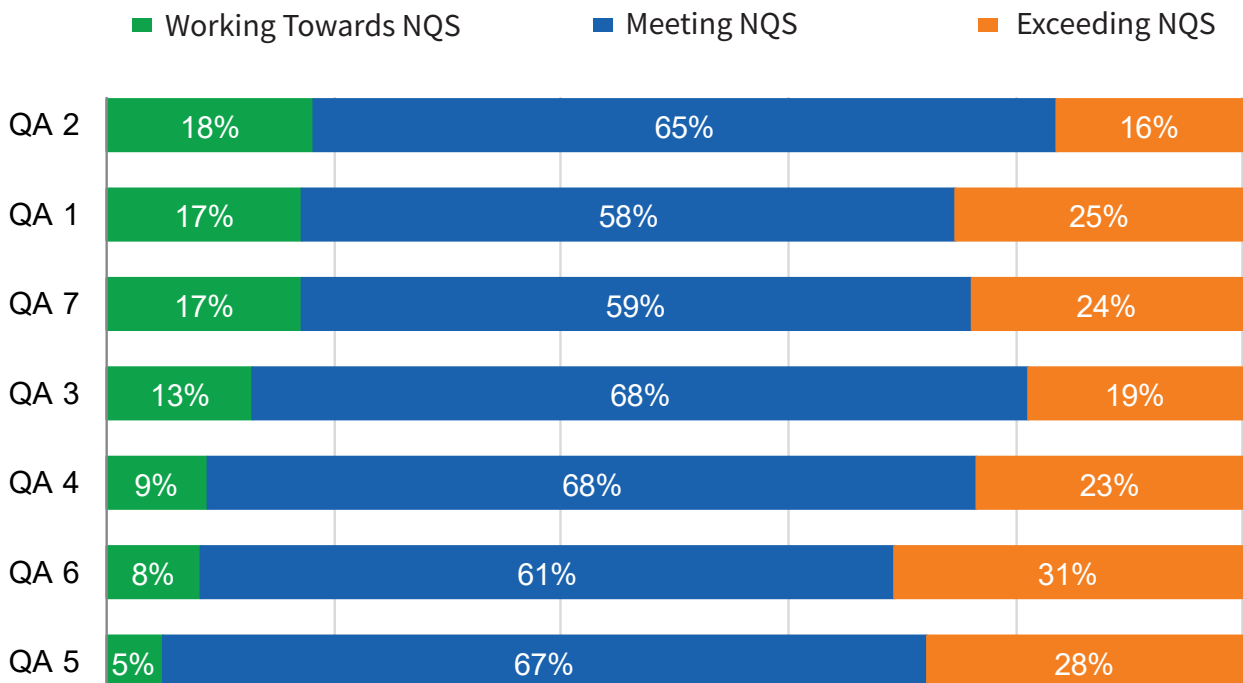
Education Directorate  
 Children's Education and Care Assurance  
[www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood](http://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood)

# New South Wales summary

<b>5587</b>	services comprising <b>5417</b> centre-based services and <b>170</b> family day care services
<b>5161 (92%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>4</b>	services rated <b>Significant Improvement Required</b>
<b>1271</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>2565</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>1307</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>
<b>14</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA

Figure 17 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 17: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

Department of Education  
 Early Childhood Education Directorate  
[www.education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education)

# Northern Territory summary

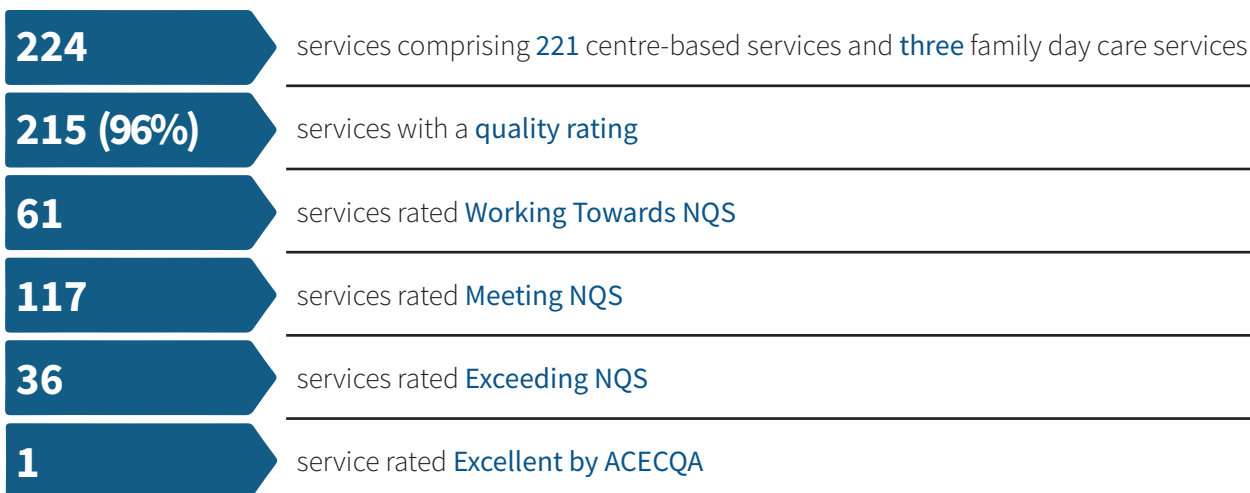
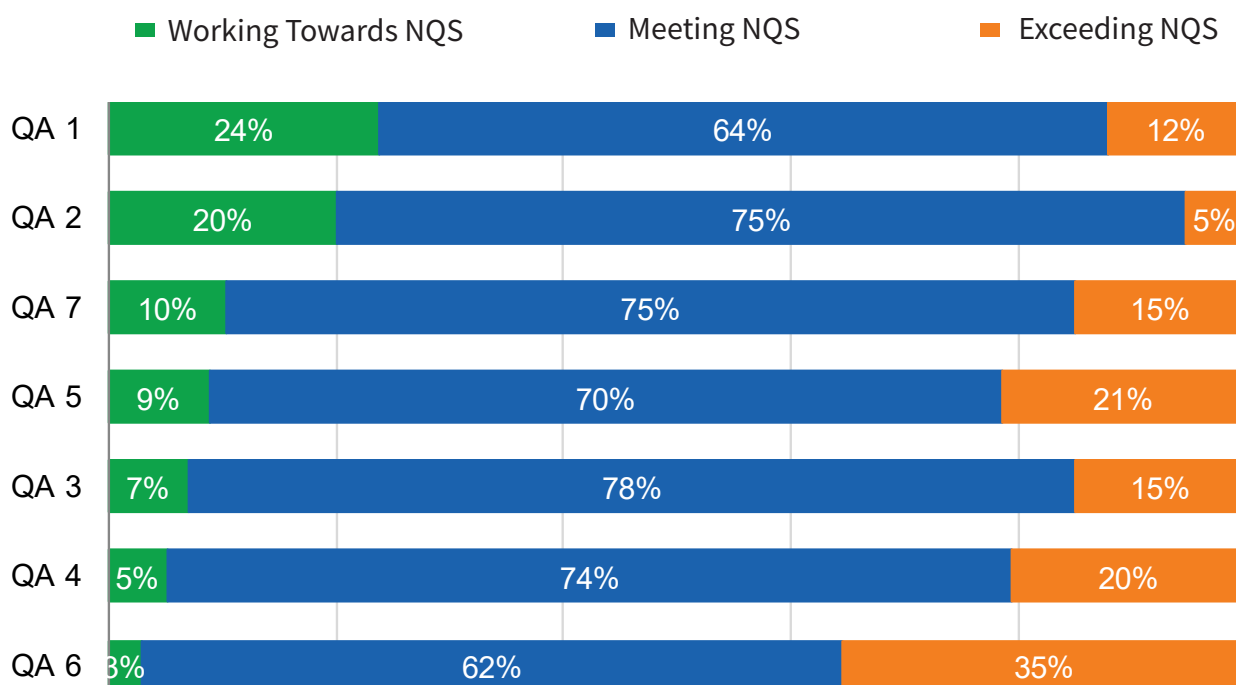


Figure 18 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 18: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

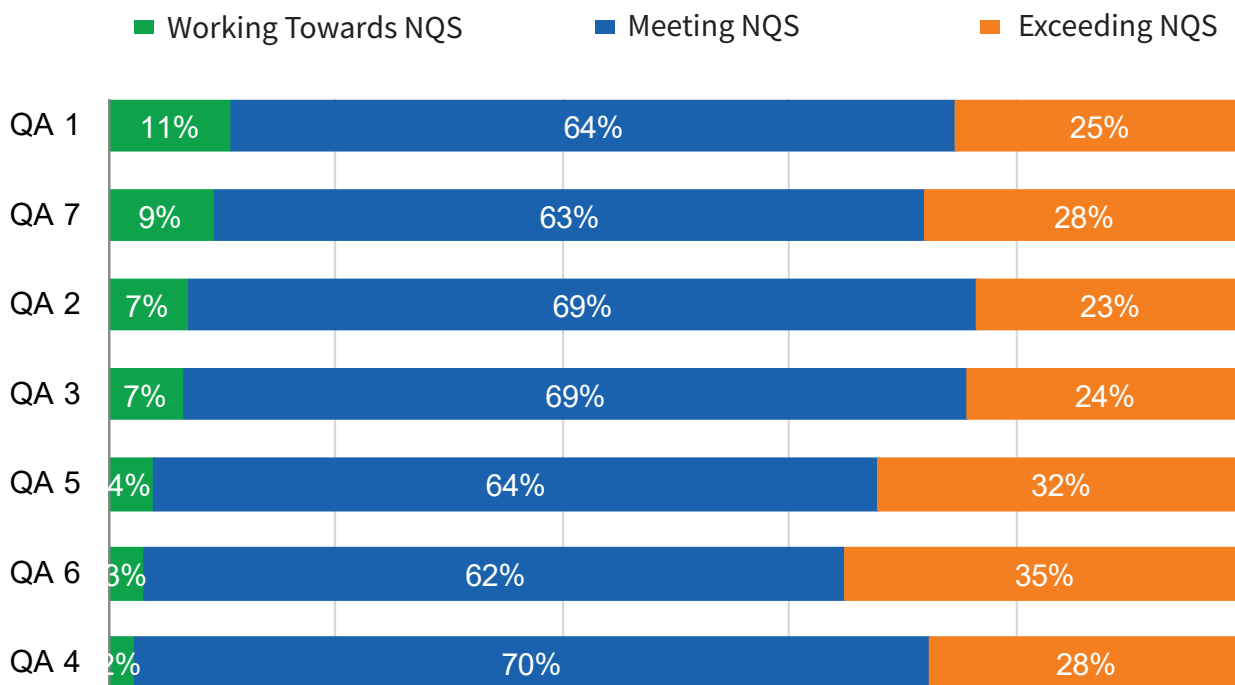
Department of Education  
 Quality Education and Care NT  
[www.nt.gov.au/learning/early-childhood](http://www.nt.gov.au/learning/early-childhood)

# Queensland summary

<b>3030</b>	services comprising <b>2917</b> centre-based services and <b>113</b> family day care services
<b>2848 (94%)</b>	services with a quality rating
<b>1</b>	service rated <b>Significant Improvement Required</b>
<b>393</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>1599</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>848</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>
<b>7</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA

Figure 19 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 19: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

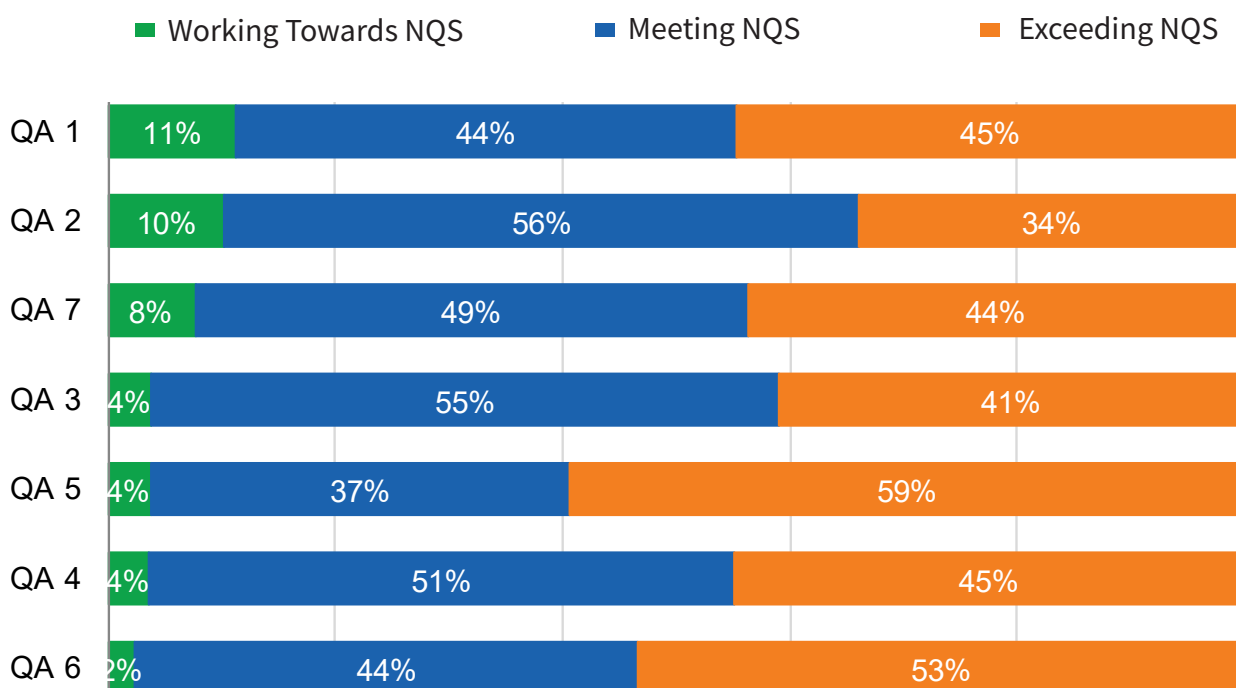
Department of Education  
 Early Childhood Education and Care  
[www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au](http://www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au)

# South Australia summary

<b>1216</b>	services comprising <b>1204</b> centre-based services and <b>12</b> family day care services
<b>1146 (94%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>172</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>416</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>550</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>
<b>8</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA

Figure 20 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 20: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

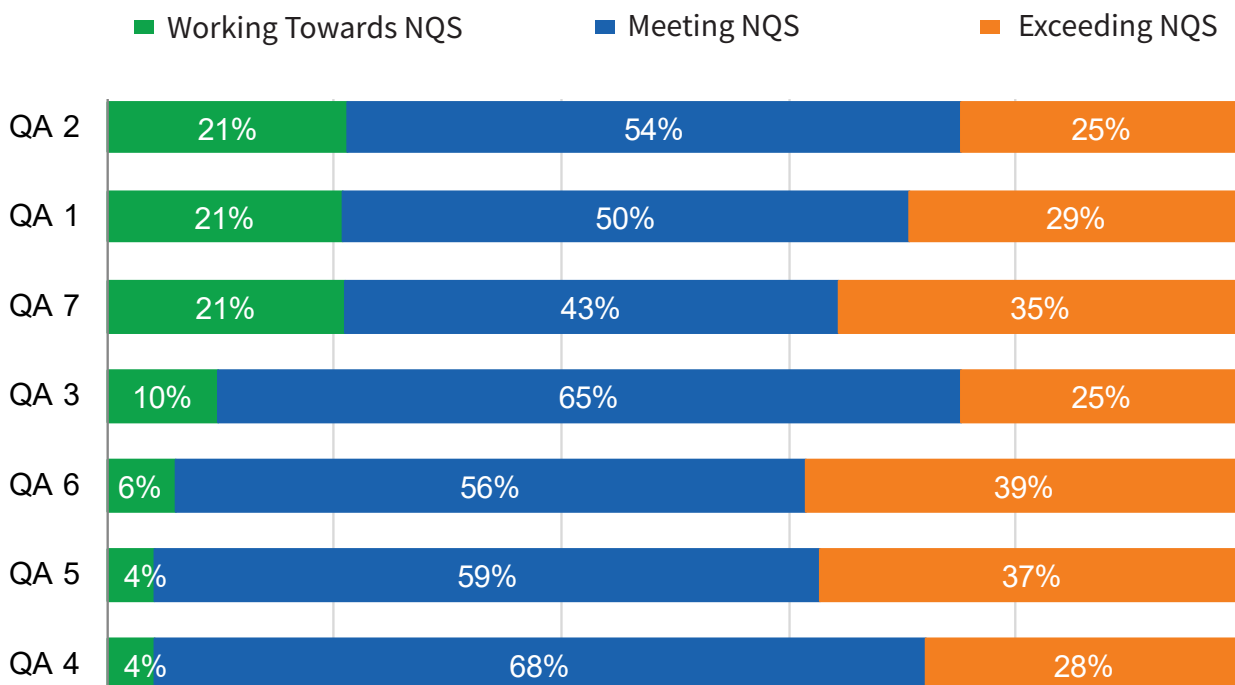
Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards  
Board of South Australia  
[www.esb.sa.gov.au/early-childhood](http://www.esb.sa.gov.au/early-childhood)

# Tasmania summary

<b>227</b>	services comprising <b>217</b> centre-based services and <b>10</b> family day care services
<b>218 (96%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>2</b>	services rated <b>Significant Improvement Required</b>
<b>61</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>87</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>68</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>

Figure 21 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 21: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

Department of Education  
Education and Care Unit  
[www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au](http://www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au)



# Victoria summary

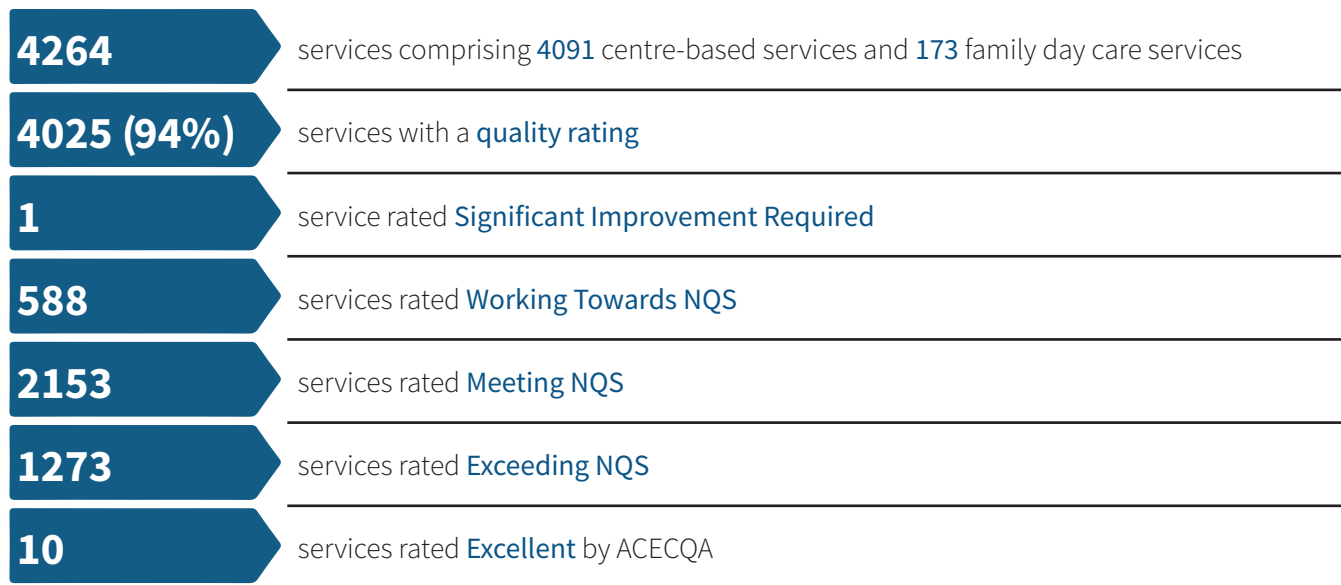
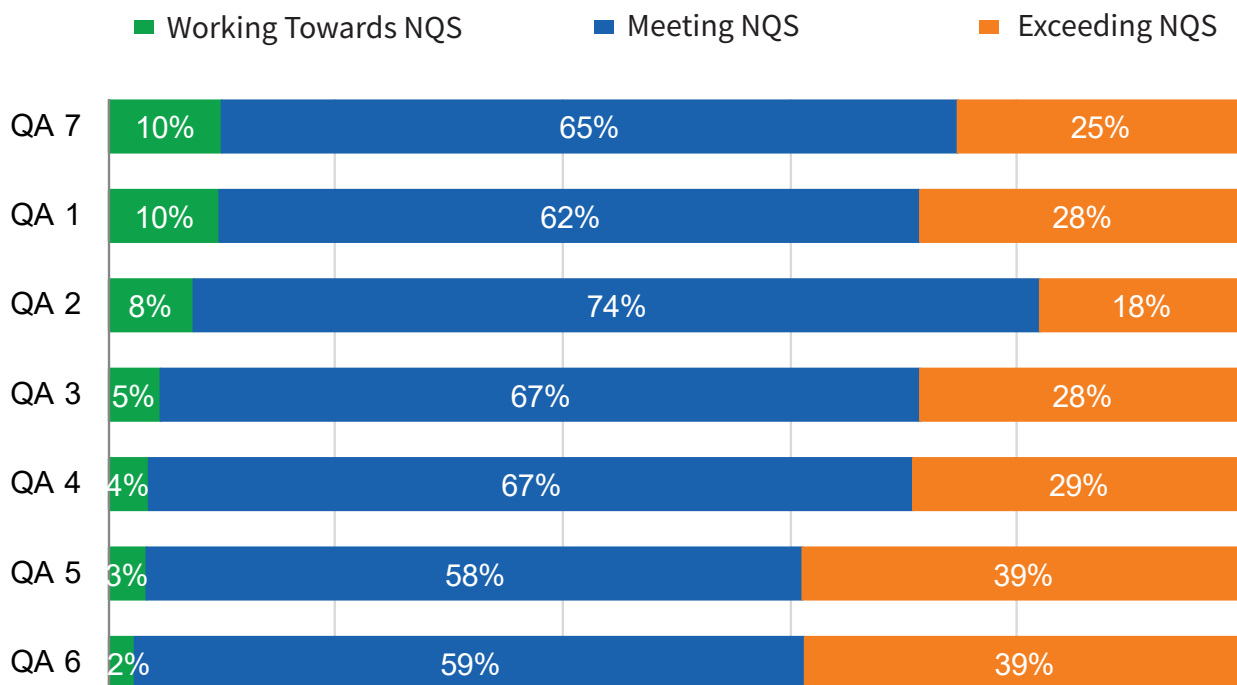


Figure 22 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 22: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

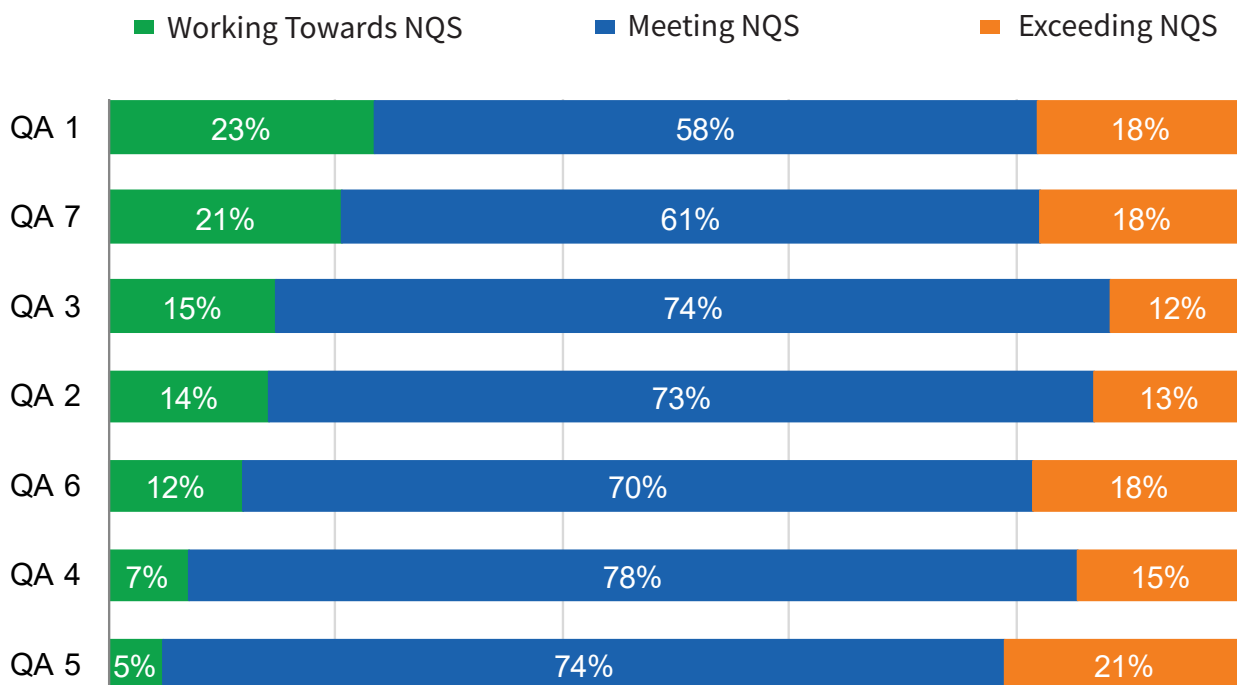
Department of Education and Training  
 Quality Assessment and Regulation Division  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation)

# Western Australia summary

<b>1237</b>	services comprising <b>1199</b> centre-based services and <b>38</b> family day care services
<b>1111 (90%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>317</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>591</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>203</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>

Figure 23 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 23: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

Department of Communities  
 Education and Care Regulatory Unit  
[www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au)



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