



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority



ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

CONTENTS



ACECQA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Lands on which we work and across Australia, and we also extend our respects to Elders, past and present.

We recognise and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia, including their role in the education and care of children. We recognise the rich and diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the valuable contribution this diversity brings.

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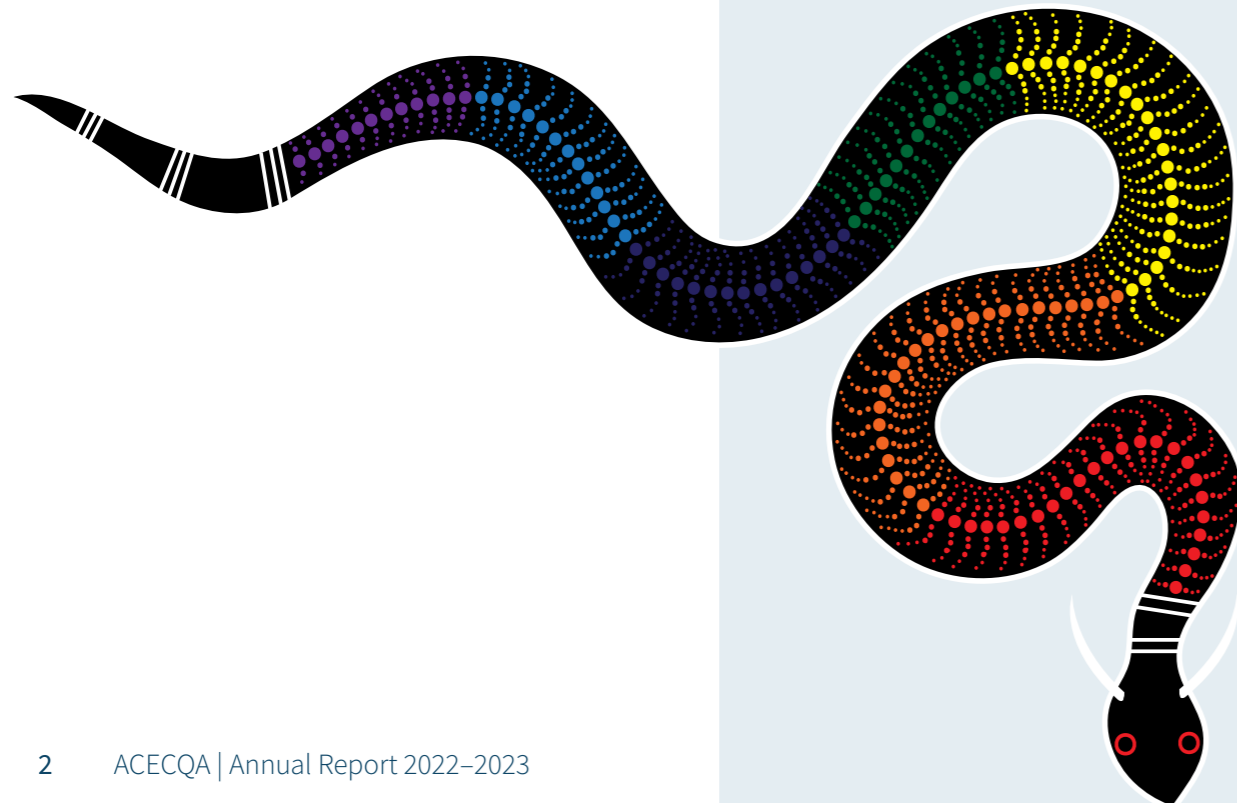
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ISSN # 2202-8854



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OUR VISION

Children have the best start in life through high quality education and care.

OUR VALUES

Commitment

We build and maintain relationships to achieve our vision and purpose.

Collaboration

We work together to achieve better outcomes.

Integrity

We act honestly, take responsibility and lead by example.

Respect

We consider and value the opinions, perceptions and expectations of others.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2331

NQA ITS service desk enquiries



17.9%

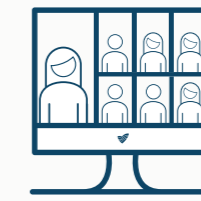
increase in ACECQA website users



1,075,709

StartingBlocks.gov.au website sessions

29% increase in views of the site



27
Conference and sector presentations



30,136

customer service enquiries answered



14,366
email enquiries



15,770
phone enquiries

341,217

views of the new StartingBlocks Child Care Subsidy calculator



42,000

subscribers to ACECQA newsletter

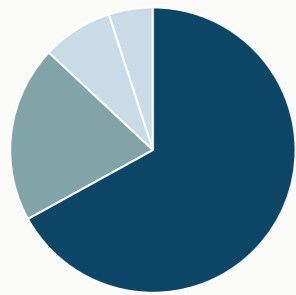


ACECQA FUNCTIONS

35 Excellent rated services
18 applications this year
8 awarded Excellent this year

10,940 applications and
113,060 notifications submitted via NQA ITS

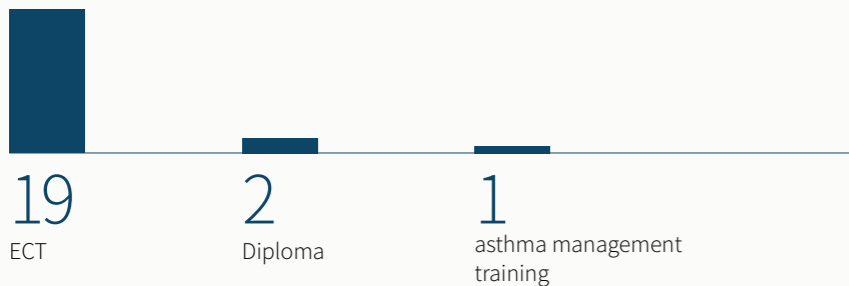
95 authorised officers trained to undertake assessment and rating



1011 individual qualification applications

65% ECT
20% Diploma
8% Certificate III
5% Outside School Hours Care

22 Higher education and other provider qualification applications



318 skilled migration skills assessment

63% Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only) category

196 reliability tests and
478 drift tests of authorised officers

free

resources provided to the sector and families:

- » Quality Support Program resources
- » REAL program resources
- » Disability Discrimination Act resources
- » 2019 NQF Review change resources
- » supporting children through transitions
- » Approved Learning Framework resources

CCCFR training delivered to over

150 services primarily in regional and remote areas



Survey showed

100% satisfaction

5 finalised second tier review applications



289 services participated in

3 Quality Support Pathways learning programs



2 occasional papers published

6 submissions to public inquiries

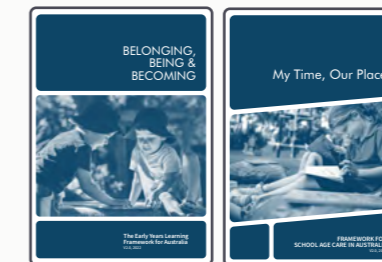


MAJOR PROJECTS

Implementation of



Approved Learning Frameworks update



- ✓ Joined up Approvals Project
- ✓ Child safety arrangements review
- ✓ Community Child Care Fund Restricted Quality and Safety Training Package
- ✓ Quality Support Program; Dual Program Pathways
- ✓ ELACCA Professional Development Program
- ✓ In Home Care Quality and Safety Project
- ✓ Review of NQF Staffing and Qualification Requirements



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29 September 2023

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Chair
Education Ministers Meeting
Department of Education
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister

The Board of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has pleasure in submitting to the Education Ministers Meeting the 2022–23 ACECQA Annual Report.

The report is presented in accordance with section 279 of the *Education and Care Services National Law* (the National Law) and conforms to its requirements.

The National Law requires that the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) make arrangements for tabling the ACECQA Annual Report in the Parliament of a participating jurisdiction, as determined by the EMM. ACECQA is advised that South Australia has been confirmed as the participating jurisdiction for tabling purposes. Accordingly, the 2022–23 Annual Report has been prepared to meet the tabling requirements of that jurisdiction.

Yours sincerely

Annette Whitehead
Chair

Children have the best start in life through high quality education and care



ANNETTE WHITEHEAD

Chair

On behalf of the ACECQA Board, it is a pleasure to present our annual report for 2022–23.

A little over a decade ago, the national approved learning frameworks were introduced in preparation for the commencement of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Both are an essential part of educating and caring for our youngest citizens. When I reflect on ACECQA's work over the past year, and the sector's achievements over the past decade, the newly updated versions of Belonging, Being and Becoming and My Time, Our Place are emblematic of the vital contribution our sector is making to children's health, safety, wellbeing and participation in society as active and informed citizens.

In keeping with our shared commitment to continuous improvement and, in partnership with all Australian governments, we led the commissioning of the review of the frameworks in 2021 to ensure they remained contemporary and able to best support the learning and development of each child attending an approved service. The refreshed frameworks, approved by Education Ministers and published at the beginning of 2023, contain key updates that reflect both evidence-based research and best practice in high quality services across Australia.

As all governments renewed their commitment to celebrating and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the Mparntwe Education Declaration, the need to reinforce these perspectives within the national learning frameworks, to support children's greater understanding as they grow into active and informed members of the community, was clear. This emphasis builds on one of the NQF's guiding principles – valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures – and reflects the essential role of education in Reconciliation.

The increased focus on promoting collaborative leadership and teamwork underscores the expectation that it is the professional responsibility of all educators to progress the quality of educational programs and practices, and to strive for improved outcomes for children. And perhaps most importantly for our children and our nation, the expansion of the principle of high expectations and equity to encompass

inclusion reinforces the rights of all children to receive a quality education, regardless of their circumstances, strengths, gender, capabilities or diverse ways of doing and being.

These changes affirm the importance of remaining attuned to our communities and the varying needs of children and families accessing education and care in thousands of different settings across Australia. They also support educators in their work as they guide children on their learning journey.

As Chair of the National Authority, I am incredibly proud of our role in supporting governments and services to achieve the objectives of the NQF and what we do to help families to understand quality in early education and care so they are able to make the best choices for their children.

As a Board, it is a privilege to lead the strategic direction of this work and I would like to express my appreciation to my colleagues for their thoughtful stewardship. I also acknowledge the service of our outgoing members – Maree Bredhauer, Selwyn Button, Kate Hamond, Amanda Price-McGregor and Michael White: their wise counsel has helped us grow and evolve. And as always, my sincere thanks to the committed and hard working staff of ACECQA, under the experienced leadership of CEO Gabrielle Sinclair.



GABRIELLE SINCLAIR

Chief Executive Officer



The potential of affordable, high quality education and care to improve outcomes for children and enable workforce participation is the driving force behind several important inquiries into education and care this year. In our submissions to these inquiries, we have been proud to champion the NQF as a world-leading model of education and care worthy of support and investment by governments. The NQF is based on international research into the aspects of quality that make a difference to children and improve outcomes.

While protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of children, the NQF also drives quality. Data we have collected since the introduction of the NQF a decade ago shows sustained increases in quality areas across

the National Quality Standard (NQS). There are more than 17,000 services across Australia and more than 89 per cent of them are now Meeting or Exceeding the NQS.

The NQF provides families with choice of education and care service types, and information about services to make choices that best suit them. Our StartingBlocks.gov.au website continues to grow as the leading source of information about the location and quality of services, contact details, fee and vacancy information. This year many families have accessed our new StartingBlocks.gov.au Child Care Subsidy Calculator page to find out about changes to their subsidies. We have

continued to inform the sector and community about quality in education and care through our newsletter which reaches 42,000 people, quarterly snapshots and through a range of research and evaluation measures and collaborations. Our two latest occasional papers provide a high-level overview of the first decade of the NQF, and a detailed analysis of serious incidents relating to injury, trauma or illness providing us with insights into how the system is working and how to guide the sector to better protect children attending education and care.

While advocating for high quality, NQF regulated education and care for children, we have continued to work with governments, peak



bodies and services to ensure the NQF remains evidence-informed and contemporary.

Outcomes of the 2019 NQF Review have been implemented. Amendments to the National Law and Regulations are being phased in throughout 2023, and national guidance to support the sector understand and implement these changes has been published on our website.

Reforms to assessment and rating processes were agreed by governments and implementation has begun. These changes will make the system more efficient and effective.

Updated versions of both national approved learning frameworks were released in early 2023. The updated frameworks will ensure a stronger connection with the NQS in areas such as transitions, sustainability, theoretical approaches, critical reflection, the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing, and inclusion for every child.

Through the Joined up Approvals (JuA) project, together with all governments, we have made it more efficient for providers to be approved to operate, while increasing the ability of regulators to screen out unsuitable providers. Because of the JuA project, applications for approvals under the National Law and Family Assistance Law are now submitted through the one platform – the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS), and state and territory regulators and the Australian Government will assess the suitability of applicants using a nationally consistent risk framework and operational practices.

The NQA ITS is critical for supporting interactions between regulators and providers, and for gathering data about the operation of the NQF. We continue to enhance the NQA ITS this year with changes to support the NQF Review and JuA projects, and also through implementing critical foundational requirements from the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap to ensure the system remains fit for purpose into the future.

We have continued to work closely with services on collaborative quality improvement initiatives that drive equity and improved outcomes for Australian children. We worked with CCCFR services, which are primarily located in regional and remote areas, to deliver tailored quality and safety training. With one-on-one support, face-to-face workshops, community of practice sessions and service visits, participants wholeheartedly supported the package, with 100 per cent satisfaction reported in our evaluation.

We continued our work with the NSW Department of Education delivering the Quality Support Program, with 289 services participating across three pathways and our evaluation showing notable improvements in the ratings of participating services.

Working with the Australian Government, we developed and delivered the final set of resources to assist the sector to understand and implement their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Quality outcomes for children in education and care are dependent on a qualified and consistent workforce. The National Workforce Strategy, a joint initiative between governments and the sector, addresses critical and longstanding workforce issues and we have begun work on a review of NQF staffing and qualification regulations, one of the commitments of the strategy. With critical workforce shortages, it is pleasing this year to see an increase in applications from individuals wanting their qualifications assessed to be able to work in our sector.

The leadership and exceptional quality of services in our sector is inspiring. I congratulate the eight services awarded the Excellent rating this year with a special acknowledgement of Bribie Island Community Kindergarten for being awarded this honour for the fourth time.

All that we have delivered this year could not have been achieved without the guidance of our Board and the commitment and expertise of our staff who exemplify our values of integrity, commitment, respect and collaboration. Attracting and retaining the calibre of staff at ACECQA requires an ongoing commitment to being an employer of choice. This year, we have endeavoured to be that in finalising and implementing a new enterprise agreement, developing an Employee Value Proposition statement, implementing remote working and hybrid working arrangements, and delivering a professional development program on workplace conduct, values and behaviours.

As we head into the second decade of the NQF and await the recommendations of the inquiries into education and care, we continue to work with our government partners and committed stakeholders to deliver high quality education and care, delivered accessibly and equitably, so that every child has the best start in life.



PART 1

Our governance
and operations

1.1 OUR ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is an independent national authority that assists governments in implementing and administering the National Quality Framework (NQF) for children's education and care.

We work with the Australian and state and territory governments to:

- implement changes that benefit children birth to 13 years of age and their families
- monitor and promote the consistent application of the *Education and Care Services National Law* (the National Law) across states and territories
- support the children's education and care sector to improve quality outcomes for children.

We work with all stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the NQF, which are:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services
- improved educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services
- continuous improvement in the provision of education and care services
- a system of national integration and shared responsibility between governments in the administration of the NQF
- improved public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services
- reduced regulatory and administrative burden for education and care services by enabling information to be shared between governments.



Our functions are outlined in section 225 of the National Law:

- conduct national audits relating to the administration of the NQF
- keep national information on the assessment, rating and regulation of education and care services
- establish, maintain and publish national registers of approved providers and education and care services
- promote and foster continuous quality improvement by education and care services
- making determinations with respect to the highest level of rating for approved education and care services – the Excellent rating

- educate and inform education and care services and the community about the NQF
- publish guides and resources to support parents and the community in understanding the importance of quality early education and care
- publish guides and resources to support education and care services in understanding the NQF
- train state and territory regulatory authority staff
- establish the qualifications required to be an educator in the sector.

Under the National Law (Part 5, Division 4 – ‘Review by Ratings Review Panel’), we are also responsible for managing “second tier” reviews of service quality ratings.

LETTER OF EXPECTATION

The Education Ministers Meeting’s Letter of Expectation 2021–23 (**Appendix A**) is the foundation for our Letter of Expectation Reporting Plan 2021–23 and informs our priorities and strategic planning.

1.2 OUR BOARD AND SUB COMMITTEES



REPORTING

We produce the following reports and plans:

Strategic plan

Our five-year strategic plan demonstrates our priority areas and outlines the strategies we use to achieve the objectives of the NQF. It provides direction on areas of focus and communicates to our stakeholders how we will work with them to deliver our programs, services and resources. It sets out our vision, our organisational values and our success indicators.

Letter of Expectation reporting plan

Our Letter of Expectation Reporting Plan is informed by the Education Ministers Meeting's Letter of Expectation, the National Law, our strategic plan and our funding agreement with the Australian Government. The reporting plan outlines the key activities and programs of work we are undertaking to deliver against our strategic priorities and the timelines for these deliverables. Our 2021–23 progress report for our reporting plan demonstrated to governments how we met our obligations and continue to deliver additional projects to progress the aims of the NQF.

Annual report

Under section 279 of the National Law, we must submit an annual report to the Education Ministers Meeting. The 2022–23 report is our twelfth annual report.

Ministerial directions

Under section 222 (1) of the National Law, the Education Ministers Meeting may give directions to our Board in relation to carrying out its functions under the law. Section 222 (2) also permits the Education Ministers Meeting to give directions to a regulatory authority with respect to the administration of the NQF. No directions were given to us or a regulatory authority by the Education Ministers Meeting in 2022–23.



OUR BOARD

The Board is appointed by, and responsible to, the Education Ministers Meeting for our overall strategy, governance and performance. The Board brings together a dedicated team, with a wealth of relevant experience and commitment to improving education and care outcomes for Australia's children. Up to eight members are appointed from nominations by each state and territory, up to four members are appointed from nominations by the Australian Government and the Chair is appointed independently by Education Ministers. The Deputy Chair is appointed from the 12 members.

Membership of the Board is outlined at **Appendix C**.

The Board held four meetings in 2022–23. Board meeting attendance is outlined at **Appendix D**.

The ACECQA Board.

Back row (L–R): Madeleine Smith, Michael White, Marc de Rosnay, Jenni Perkins, Maree Bredhauer

Front row (L–R): Akiko Jackson, Anne Glover, Annette Whitehead (Chair), Sandra Lambert, Mark Campling

Not photographed: Selwyn Button, Kate Hamond, Amanda Price-McGregor

1.3 OUR OPERATIONS

Key undertakings for the Board in 2022–23 included overseeing:

- extension of modifications to our supervised professional experience requirements for overseas graduates applying to have their qualifications assessed for equivalence on a case-by-case basis
- extension of the transitional measure of recognising primary and secondary teachers with teacher registration and an approved education and care qualification as early childhood teachers
- our Policy for Development and Delivery of Programs, Services and Resources
- development and delivery of significant programs and services such as the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Project Stage 2
- progression of a national approach to the children’s education and care workforce, and the implementation of actions from the National Workforce Strategy
- our work to reduce red tape by ‘joining-up’ provider approval processes under the NQF and Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- the update of the national approved learning frameworks – Belonging, Being and Becoming and My Time, Our Place
- our co-leadership of the implementation of 2019 NQF Review recommendations
- implementation of our NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap
- our cyber security planning
- our financial performance
- introduction of our culture action plan and employee value proposition
- our performance against our strategic plan and Letter of Expectation reporting plan.

BOARD SUB COMMITTEES

Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee

The purpose of the Audit, Finance and Risk Sub

Committee (AFR SC) is to provide independent assistance to our Board by overseeing and monitoring the organisation’s financial performance and external financial, governance, legal and reporting accountability requirements, as well as its governance, risk and control frameworks. Membership of the Committee and details of meetings held throughout 2022–23 are outlined at **Appendix E**.

Priorities for the Sub Committee during the reporting period included:

- reviewing and endorsing the financial statements
- reviewing and monitoring our financial and corporate governance policies and strategies, including the governance, planning and accountability framework, risk management plan and register, investment policies, procurement policies, fraud and corruption control plan, financial delegations, and legal and compliance reporting
- overseeing our insurance arrangements
- overseeing an internal audit of our intellectual property framework.

Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee

In 2022–23, the Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee provided advice on performance and remuneration matters. Membership of the Sub Committee and details of meetings held throughout 2022–23 are outlined at **Appendix E**.

Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee

In the first quarter of 2022-23, the Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee provided oversight of the finalisation of our Enterprise Agreement. Membership of the Sub Committee and details of meetings held throughout 2022–23 are outlined at **Appendix E**.

Qualifications Sub Committee

The Qualifications Sub Committee did not have cause to meet in 2022–23. Membership of the Sub Committee is outlined at **Appendix E**.



OUR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION

We have 140 staff delivering our statutory functions and programs across six business groups and teams. A breakdown of the workforce profile by FTE, headcount and gender is at Table 1.

Table 1: Workforce profile - FTE and headcount by gender, 30 June 2023

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
FTE	78.1	50.3	128.4
Headcount	87	53	140
% of workforce (headcount)	62%	38%	100%

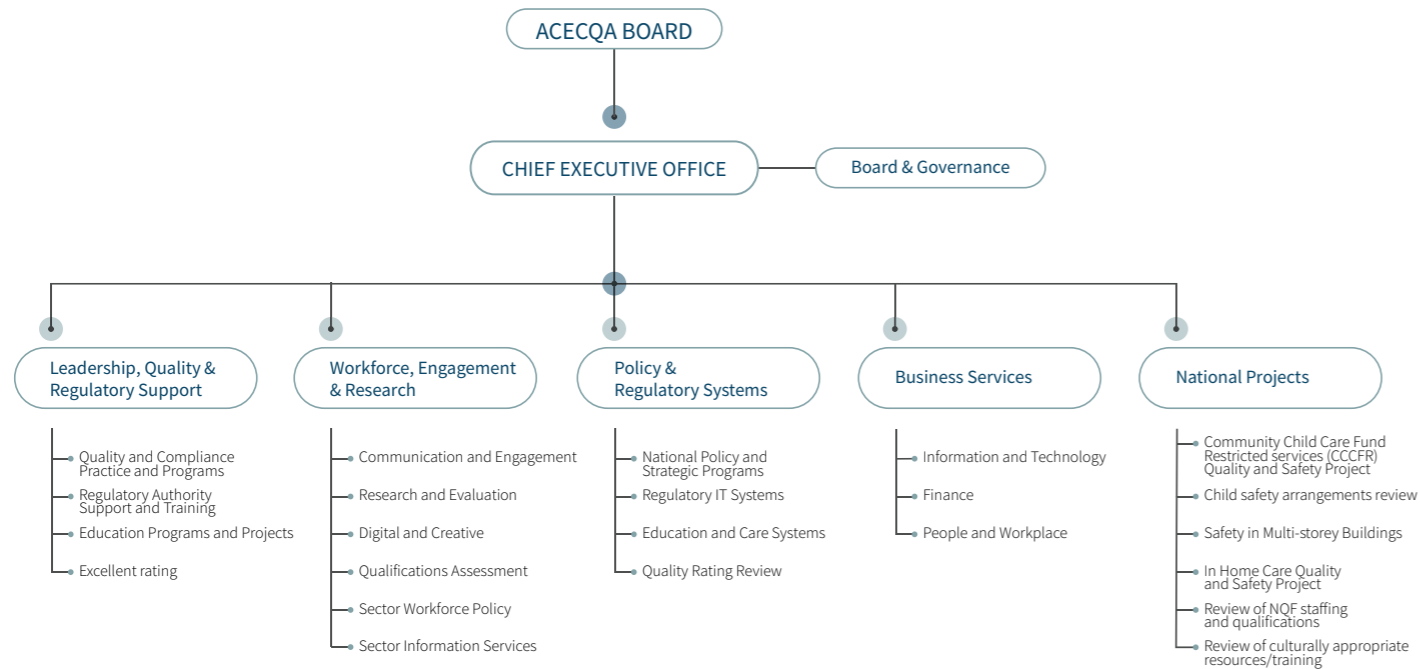
The ACECQA Executive.

Back row (L–R): Lisa McCoy, Rhonda Livingstone, Craig Bennett, Michelle Edwards

Front row (L–R): Angela Buchanan, Gabrielle Sinclair, Michael Petrie

Figure 1: Organisational structure, 30 June 2023

ACECQA's core groups and teams



The Leadership, Quality and Regulatory Support group delivers the following functions:

- providing advice on quality programs, practices and policies in early childhood education and school age care services and contributing to national reform processes
- developing and delivering training and testing for authorised officers in assessing and rating against the National Quality Standard (NQS), in collaboration with regulatory authorities
- assessing and promoting excellence in the delivery of early childhood education and school age care services to support continuous quality improvement
- developing and delivering programs and services, in collaboration with government partners, to improve quality in approved education and care services, including the Quality Support Program.

The Workforce, Engagement and Research group delivers the following functions:

- developing evidence-informed resources to inform families and the community about the benefits of early childhood education and care, and what quality looks like in approved services
- providing information to educators and approved providers through a sector information and enquiries service
- monitoring, assessing and reporting on the NQF through a national audit program and the regular publication of reports
- approving educator qualification courses offered by institutions
- determining the equivalence of individuals' qualifications who seek to work in the sector, particularly those with overseas qualifications
- assessing applications for skilled migration to work in Australia as a Child Care Centre Manager or Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only) occupations

- developing programs and initiatives to contribute to a sustainable, high quality workforce for the education and care sector.

The Policy and Regulatory Systems group delivers the following functions:

- leading our national policy and strategic programs to support governments, regulatory authorities and the sector
- working with governments and the sector to provide strategic advice and support in the effective administration of the NQF, including operational policy advice
- administering, maintaining and developing regulatory IT systems including the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) for the NQF
- managing the quality rating review function including coordination of independent second tier review panel members.

The Business Services group delivers the following functions:

- Finance - corporate budgeting, financial management and reporting, investments, procurement, accounts receivable and payable and receipt of fees
- People and Workplace - HR services (recruitment, WHS, performance management, learning and development, workforce planning and payroll services) and workplace services (facilities, asset management)
- Information and Technology - IT operations, information and records management, cyber security and IT business systems analysis and development.

The National Projects group delivers the following functions:

- programs and services focused on improving quality outcomes for children, such as the Community Child Care Fund Restricted services (CCCFR) program

- strategic policy advice and contributing to national policy solutions such as improving safeguards for education and care services operating in multi-storey buildings.

The Board and Governance team supports our Board and manages FOI, intellectual property, legal, governance, planning, and reporting and accountability requirements, including our participation in inter-governmental working groups.

PEOPLE AND WORKPLACE

Our People and Workplace team is responsible for all people and human resource functions across ACECQA as well as the management of ACECQA's office. The team delivered a number of high priority projects in 2022–23 including:

- finalisation and implementation of the ACECQA Enterprise Agreement 2022–25 which commenced in October 2022
- development of an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) statement which outlines our offerings as an employer in line with what employees value
- implementation of a new Remote Working and Hybrid Working Arrangements policy
- delivery of a professional development program on workplace conduct, values and behaviours, and
- implementation of a Buddy Program for new starters which was launched in October 2022.

In addition, this year the People and Workplace team held four meetings with the Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) to gain employee feedback and to consult on new initiatives including the:

- Employee Value Proposition
- Wellbeing framework
- Performance planning process
- Accommodation & Relocation Project.



New office at 1 Oxford Street

We relocated to a new office in May 2023 at 1 Oxford St, Darlinghurst following the end of the previous office lease. The new office environment was designed to facilitate our hybrid working arrangements and includes collaborative working spaces as well as quiet zones for focussed working.

Staff consultation on the office design occurred through several channels including our SCC. The SCC provided valuable feedback that assisted with the design and function of the new office.

An integral part of the design was to incorporate Aboriginal artwork throughout the office. Artist Natalie Bateman and the team at Spirit Creative Agency provided the opportunity to work collaboratively on artwork that was used to create detailed graphics for our meeting rooms. The main graphic incorporates an Acknowledgement of Country which is central in our reception area.

Through design and effective use of space, our new office provides the opportunity to incorporate sustainability and environmental office initiatives, while meeting our current and emerging needs as an organisation.

Health, safety and wellbeing

We continue to have a strong focus on health, safety and wellbeing. This is reflected in our consultation arrangements, policies and procedures, workplace inspections, ergonomics, training and emergency procedures.

In 2022–23, consultation occurred on the development of our Wellbeing Framework which will be finalised in early 2023–24.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In 2022–23, ACECQA's operational funding was provided by the Australian Government and this comprised approximately 50 per cent of ACECQA's revenue.

In addition to this operational funding, income streams in 2022–23 mainly included:

- fee revenue under the National Law relating to our functions of assessing educator qualifications and managing second tier reviews
- fee revenue of assessing skills for the 'Child Care Centre Manager' and 'Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only)' occupations under the skilled migration program
- funding for delivering specific programs and services to governments and education and care sector stakeholders
- sale of NQF educational resources.

We operated in accordance with the Board approved budget to deliver on the strategic priorities contained in the Education Ministers Meeting's Letter of Expectation for 2021–23

The operating result for the 2022–23 financial year was a surplus of approximately \$1.2 million (2022 \$6.1m). This result was a reduction in the surplus position compared to previous years due to a net higher level of expenditure relating to Programs and Services with revenue being recognised in prior years and expenditure being incurred in 2022–23.

Total revenue in 2022–23 was \$29.8 million with the Australian Government providing approximately \$13.4 million for our core operating activities. We also received own-source revenue of approximately \$16.4 million, mainly from funding for delivering programs and services for our government partners, services delivered under the National Law on a fee for service basis, the sale of NQF educational resources and interest income.

Total expenditure for 2022–23 was \$28.7 million. The main expenditure items were:

- salaries and on-costs (approximately 61 per cent)
- ICT costs (approximately 13 per cent)
- occupancy costs (approximately 4 per cent).

The accumulated surplus at 30 June 2023 was \$19.0 million with total assets of approximately \$35.2 million. In 2023, total assets include the new right of use asset for the new office lease (\$6.4m) and leasehold improvements (\$2.7m). The accumulated surplus includes funding timing differences and required working capital.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CYBER SECURITY

Our Information Technology and Cyber Security team is responsible for delivering effective and secure services utilising information and technology to streamline internal and external operations. Functions include IT operations,

cyber security, business systems and records management. The IT operations team also provides technical support for the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) for external stakeholders.

IT Operations

During 2022–23, the IT operations team delivered a number of high-priority projects and initiatives including:

- the upgrade and modernisation of device hardware across the organisation to enhance user experience and productivity in a hybrid workplace environment
- implementing scalable and cyber resilient IT and network infrastructure as part of ACECQA's office relocation
- implementation of audio visual and collaboration services to enable ACECQA's hybrid workplace strategy
- fostering whole-of-government agency and vendor relationships with strategic partners including Microsoft and the Australian Government Digital Transformation Agency (DTA).

Cyber security

Cyber security threats and risks continue to evolve and pose ongoing challenges for all organisations. Cyber security is an ongoing focus with a number of enhancements implemented to preserve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information in accordance with Australian Government information security standards. These include:

- further developing our cyber security risk management plan and practices
- updating ACECQA's IT and information security policies to align to the Australian Cyber Security Centre's (ACSC) Information Security Manual (ISM) and the Attorney General's Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) standards
- adopting Zero Trust principles by implementing fit for purpose controls to reduce risk and enhance data protection within ACECQA's corporate environment

- supporting an Infosec Registered Assessors Program (IRAP) assessment of our National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) as part of the combined National Law and Family Assistance Law application and assessment process in the NQA ITS (known as the Joined up Approvals Project)
- becoming an official Network Partner with the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), which enables us to engage with the ACSC and fellow partners, drawing on collective understanding, experience, skills, and capability to lift cyber resilience across the Australian economy.

Business systems and records management

The business systems and records management function underpins our capability to both maintain and improve operational efficiency. It ensures consistent and informed decision making, information sharing, and advice to external stakeholders through fit for purpose business systems. This IT function facilitates recordkeeping and information management governance spanning the lifecycle of all corporate records, and in so doing, upholds an accountable and compliant level of business continuity that enhances our reputation. In 2022–23, the following business systems and records management initiatives were delivered:

- adoption of key applications within the Microsoft 365 environment such as Microsoft SharePoint, Planner, and Teams enhancing collaboration with external and sector partners
- implementation of a full suite of capabilities offered in Microsoft Teams to save time, reduce costs, and improve internal business performance by bringing together telephone calling, chat, and meetings, all in one platform that empowers teams with a collaborative and context-rich experience
- progressing the integration between the corporate records management system and M365 environment
- strategic and operational management of ACECQA's corporate records management system to meet the requirements at a state and national level.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, our Reconciliation Advisory Group has been working with Reconciliation Australia on our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). In 2022–2023, our Statement of Reconciliation which focuses on opportunities to increase learning, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements has informed our activities and shaped the development of our next innovate RAP. Our Indigenous Participation Plan, developed in accordance with the Australian Government's Indigenous Procurement Policy, complements our reconciliation efforts. The plan included regular reporting to the Australian Government on progress against key targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business participation.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (ESG)

Environmental, Social and Governance reporting, also known as sustainability reporting, is the disclosure of an organisation's performance in relation to material ESG risks and opportunities to explain how these inform our strategy and overall performance.

Environmental performance

We aim to reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint where possible. As part of our new accommodation project in 2023, we considered the office design in terms of environmental sustainability – through appropriate choices of materials, design, construction, equipment purchases, waste management, energy conservation and maintenance regimes, and also organisational sustainability. We are also increasing our green footprint through the introduction of green products and the reduction in office consumables such as paper and stationery items.

During the COVID pandemic, we decreased our carbon footprint through the reduction in staff travel and have successfully continued this practice through ongoing use of videoconference meetings.

Social and community development

We have strong organisational policies, practices and business ethics including:

- health and safety reporting to each meeting of the Board which highlights any WHS issues across the organisation and the mitigations and resolutions for each
- enhanced privacy reporting with the development of a Privacy Management Plan which explains how we will meet our obligations under the Privacy Act in respect of handling personal information and updated mandatory training for all employees
- data security improvements with ongoing enhancements to cyber security and the updating of existing IT infrastructure.

We recognise our human capital and we invest in, and develop, our employees through:

- professional development goals which are required to be set in every employee's performance plan, identifying areas of growth and development for each employee
- the development of an Employee Value Proposition which identified the benefits of working at ACECQA and now guides the way in which we work
- ongoing training modules to ensure employees are up to date on any changes to existing policies and that employees are reminded of our Code of Conduct, values and other policies that enhance corporate behaviour.

Through our social group, ACECQA Life, we held multiple fundraisers throughout the year that benefited charities or groups that are aligned to our values. ACECQA Life also connected staff to community events, volunteer opportunities and provides information on cultural events including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.



Workplace environment and governance

One of our strategies is to operate as a high performing, effective and efficient organisation, with a commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce.

We continue to develop a strong culture based on our values of commitment, collaboration, integrity and respect. Recent benefits and opportunities introduced for staff include:

- a hybrid working environment which has increased the diversity of our workforce by expanding the geographical location in which our employees can reside
- all-staff forums that provide an opportunity for staff to come together and build on and maintain our strong organisational culture
- quarterly morning teas hosted by Executive members to welcome new staff, provide networking opportunities, and share information about organisational and business group priorities.

We have strong governance practices including:

- a focus on corporate governance review:
 - » risk mitigation and management across the organisation and in each individual major project, with regular reports to the AFR SC and Board
 - » regular review of the compliance policy, major compliance obligations and the non-compliance register
 - » regular reminders to staff about key fraud and corruption controls, as well as review of our fraud and corruption risks and control plan, which outlines our commitment to detecting, responding to and reporting fraud.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The National Law and National Regulations apply and modify the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act). Table 2 shows the status of Freedom of Information applications for the reporting period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Table 2: FOI application status

APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED	NUMBER
On hand as at 1 July 2022	0
Received	1
Granted in full	0
Granted in part	0
Access refused	0
Dealt with administratively	0
Withdrawn by the applicant	1
Transferred to another agency	0
On hand as at 30 June 2023	0
Appeals to the National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information Commissioner	0
Appeals to the relevant Administrative Tribunal	0

We have an Information Publication Plan which describes how we implement and administer the Information Publication Scheme under the FOI Act. We take a proactive approach to publishing information about our structure, functions, appointments, annual reports and FOI officer on our website.

PRIVACY

The National Law applies the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (the Privacy Act) to regulatory bodies that undertake the administration of the 'national education and care services quality framework'.

The National Law and National Regulations modify the way the Privacy Act applies to the national education and care services quality framework and to us. Our Privacy Policy, published on our website, provides information on:

- the type of personal information we collect and hold
- how we collect and hold personal information
- purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information
- how the public may access personal information held by us and seek its correction.

During 2022–23, we did not receive any privacy complaints and received one request for information under the Privacy Act.

In 2022, we developed a Privacy Management Plan which explains how ACECQA will meet its obligations under the Privacy Act, including the Australian Privacy Principles, in respect of our handling of personal information. In 2022, we also conducted our first Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) which is a systematic assessment that identifies the impact a project might have on the privacy of individuals, and sets out recommendations for managing, minimising or eliminating that impact. We have also created a Privacy Impact Assessment register that is published on our privacy page on the ACECQA website.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

The Education and Care Services (ECS) Ombudsman is an independent, statutory officer appointed by Education Ministers under the National Law. The Ombudsman is responsible for independently examining complaints and concerns about the administrative actions we undertake. In 2022–23, we worked with the ECS on an informal investigation of one qualifications assessment. No formal investigations were instigated.



PART 2

Reporting on
our functions and
administration
of the NQF

2.1 GUIDING ADMINISTRATION OF THE NQF

WORKING WITH OUR GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

One of the five key pillars of our strategic plan is to enhance the NQF by working with regulatory authorities and governments. Details of the inter-governmental committees and groups, and current projects with our government partners are provided throughout this section of the report.

Early Childhood Policy Group

The Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) reports to and provides high-level strategic policy advice to the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), through the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC), on early childhood education and care matters. We consult with ECPG on policy and high-level operational matters prior to reporting to AESOC and the EMM.

During 2022–23, in addition to consulting with ECPG on our formal reporting obligations, we have been an active member of several ECPG groups supporting and leading work on the following priority areas:

- 2019 NQF Review
- NQF Approved Learning Frameworks Update
- Joined up Approvals Project
- National Workforce Strategy (further detail in Part 2.8).

Regulatory Practice Committee

The Regulatory Practice Committee (RPC) provides us, all state and territory regulatory authorities and the Australian Government with a ‘community of practice’ to improve consistent regulatory practice, consider opportunities to reduce regulatory burden for services, share innovative operational policies and practices, and collectively inform and authorise a range of responses on behalf of all RPC members.

In 2022–23, the RPC and its working groups supported priority areas of regulatory work including:

- implementation of recommendations from the 2019 NQF Review, including issues relating to safety in multi-storey buildings
- development of national assessment and rating reforms
- regulation of outdoor space
- Six Reasonable Steps to Ensure Staff Follow Policies and Procedures
- accurate notifications of incidents resource
- guidance of the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap 2021–25.

OPERATIONAL AND EMERGING ISSUES WORKING GROUP (OEIWG)

A working group of RPC, this forum gives members the opportunity to easily share information and discuss operational issues. It is an effective way we help support nationally consistent approaches to implementing the NQF. In 2022–23, this has included the development of new guidance materials to assist approved providers meet their obligations under regulation 170 (Six Reasonable Steps to Ensure Staff Follow Policies and Procedures) and on the use and regulation of outdoor space.

In 2022–23, the OEIWG has also continued to focus on assessment and rating reform, as well as ongoing work relating to recommendations from the 2019 NQF Review.

ASSESSMENT AND RATING REFORM

Through OEIWG and RPC, members agreed on changes to quality assessment and rating operational processes to introduce efficiency, help ensure ratings reflect typical service practice, and drive continuous improvement. These changes are being introduced from early 2023, and include the increased use of partial reassessments, providing services with a shorter notice period of 1-5 days for most assessment and rating visits, and a renewed focus on quality improvement planning and integration into service practice.

Lead Investigator Network

The Lead Investigator Network (LIN) is a working group of the RPC and comprises lead investigators and compliance monitoring staff from each state and territory, ACECQA and the Australian Government. The LIN is a community of practice that allows members to discuss emerging trends and systemic issues, as well as sharing valuable information in relation to regulatory responses and practice. During 2022–23, we began the development of a new national resource to support accurate notifications of incidents in education and care services.

Lead Assessor Network

Another working group of RPC, the Lead Assessor Network (LAN) met quarterly to discuss operational and contextual issues, share resources, information, and support. In turn, LAN supports our ability to plan and contribute to the development of eLearning courses, guidance notes and master coding of authorised officer reliability and drift tests.

LAN meetings provide opportunities for establishing national consistency and a unified approach to supporting quality in education and care settings and ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children across Australia.

The ECEC Safety in Multi-storey Buildings Joint Working Group

We continued to lead the ECEC Safety in Multi-storey Buildings Joint Working Group, comprised of representatives from the Australian Government Department of Education and Department of Industry, Science and Resources, as well as the Queensland, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and New South Wales regulatory authorities. The working group has continued to increase safeguards for children in services located in multi-storey buildings by:

- supporting the NQF Review implementation of outcomes relating to service approvals and emergency and evacuation procedures for services located in multi-storey buildings
- working with the Australian Building Codes Board to achieve amendments to the National

Construction Code which commenced in May 2023. These include a range of improvements such as [changes](#) to building classification and increased Deemed-to-Satisfy requirements relating to compartmentation and separation, fire isolated exits, handrails, fire-fighting equipment and smoke hazard management. These improvements apply to new buildings (or new building work in existing buildings).

Communications Working Group

RPC’s Communications Working Group (CWG) brings together communications and engagement professionals representing all state and territory regulatory authorities, the Australian Government and ACECQA. CWG delivers the national NQF communications and engagement strategy, shares ideas and resources, and develops consistent national communications and engagement activities for priority issues identified by RPC.

National IT Systems Steering Group

RPC provides strategic guidance and direction in both the implementation of the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap 2021–25 (the Strategy), and with strategic priority setting related to the NQA ITS. Operating under the RPC is the National IT Systems Steering Group (NSG), which includes representatives from all state and territory regulatory authorities, the Australian Government and ACECQA.

The NSG is responsible for:

- making recommendations to RPC regarding the NQA ITS’s strategic priorities
- reporting to RPC on the implementation of the Strategy and other significant operational matters as they progress
- managing data quality and consistency issues for the regulatory authorities.

In the reporting period, the NSG met on a quarterly basis, discussing the current status of the NQA ITS, progression in the implementation of the Strategy, core development projects, and other technical and operational matters.



KEY PROJECTS

2019 NQF Review

Regular reviews of the NQF ensure the regulatory system remains current, achieves its objectives, and supports approved providers and services to provide high quality education and care. The majority of changes recommended from the 2019 NQF Review are being delivered throughout 2023. On behalf of all states and territories and the Australian Government, throughout 2022–23, the Review Implementation Group (RIG) has progressed the recommendations of the 2019 NQF Review, by delivering guidance materials and updates to the *Guide to the NQF*, to assist the education and care sector and regulatory authority personnel to understand changing legislative requirements, and by determining NQA ITS changes required to implement the Review recommendations.

We have supported ECPG’s Legislation Working Group (LWG) to advise on and review amendments to the *Education and Care Services National Law* and the Education and Care Services National Regulations to implement 2019 NQF Review and other required changes. The amendments are being implemented in stages across the year.

Approved Learning Frameworks Update

There have been two national approved learning frameworks in operation for services since 2009, which outline principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide educational leaders and educators in their curriculum decision-making, and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs in early childhood and school age settings.

In 2022–23, we commissioned the national consortium on behalf of governments to undertake an update of the national frameworks. Updated versions of both national approved learning frameworks were released in early 2023.

The updates to both frameworks are the result of a robust process to assess options and provide recommendations for change. This included reviewing contemporary research, comprehensive stakeholder engagement nationally, and piloting of proposed changes across a range of education and care settings.

The changes comprise a mix of clarifications and expanded explanations across parts of the original Approved Learning Frameworks, and a smaller number of more substantial changes, including the addition of three new principles and updated practices across all relevant aspects of V2.0 of both national frameworks. The main differences are a stronger connection between the frameworks and the National Quality Standard in areas such as transitions, sustainability, theoretical approaches, critical reflection, the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing, and inclusion.

Throughout 2023, approved providers and their services are familiarising themselves with the updated learning frameworks and adjusting relevant aspects of their educational program and practice where needed to reflect new or amended aspects of the frameworks. The original national learning frameworks remain in operation alongside the updated frameworks, until early 2024, to enable approved providers and their services time to transition.

Joined up Approvals (JuA) Project

The Joined up Approvals Project was launched 1 July 2023. Applications for both provider and service approval under the National Law (NL) and Family Assistance Law (FAL) are now submitted through the NQA ITS.

The JuA reforms the way state and territory regulators and the Australian Government assess the suitability of applicants, using a nationally consistent risk framework and operational practices. Applicants may also be asked to complete a nationally consistent online NL or FAL knowledge assessment. The assessment result helps to determine the applicant’s knowledge of the NL and/or FAL and their suitability to be an approved provider.

A series of NL and FAL e-learning education modules is now available for prospective applicants to complete prior to submitting an application. The e-learning modules are designed to enhance the applicant’s knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of becoming an approved provider.

Child safety review

Children’s health, safety and well-being is the paramount objective for governments and education and care services approved under the NQF. The NQF is over 10 years old and, to ensure it continues as a contemporary, world-class regulatory system, the Australian Government Department of Education engaged us to undertake a review of the child safety provisions under the NQF and related systems. The Review is focused on identifying systemic safeguards needed to support providers, teachers and educators to protect children, with an emphasis on reducing harm, including abuse and neglect. The Review report will be considered by Education Ministers later this year.

Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) quality and safety training package

The Australian Government engaged us to design, develop and deliver a quality and safety training package for CCCFR services (many of which were formerly known as Budget Based Funded services). The majority of CCCFR services are regulated under the NQF or residual state and territory legislation and approximately one third (priority services) are required to comply with Federal Minister's Rules.

From 2021 into early 2023, the CCCFR Training Package delivered tailored professional development to over 150 services, primarily located in regional and remote areas, and providing children's education and care for approximately 5000 children, 40 per cent of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The Training focused on improving safety and supervision. Phase 1 provided eLearning modules and materials, and a series of webinars for all CCCFR services, aimed at strengthening the quality of safety and supervision provided for children. Phase 2 of the project supported priority services through one-on-one facilitator support, a face-to-face workshop, community of practice sessions and where possible a service visit, all designed to:

- embed the practice from the learning materials at their service
- build capability in quality supervision and care practices and processes, and
- enable improved outcomes for children over the longer term.

An evaluation framework was developed for the project and used mixed methods to assess the program's outcomes, comprising three cross-sectional self-assessment and satisfaction surveys, content analysis of service summaries and qualitative analysis of facilitators' reflections on learning outcomes. The evaluation highlighted the benefits of the program and the extent to which outcomes are being achieved from a satisfaction and quality improvement perspective with:

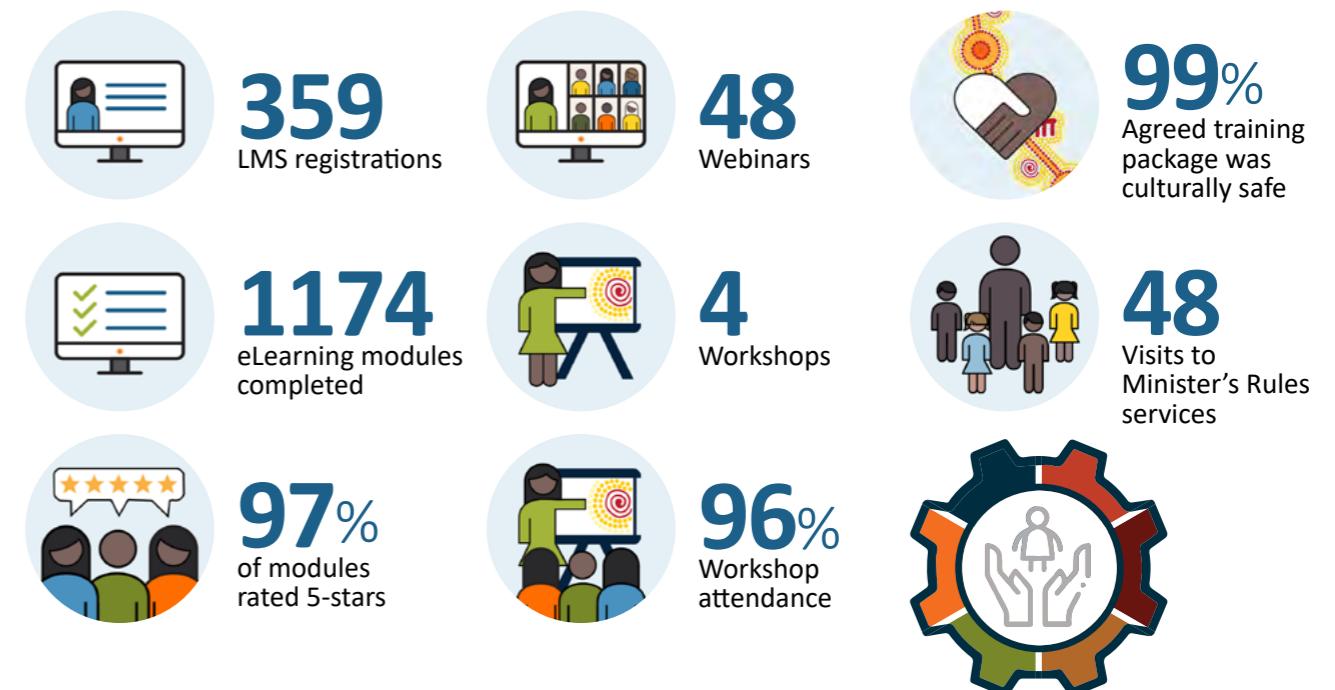
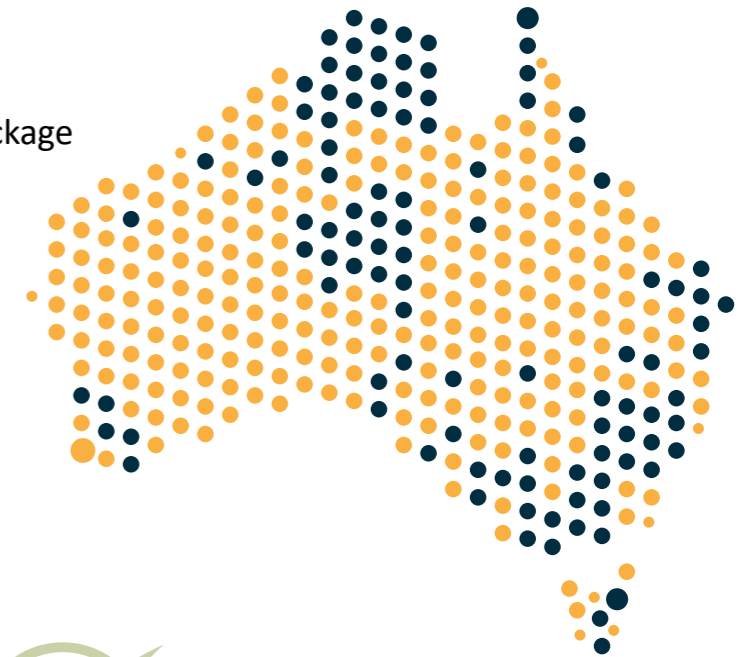
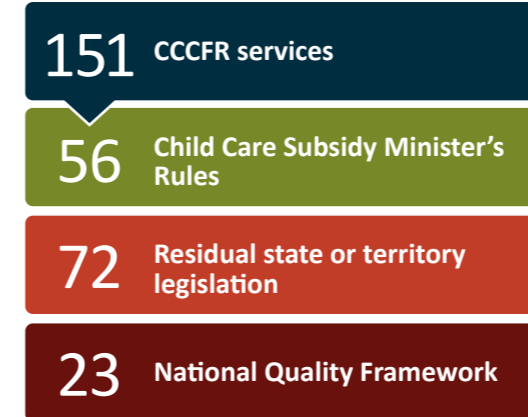
- 100% satisfaction with the training package
- 99% agreed the training package was culturally safe
- 97% of eLearning modules were rated five star
- 96% workshop attendance.

The learnings from the project are being used to inform our national sector guidance and authorised officer (AO) training to highlight and showcase how quality looks in different contexts.

Based on the successful outcomes of the project, the Australian Government has engaged us to deliver Stage 2, another 18-month professional development training program, which commenced in early 2023. Stage 2 includes professional development, eLearning and engagement opportunities. It is also delivered in two parts, with a continued focus on quality, safety and supervision and a Quality Area 1 Educational Program and Practice lens. Momentum has been maintained during the development of new eLearning modules and webinars, with a series of five online community of practice sessions held. In mid-June the first Stage 2 eLearning modules were launched ahead of webinars in July and August, which will be followed by workshops undertaken in partnership with the Australian Government and state and territory regulatory authorities to provide holistic support for services.

OVERVIEW

CCCFR Quality and Safety Training Package



2.2 REPORTING ON NQF QUALITY RATINGS

SECTOR OVERVIEW

There were 17,322 services [approved to operate](#) under the NQF at the end of the 2022–23 financial year – 16,874 centre-based care¹ services and 448 family day care² services. This represented an annual increase of two per cent for centre-based services and an annual decrease of 10 per cent for family day care services. Of the 7226 providers approved under the NQF, 79 per cent (5726) were approved to operate a single service.

QUALITY RATINGS

Regulatory authorities in each state and territory [quality assess and rate](#) services against the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#). This is in addition to the robust provider and service approval processes, and ongoing compliance, monitoring, enforcement and investigation activities that they undertake.

As at 30 June 2023:

- 91 per cent (15,765) of services have a [quality rating](#)³
- 89 per cent (14,049) of quality rated services are rated [Meeting NQS](#) or above – 24 per cent (3795) of these are rated [Exceeding NQS](#) or above
- 35 services are rated [Excellent](#)
- One service is rated Significant Improvement Required
- 17,691 quality rating reassessments had been completed. Of the services that were rated Working Towards NQS, 68 per cent improved their overall quality rating at reassessment.

Figure 2: National Quality Standard - quality areas and quality ratings



1 Centre-based care services include most long day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services. They do not include preschools in Tasmania or Western Australia that are outside the scope of the NQF, or other services that are not regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law*.

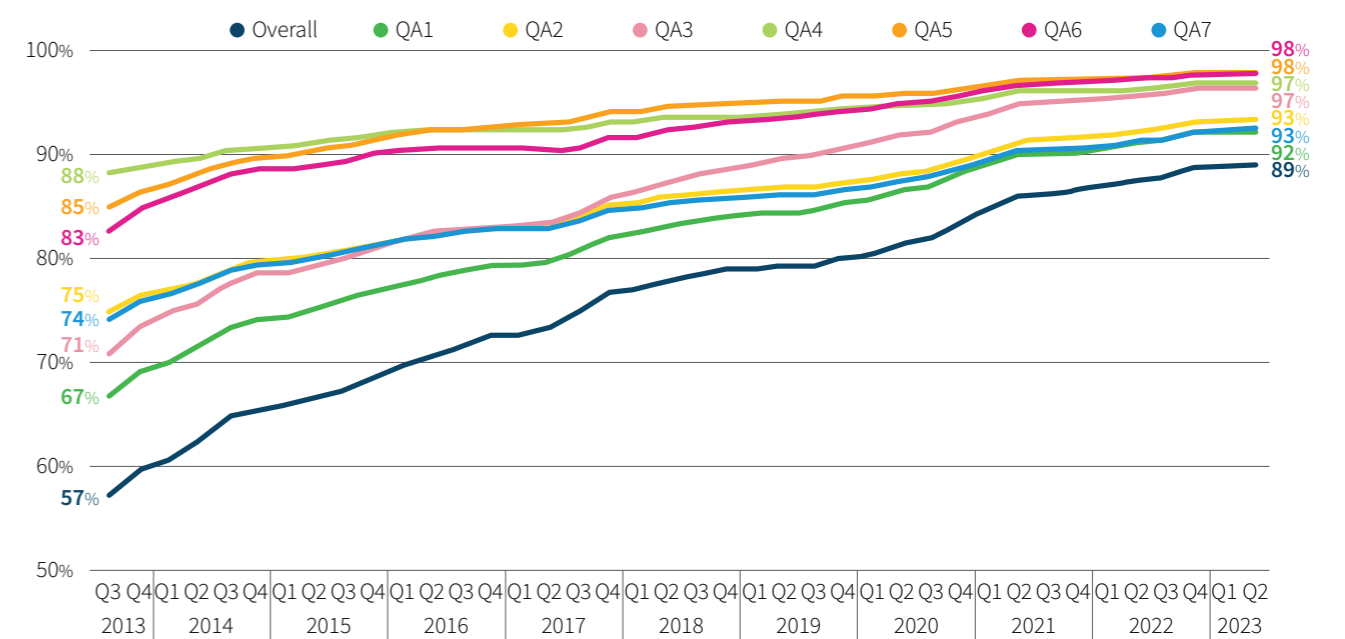
2 Family day care services provide education and care in residences or venues. They are sometimes known as family day care schemes and are administered and supported by central coordination units.

3 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: Overall quality ratings by jurisdiction

	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED	WORKING TOWARDS NQS	MEETING NQS	EXCEEDING NQS	EXCELLENT RATED	TOTAL
ACT	0	67 (19%)	130 (37%)	150 (43%)	2	349
NSW	1	556 (10%)	3,857 (70%)	1,113 (20%)	15	5,542
NT	0	35 (16%)	155 (72%)	24 (11%)	0	214
Queensland	0	294 (10%)	2,011 (67%)	696 (23%)	7	3,008
SA	0	195 (16%)	529 (43%)	490 (40%)	3	1,217
Tasmania	0	39 (18%)	128 (60%)	48 (22%)	0	215
Victoria	0	321 (8%)	2,678 (65%)	1,097 (27%)	8	4,104
WA	0	208 (19%)	766 (69%)	142 (13%)	0	1,116
TOTAL	1	1,715 (11%)	10,254 (65%)	3,760 (24%)	35	15,765

Figure 3: Proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above by overall rating and quality area⁴



4 QA1 - Educational program and practice; QA2 - Children's health and safety; QA3 - Physical environment; QA4 - Staffing arrangements; QA5 - Relationships with children; QA6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities; QA7 - Governance and leadership.

Figure 4: Overall quality ratings by service type

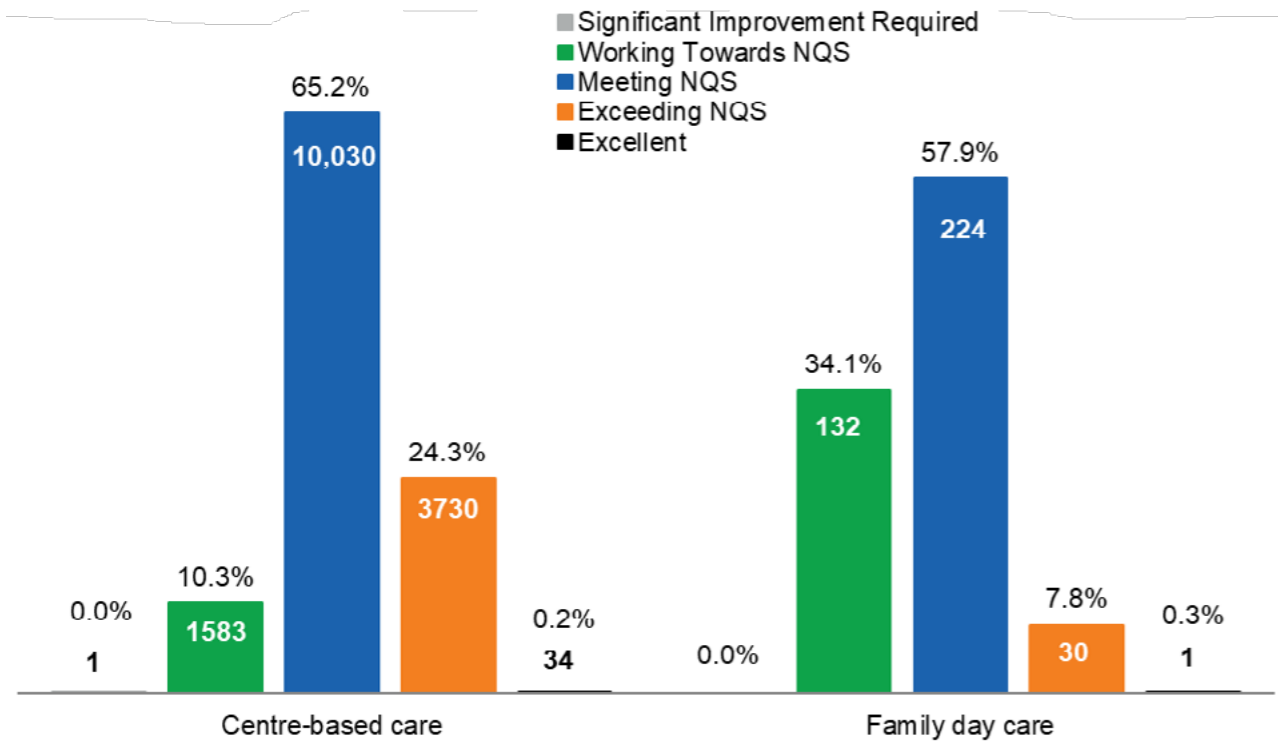


Figure 5: Quality area ratings

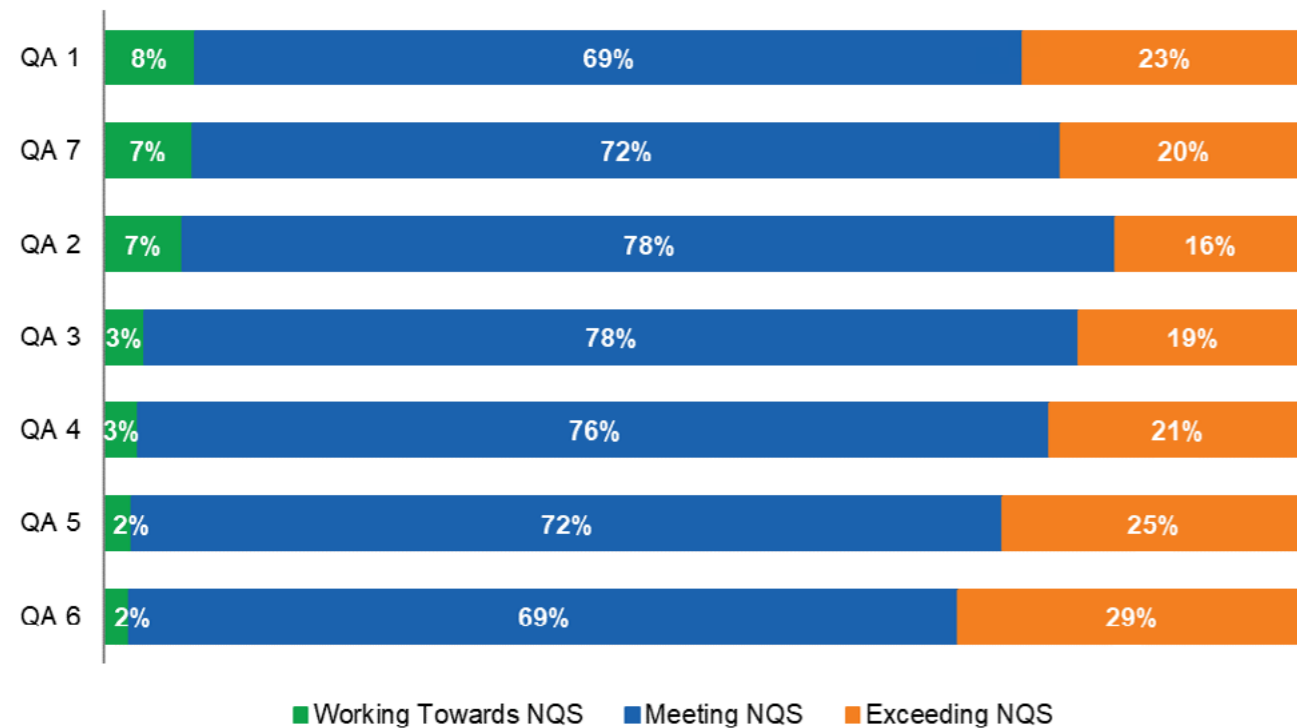


Table 4: Reassessments by overall quality rating

		RATING AFTER REASSESSMENT				TOTAL
		SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED	WORKING TOWARDS NQS	MEETING NQS	EXCEEDING NQS	
RATING BEFORE REASSESSMENT	Significant Improvement Required	20	80	17	0	117
	Working Towards NQS	52	2,207	4,012	792	7,063
	Meeting NQS	6	1,031	4,350	944	6,331
	Exceeding NQS	2	395	1,800	1,983	4,180
	TOTAL	80	3,713	10,179	3,719	17,691

		RATING AFTER REASSESSMENT				TOTAL
		SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED	WORKING TOWARDS NQS	MEETING NQS	EXCEEDING NQS	
RATING BEFORE REASSESSMENT	Significant Improvement Required	17%	68%	15%	0%	83%
	Working Towards NQS	1%	31%	57%	11%	68%
	Meeting NQS	0%	16%	69%	15%	15%
	Exceeding NQS	0%	9%	43%	47%	-

2.3 REPORTING ON NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

Our [research and evaluation strategy \(2021–24\)](#) sets out our approach to ongoing research and evaluation under the NQF, including:

- **internal production** of a broad range of regular and ad hoc reports
- **commissioning** research from third parties, when a specific need or priority arises
- **collaboration and partnerships** with governments and sector stakeholders.

The strategy is underpinned by the [NQF Evaluation Framework](#), agreed by all governments. It was developed so governments and their regulatory agencies have an agreed way of understanding whether and how the NQF is meeting its objectives.

Our research and evaluation activities align to one or more of the objectives of the NQF to ensure they contribute to the NQF evidence base, with our [research and reports page](#) continuing to provide a repository of NQF related research and evidence.

Partner bodies, such as the [Australian Education Research Organisation](#) (AERO) and the [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership](#) (AITSL) also continue to contribute important research, evidence and guidance to the children's education and care sector.

NQF ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Our sixth [annual performance report](#), published in December 2022, highlighted several important milestones and achievements for the NQF, including the 10-year anniversary of the regulatory system.

It showed the continuous improvement the NQF aims to foster is occurring across all seven quality areas of the NQS. Other highlights included the release of the [National Workforce Strategy](#) and accompanying Implementation and Evaluation Plan, which address critical and longstanding workforce issues.

A range of [supporting resources](#), including a report summary, interactive report charts and a summary slide pack were published alongside the main report.

NQF SNAPSHOTS

Our quarterly [NQF Snapshot](#) reports provide analysis and information on the profile of the children's education and care sector, and the quality ratings awarded to services, including examining the distribution of ratings by service and provider management type, and geographic location.

In addition to detailed information about the quality of education and care services, the Snapshot and interactive [Online Snapshot](#) include data about other aspects of service regulation, such as staffing waivers.

We continue to add new content to the interactive [Online Snapshot](#), including in 2023–23:

- the proportion of services rated Meeting NQS and Exceeding NQS or above over time
- geographic representations of the proportion of staffing and physical environment waivers across the country.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

In July 2022, we published our [eighth occasional paper](#), marking the first decade of the NQF.

The paper provided a high level overview of the NQF, highlighted progress over the past 10 years, and summarised a range of projects and strategies in place to ensure the NQF remains fit for purpose.

The paper highlighted the huge progress our sector has made since the introduction of the NQF in 2012, driven by the efforts of hundreds of thousands of service providers, teachers, educators and other service staff. It also noted the marked rise in service quality over the past decade and the benefit children receive from high quality education and care.

Our [ninth occasional paper](#), analysing serious incidents relating to injury, trauma or illness, was published in June 2023.

The paper highlighted the trends in notifications of serious incidents resulting in injury, trauma or illness in children's education and care services during a two-year period. It identified the volume, characteristics and causes of these incidents, including the times and locations they are more likely to happen. It also offered practical strategies to support providers and educators to prevent and reduce such incidents.

Providers and educators can also refer to our recently published [information sheet](#) on managing and responding to injury, trauma and illness incidents.

All our occasional papers are available on the [research and reports page](#) of our website.

NQF NATIONAL AUDITS

In 2022–23, we completed one national audit examining serious incidents that result in injury, trauma or illness between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2022. Analysis included relevant data extracted from the NQA ITS and questionnaire responses from jurisdictional audit contacts, and a cross-section of large providers across Australia.

The audit shared recommendations for governments and regulators to develop further national guidance on serious incident notifications to help the sector better understand their reporting obligations.

Our audits align with our objectives of guiding the administration of the NQF and monitoring and promoting national consistency. They also align with the evaluation questions in the [NQF Evaluation Framework](#). Our audit topics focus on areas that have been identified and agreed as high priority, and the outcomes, learnings and good practice are shared with state and territory regulatory authorities.

NQA ITS USERS SURVEY

We strive to improve the function and usability of the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS), the online tool offering providers secure direct communication with regulatory authorities. We conduct an annual NQA ITS users survey which gathers feedback from end users of the NQA ITS about usability, the effectiveness of system guidance and the quality of the support offered by our IT service desk.

Results from the 2022 survey indicate that most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the system itself, the available training and guidance, and the service desk.

Annual survey results are used to support system changes and improvements, and gauge whether it is meeting the requirements of both service providers and state and territory regulatory authorities.

NQF APPROVED PROVIDER PERCEPTION SURVEY

One of the objectives of the NQF is to reduce the regulatory and administrative burden for children's education and care services.

We conducted six surveys examining approved providers' perceptions of the NQF since 2013.

In 2022, support for the NQF remained very high among approved providers, at 97 per cent although half of respondents reported high levels of overall burden associated with the administrative requirements.

The latest survey results were published in the [NQF Annual Performance Report](#) 2022 and are used to support changes and improvements to the regulatory system.

2.4 NATIONAL REGISTERS AND NATIONAL QUALITY AGENDA IT SYSTEM (NQA ITS)

FAMILIES SURVEY

We conducted our fourth families' survey in mid-2023. The online survey aimed to understand more about factors families consider when choosing an education and care service, and the information used to inform the decision.

The survey targeted both existing users of education and care services, as well as families who were considering using an education and care service in the next 12 months.

The latest survey results will be published in the [NQF Annual Performance Report 2023](#) before the end of the calendar year.

REPORT ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Together with governments, we contribute to the annual [Report on Government Services](#) (RoGS), which provides information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia.

The early childhood education and care chapter of RoGS contains data on the quality of NQF approved education and care services and compliance measures, including serious incidents that occurred at approved services and the number of confirmed breaches of the National Law and Regulations. There is also information contributed by other organisations on the size, scope and funding of the education and care sector, and performance indicators relating to participation, cost and demand for services.

In 2022–23, we also contributed to several other collaborative research projects including taking part in the project advisory group for the Australian Education Research Organisation [Early childhood science of learning and development project](#).

SUBMISSIONS TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

We make submissions to national or jurisdictional reviews in line with our statutory responsibilities and role.

In 2022–23, we made submissions to the following inquiries:

- [Early Childhood Education and Care](#) (2023) Productivity Commission
- [SA Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care](#) (2022) South Australian Government
- [Review of Australia's Migration System](#) (2022) Australian Government
- [National Teacher Workforce Action Plan](#) (2022) Australian Government
- [Employment White Paper Consultation](#) (2022) Australian Government
- [Updating the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations](#) (2022) Australian Bureau of Statistics.

All published submissions are available on the [research and reports page](#) of our website.

NATIONAL REGISTERS OF APPROVED PROVIDERS AND THEIR SERVICES

We publish and maintain two [national registers](#) to provide open and transparent information about education and care providers and their services:

- Education and Care Services – this register lists all services approved to operate under the NQF. These records display operational details, any conditions on the approval that must be met, and the previous and current quality ratings issued to the service.
- Approved Providers – this register details individuals or entities authorised to operate an approved education and care service. The current approved services are also listed demonstrating which services the approved provider currently operates.

The two registers can be viewed online or can be exported for ease of use by the public. The register information is also available on our [StartingBlocks website](#).

NQA ITS

The National Quality Agenda (NQA) IT System is essential for fulfilling many of our functions under Section 225 of the National Law, including the publication and maintenance of the National Registers. The NQA ITS is a national database and online business tool used by regulatory authorities and ACECQA in the administration and implementation of the NQF. The NQA ITS offers approved providers of children's education and care, secure and direct communication with regulatory authorities.

Following completion of a significant initiative across 2021–2022 and 2022–23, the NQA ITS is now also the single portal for submission and assessment of Child Care Subsidy provider and services approval applications assessed by the Australian Government under the Family Assistance Law (FAL), alongside National Law provider and service approval applications. This outcome was delivered through the Joined up Approvals project as detailed in [Part 2.1](#).

The NQA ITS main functions comprise:

- CRM as the National Database – the NQA ITS provides customer records management (CRM) enabling jurisdictions to enter, process and manage data related to the implementation of the NQF in their state or territory.
- Public Portal – the NQA ITS Public Portal provides a tool for approved providers to communicate with regulatory authorities through the submission of notifications, applications and any other documentation required under the National Law to demonstrate compliance.
- Reporting – the NQA ITS supports ACECQA and governments to meet their reporting requirements. The reporting functionality of the NQA ITS is essential for providing data and insights that aid governments in making evidence-informed decisions. ACECQA uses data reported from the system to produce our quarterly NQF Snapshot, annual performance reports, and to inform policy and communications initiatives.

NQA ITS GOVERNANCE

The NQA ITS is maintained by ACECQA and governed as outlined within [Part 1](#), including any requirements set out in the Letter of Expectation.

The strategic direction of the NQA ITS is established in our [strategic plan](#), which aligns with the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap 2021–25 (the Strategy). The Strategy was developed in consultation with state and territory regulatory authorities and the Australian Government to ensure it meets governments' collective needs.

NQA ITS USAGE

NQA ITS users

Throughout the reporting period, the NQA ITS has supported users from state and territory governments, the Australian Government and our people who fulfil a range of functions as the national authority and custodians of the NQA ITS.

In the 2022 NQA ITS Survey, 73 per cent of secure users agreed or strongly agreed that the NQA ITS helped them to efficiently complete their work, and 80 per cent agreed or strongly agreed they felt confident knowing how to use the NQA ITS correctly.

NQA ITS public portal usage

The public portal enables approved providers and service representatives to quickly and efficiently submit applications, notifications and any other requested documentation. There has been a significant increase in the utilisation of the public portal as the NQA ITS has evolved and communication has become increasingly digitised. The public portal provides a significant reduction in administrative burden for providers and efficiencies for regulatory authorities as they respectively implement and administer the NQF.

In the 2022–23 reporting period, a total of 10,940 applications and 113,060 notifications were submitted.

The public portal users were invited to participate in the 2022 NQA ITS Survey based on their experiences. The results demonstrated that 75 per cent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the NQA ITS.

In addition to the functions listed above, the NQA ITS' public portal supports users to:

- review and update provider and service details and submit notifications as required under the National Law
- pay invoices for annual fees
- download a copy of their service's latest quality rating certificate



- access reports that support implementation of the NQF and promote the effective and efficient use of the portal
- manage linked users and their access across the functions on the portal
- access a register for prohibited persons and suspended educators.

NQA ITS RELEASES

The NQA ITS evolves through the implementation of enhancements and system changes that are developed in collaboration with our government partners, as well as through improvements suggested by sector users. Throughout the reporting period, there have been three core technical development projects progressing that have driven the changes and enhancements made to the system.

There were two main releases in the reporting period, which included the following enhancements:

- necessary changes to support the implementation of the outcomes of the 2019 NQF Review, including additional requirements around centre-based services that provide regular transport
- significant changes to enable Joined up Approvals for both National Law and Family Assistance Law to be submitted through the Public Portal and assessed by the Australian Government and regulatory authorities.

NQA ITS SERVICE DESK

Our in-house service desk is the port of call for technical questions from the sector, regulatory authorities and the Australian Government seeking assistance in using the system. In 2022–23, the service desk responded to 2331 enquiries from users.

NQA ITS TRAINING SUPPORT

We provide training and support to the regulatory authorities and the Australian Government through online, self-paced interactive courses, videos, and guidance documents. The sector can access [guidance documents on our website](#), with new guides provided as the NQA ITS evolves.

In the reporting period, we established and delivered tailored training for users in the lead up to the release for Joined up Approvals. Guidance and training materials have also been updated to support users with these changes moving forward.

NQA ITS STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT ROADMAP 2021–25

Progressing the implementation of the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap (the Strategy) has been a significant endeavour during the reporting period. The current project delivery schedule will provide a major uplift to a cloud environment of the NQA ITS, which will provide the foundational requirements required to achieve the Strategy's future state for the NQA ITS.

We reached our first major milestone as we completed the design and discovery phase of the project in November 2022. We are currently well into the build phase of this work and expect to complete this significant technical upgrade in 2023–24.

2.5 SECOND TIER REVIEWS AND EXCELLENT RATING

SECOND TIER REVIEWS

Second tier reviews allow approved providers to seek a further rating review where they disagree with the rating level awarded by the regulatory authority at first tier review. Ratings reviews are conducted by an independent ratings review panel.

Applications received and finalised

In 2022–23, we received six second tier review applications, and finalised five applications. This continues a downward trend in the number of second tier reviews applications being made, which may be due to the continued impact of the COVID pandemic.

Table 5: Source of applications for second tier review received 2022–23

APPLICATION	JURISDICTION	SERVICE TYPE
1	NSW	Outside School Hours Care
2	NSW	Long day care
3	SA	Long day care
4	ACT	Long day care
5	NSW	Family day care
6	QLD	Outside School Hours Care

Table 6: First tier review ratings of services that had a second tier review in 2022–23

RATING AT FIRST TIER REVIEW	NUMBER
Exceeding NQS	1
Meeting NQS	3
Working Towards NQS	1

In all five finalised cases, ratings review panels decided to confirm all ratings under review.



Information about the ratings review panel, the number of second tier review applications received and finalised, and the outcomes of these applications, are available on our [website](#).

EXCELLENT RATING

We award the Excellent rating for children’s education and care services in Australia as one of our functions under the National Law. The Excellent rating is the highest rating a service can achieve. To be eligible to apply for the Excellent rating, a service must have received a quality rating of Exceeding NQS in all seven quality areas from their state or territory regulatory authority.

In 2022–23, we assessed 18 applications for the Excellent rating and awarded the rating to eight services. Of the 18 applications, four were from services already rated Excellent and reapplying for the second, third or fourth time. One of the four reapplying services was Bribie Island Community Kindergarten, the first service to be awarded the rating for a fourth time.

All applications, including re-applications, are assessed against the following criteria determined by our Board:

- **Criterion 1:** The service exemplifies and promotes exceptional education and care that improves outcomes for children and families across at least three of the five themes
- **Criterion 2:** The service demonstrates leadership that contributes to the development of a community, a local area, or the wider education and care sector
- **Criterion 3:** The service demonstrates commitment to sustained excellent practice through continuous improvement and comprehensive forward planning.

The most popular themes under Criterion 1 for 2022–23, with 17 out of 18 applications applying for these themes, were:

- Theme 1: Collaborative partnerships with professional community or research organisations

- Theme 4: Positive workplace culture, organisational values, support of educators and sustained commitment to professional development.

The following describes applicant success across the criteria:

Criterion 1:

- Theme 1: Collaborative partnerships with professional community or research organisation – 29 per cent of applicants who applied for this theme met the theme
- Theme 2: Commitment to children that reflects, respects and celebrates culture and diversity, including place of origin – 50 per cent of applicants who applied for this theme met the theme
- Theme 3: Inclusive partnerships with children and families – 55 per cent of applicants who applied for this theme met the theme
- Theme 4: Positive workplace culture, organisational values, support of educators and sustained commitment to professional development – 67 per cent of applicants who applied for this theme met the theme
- Theme 5: Practice and environments that enhance children’s learning and growth – 53 per cent of applicants who applied for this theme met the theme.

Criterion 2: 44 per cent of applicants met this criterion.

Criterion 3: 44 per cent of applicants met this criterion.

Table 7: Source of applications received 2022–23

JURISDICTION	NUMBER
NSW	4
QLD	5
VIC	7
WA	2

In 2022–23, the highest number of applications came from services in Victoria.

Excellent rated service profile

As of 30 June 2023, 35 services have the Excellent rating, and all children’s education and care service types continue to be represented.

A high proportion of services awarded the Excellent rating continue to be from some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Australia. As illustrated in Table 8, 46 per cent of services rated Excellent are in the three most disadvantaged areas, as rated by their Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA).

Table 8: Number and proportion of services rated Excellent by Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Disadvantage*

SEIFA RANKING	NUMBER	PROPORTION
10 (Least disadvantaged)	2	6%
9	2	6%
8	5	14%
7	3	9%
6	0	0%
5	1	3%
4	6	17%
3	5	14%
2	1	3%
1 (Most disadvantaged)	10	29%
TOTAL	35	100%

* The [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\)](#) is a product of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census. Variables used cover a number of areas including household income, education, employment, occupation, housing and other indicators of advantage and disadvantage. ACECQA uses the address details of a service at the Statistical Area 1 (SA1) level to identify its SEIFA Index of Relative Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (ISRAD) classification. Some services are excluded from SEIFA classifications because of poor quality address matching.

As of 30 June 2023, we have received a total of 340 applications for the Excellent rating since the legislative provisions enabling this function were proclaimed in April 2013. Over this time, 143 services have been awarded the Excellent rating (this includes re-awarding the rating).



RECIPIENTS OF THE EXCELLENT RATING IN 2022-23

We awarded the Excellent rating for a fourth time to:

- Bribie Island Community Kindergarten

We awarded the Excellent rating for a third time to:

- Everton Park Child Care and Development Centre

We awarded the Excellent rating for a second time to:

- Gowrie Victoria Broadmeadows Valley

The following services were awarded the Excellent rating for the first time:

- Carrum Family and Children's Centre
- Uniting Airlie Preschool Oatlands
- Capel Sounds Educational Child Care Centre
- Goodstart Early Learning Clayton
- KU Macquarie Fields Preschool.

Examples of excellence

In 2022–23, we continued to share examples of unique and exceptional practices from Excellent rated services with the sector, stakeholders and regulatory authorities. Examples are regularly shared across our publications and used as a benchmark and reflection point across teams when discussing best practice, contextual practices and partnerships with children, families and community organisations. Many leaders of Excellent rated services proactively support and guide fellow services and elevate leadership practice, promoting greater recognition of the professionalism of the early childhood education and care sector. Examples include:

- Bribie Island Community Kindergarten published 'The Joondoburri Walk' book, which comprises First Nations historical knowledge and the related artwork of children and students from across the Bribie Island community.
- Uniting Airlie Preschool Oatlands partnered with families to establish a 'Gifted and High Potential' policy to ensure a particular child



could feel supported to share their advanced cognitive skills in group settings and to further develop their social skills development.

- Goodstart Early Learning Clayton hosted state-wide education and care professionals for an open night of discussions to increase exposure to connecting with nature and reflective practices. The purpose of the night was to impart knowledge on engaging environments across all age groups and to discuss the values of sustainability, agency, equity and inclusion.
- KU Macquarie Fields hosts frequent pedagogy meetings for staff to support dialogue around practice, ethical decision making, responsive engagement with families and prospective professional development opportunities.
- Carrum Family and Children's Centre employs a kitchen coordinator to provide nutritional menus, support families with diverse needs, allergies and dietary needs and to implement the Stephanie Alexander Garden Project within the service.



ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES – StartingBlocks.gov.au

We continue to work towards increasing families' and the public's understanding of the importance of early childhood development and the benefits of giving children the best start in life through high quality education and care.

Our family focused StartingBlocks.gov.au website helps parents to:

1. find local services and view their vacancies, fees, quality ratings and inclusions
2. compare services side-by-side
3. estimate their Child Care Subsidy entitlements
4. learn more about National Quality Standard (NQS) quality ratings
5. get information and advice about activities to do at home and children's developmental milestones.

The [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://www.startingblocks.gov.au) website provides a range of information and resources, all written in plain English.

The resources offer advice to families on early childhood education and care, including choosing the right service, preparing your child before starting at a service and helping them settle in. They also provide tips on what to expect from the educators and how to build and maintain a collaborative partnership with your child's educators once they start attending an early childhood education and care service. The helpful resources for stay-at-home parents, including activities to do at home to encourage children's learning and development, makes StartingBlocks.gov.au a one-stop shop for information on quality children's education and care.

The website also has a selection of translated factsheets about choosing the right service for your child, preparing your child and other related topics. Languages include Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Hindi, Korean, Punjabi and Vietnamese.

We encourage providers and services to promote StartingBlocks.gov.au to their families, and to use StartingBlocks.gov.au information and resources in their conversations and communications with families.

StartingBlocks.gov.au enhancement project

Our work, in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Education, to enhance StartingBlocks.gov.au continued during this reporting period.

As at 30 June 2023:

- updates to the Child Care Subsidy (CSS) Calculator tool were available to help families estimate their costs from 10 July 2023, when CCS changes took effect. Most families receiving CCS may receive an increased amount and more families will become eligible. The StartingBlocks.gov.au CCS Calculator tool also featured in the Australian Government's Cheaper Childcare campaign from 2 June 2023.
- updates to present new Provider pages were ready for publication on 1 July 2023 to share information about large provider fees increases and revenue, to support the Australian Government's commitment to greater fees transparency and sharing reporting information.

StartingBlocks.gov.au website growth

Views of the website increased by 29 per cent during the reporting period – there were 2,027,769 views in 2022–23 compared to 1,571,819 views in 2021–22.

This growth can be attributed to the increase in traffic to our popular new tools – Find Child Care and the Child Care Subsidy Calculator. Views of Find Child Care increased by 848 per cent to a record 327,247 views in 2022–23. The top five resources/ webpages in 2022–2023 were:

1. [Find Child Care](#)
2. Child Care Subsidy Calculator
3. The importance of play in children's learning and development
4. Your child's development – 3 to 5 years
5. A brief guide to the Assessment and Rating process.

Child Care Subsidy calculator

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) calculator (formerly the Fees Estimator tool) continues to help families estimate out of pocket costs easily. There were two updates to the Child Care Subsidy calculator during 2022–23:

- In February 2023, we released updates incorporating recommendations from 2022 user testing. We streamlined the user flow and added additional functionality to help families estimate their future CCS rates when changes are introduced from 10 July 2023.
- In June 2023, we refreshed the look and feel of the calculator to align with the Australian Government's Cheaper Child Care campaign.
- There were 341,217 views of the Child Care Subsidy Calculator in 2022–23. The change of the name and updates to the Child Care Subsidy accelerated the growth in use of this tool.



StartingBlocks.gov.au social media

StartingBlocks.gov.au social media channels – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – are continually driving increased engagement and traffic to the website.

The StartingBlocks.gov.au Facebook had a reach of 776,431, an improvement of 108.6 per cent when compared to the previous financial year. The StartingBlocks.gov.au Instagram also showed increased performance with 175,102 accounts reached, an improvement of 149.3 per cent from the previous year. The increase can be attributed to our digital communications campaign to increase brand awareness in August 2022, in addition to regular promotions of StartingBlocks.gov.au resources throughout the year.

The StartingBlocks.gov.au Facebook page has over 44,000 followers as at 30 June 2023, and is the biggest social media contributor to website traffic. Over 91 per cent of visitors to the website via social media came through Facebook. StartingBlocks.gov.au has approximately 4900 followers on Instagram and approximately 474 followers on Twitter.

Top performing Facebook posts

1. Childcare Tool: 65,048 reach
2. Tips for encouraging your toddler's learning: 43,341 reach
3. Service types Outside school hours care: 37,195 reach
4. Play Based Learning: Mathematics: 36,572 reach
5. Compare early learning services, fees and vacancies: 36,562 reach

Top performing Instagram posts

1. Quality Learning Service Video 24,537 reach
2. Early childhood education and care 20,326 reach
3. National government one-stop-shop for families 10,067 reach
4. World environment day 4,340 reach
5. Tips for encouraging your toddler's learning 2437 reach



StartingBlocks.gov.au 2022 Digital Marketing Campaign

In July and August 2022, we ran a digital campaign (digital advertising and social media) to engage with families and communities and create awareness of the StartingBlocks.gov.au website. Our campaign collectively reached over 805k unique accounts and 1.7m impressions on Facebook and generated a total of over 39k reach with 730k impressions on Google.

New resources to support children through transitions

In 2022, we developed a new resource to help families support their child if they are transitioning to a new group, room or service.

StartingBlocks.gov.au Communications Strategy 2021–2026

Communicating and engaging with families is a priority for us and we aim to help them understand and value quality children’s education and care and to become a voice for continuous quality improvement. Our StartingBlocks.gov.au

Communications Strategy 2021–2026 has the following communications objectives – provide clear, engaging and accessible information to the following key stakeholders:

- parents to help them find a quality early childhood education and care service using the StartingBlocks.gov.au Find Child Care tool
- parents to help them find out about preparing and starting at an education and care service, what to expect from a service, children’s development and at-home learning on the StartingBlocks.gov.au website.

Key communications objectives in Year 4 of our communications strategy include:

- the creation of additional content/information for Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care audiences
- continuing the website optimisation and UX enhancements released in Year 3 of the strategy.

ENGAGEMENT

Conferences and speaking engagements

We participate in a range of sector conferences and speaking engagements to promote the NQF and support continuous quality improvement and innovation across the sector.

More detail on our 2022–23 major speaking and sector engagements is at **Appendix F**.

Sector Information Services team

Our Sector Information Services team is often our first point of contact with stakeholders, offering support and keeping the sector informed for all queries relating to the NQF. During 2022–23, we received a total of 30,136 enquiries, made up of 15,770 phone calls and 14,366 emails. The highest number of enquiries related to qualifications, equalling 55 per cent of total enquiries. Our stakeholders consist of approved providers, educators, prospective service staff, parents, and families. As part of our Customer Service Charter, the Sector Information Services team has a goal to respond to email enquiries within five business days. The average response time in 2022–23 was two days. We also draw on our enquiries to inform newsletter articles, information sheets, blogs, social media posts and website content to share relevant information with a broader audience.

ACECQA website

Our website is a trusted and popular source of information, particularly for our key stakeholders including educators, approved providers and peak organisations.

Based on total sessions during this reporting period, the top three pages that people have visited are:

1. Home Page
2. The National Quality Standard
3. Services Search

The ACECQA Resource Finder tool continues to help users find specific information on our website and allows them to filter search results by category and format.

2019 NQF Review website

In 2019, we built the www.nqfreview.com.au ‘Have Your Say’ website as the national online engagement platform to encourage participation in the review process by the sector, families and communities. They used it to learn about the review, stay up to date with its progress, and provide feedback on an Issues Paper, by completing surveys to have their say on the NQF.

During 2022–23, we continued delivering ongoing communications and engagement services and the 2019 NQF Review reached an important milestone in early 2023, when the implementation of changes to the NQF agreed by Australian Government, state and territory Education Ministers commenced. These changes are set out in a Decision Regulation Impact Statement (DRIS) which was published on the NQF Review website on 8 June 2022, and we have been regularly updating the summary table on this page to share details about the implementation of the review outcomes.

We are proud of the important national role the online community engagement platform www.nqfreview.com.au has played to date, allowing more people than ever before to have their say during the 2019 NQF Review, which supports better informed decision making. Its data security measures have supported everyone to safely ‘have their say’ and its compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level AA standards support usability, especially by people with disabilities.

Since its launch in 2019, over 64,000 people have visited the 2019 NQF Review website, and there have been over 19,000 downloads of key review publications.

Social media

Our social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, are continually driving increased engagement with our communications. During this reporting year, our social media content has regularly reached more than 162,700 people a week (not unique users).

Our Facebook followers (63,607 as at 30 June 2023) have grown by almost 4000 on the previous year and our Twitter followers (5461 as at 30 June 2023) have grown by nearly 100 on the previous year.

ACECQA newsletter

Our monthly ACECQA Newsletter reaches subscribers from across Australia, providing regular updates on our activities and the NQF and showcasing examples of high quality and continuous quality improvement in the childhood education and care sector.

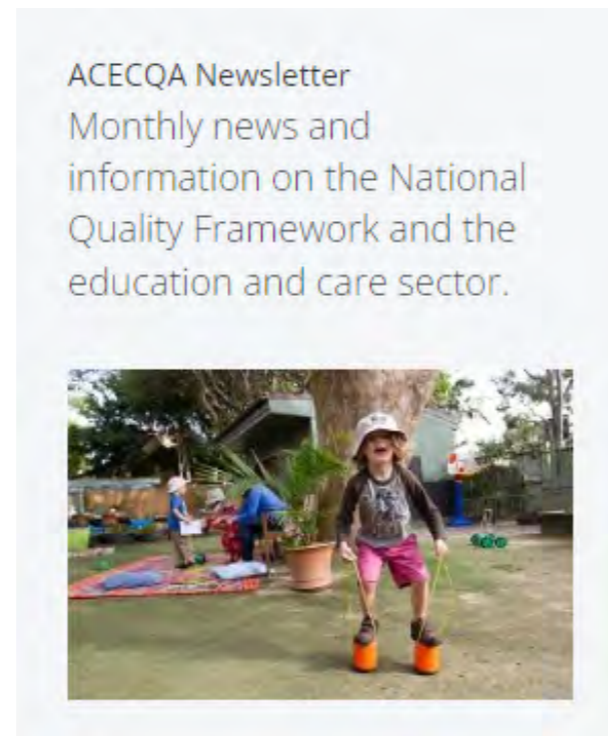
As at 30 June 2023, more than 42,000 people are subscribed to the [ACECQA Newsletter](#). Our commitment is to give them information about special events in the month ahead, updates on national initiatives and fresh articles that may be useful to them as professionals working as providers, educational leaders, teachers, educators, coordinators and as people who are passionate about children's and young people's education and development.

In particular, the ACECQA Newsletter aims to inform early childhood education and care professionals on issues impacting the sector and legislative and policy changes that may affect them, as well as promote the NQF through engaging and topical content.

All of this supports our achievement of our [Letter of Expectation](#) requirements to:

- contribute to public knowledge of, and access to information about, the quality of education and care services, and choices for families to meet their child's interests and needs
- continue to identify and promote better practice and successful innovations by approved providers, service leaders, teachers and educators

The most clicked-on ACECQA Newsletter items during 2022–23 include [Updates to national approved learning frameworks, 1 July NQF Changes](#) and [Approved learning frameworks resources](#).



ACECQA We Hear You Blog

As the national authority, our We Hear You blog features articles and guest posts from a variety of contributors offering unique perspectives from the children's education and care sector. In 2022–23, our blog received 224,910 views and featured articles on educational leadership, collaborative partnerships and sustainability.

ACECQA Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021–2024

We are committed to engaging and working with sector stakeholders to effectively deliver our functions for a diverse sector and, collectively, achieve improved outcomes for children attending education and care services.

Our ACECQA Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021–2024 articulates the who, how, when, and why of our engagement with each stakeholder group so that we:

- understand all views and needs and remain 'fit for purpose'
- learn from each stakeholder group and share expertise, experience and knowledge
- maximise our impact through partnership opportunities
- continue to improve our performance
- use resources efficiently, properly and effectively.

Our functions under the National Law and our priorities under the ACECQA Strategic Plan guide the focus of these engagements.

National NQF Communications and Engagement Strategy

Our continued NQF success is driven by the collaborative efforts of governments, services, educators and teachers, families and ACECQA working together to achieve the objectives of the NQF.

During 2022–23, we have continued working closely with all states and territories to ensure families have a sound understanding of the role of the regulatory

authority, the importance of quality education and care services, and the NQF in practice.

Key campaigns in 2022–23 have focused on enhancements to our family focused StartingBlocks.gov.au website, safe transportation of children, the updated approved learning frameworks, and the implementation of NQF changes following the 2019 NQF Review.

We have prioritised engaging visual content in social media campaigns and creation of promotional video animations to support the strategy's effectiveness and to continue to meet the needs of all our growing audiences.

Our goal is to improve everyone's experiences navigating and understanding the NQF relevant support and information we publish, so that they can support quality children's education and care.

RESOURCES

The Guide to the NQF

Under Section 225 of the National Law, we must provide guidance on the NQF. The *Guide to the NQF* is the key reference document we publish and update regularly, to deliver on this. It is designed to help education and care providers, educators and authorised officers understand and apply the requirements of the NQF.

While the National Law and Regulations take precedence, the *Guide to the NQF* provides information for all NQF service types in all states and territories. To support accessibility and greater use of this important resource, during this reporting period we have created a new online version of the Guide featuring enhanced navigation and search functions. This additional version of the Guide will be published on our website in July 2023 along with the PDF version.

During this reporting year, we made updates to the Guide content on 1 March 2023 regarding new transportation requirements, the updated approved learning frameworks, the extension of workforce provisions, and initial implementation of NQF changes following the 2019 NQF Review.



There will be further updates to the Guide in 2023–24 to support implementation of final changes following the 2019 NQF Review.

New sector resources

We continued our ongoing support to the sector, aligning our resource development with important NQF areas and new regulatory requirements following the 2019 NQF Review changes. Reflecting on key areas of need, we produced a range of new resources, including:

- guidance for family day care approved providers and educators to support their understanding and implementation of the 2019 NQF Review legislative changes that are specific to the family day care sector
- information sheet for providers of school age care services about changes to program documentation requirements
- information sheet and templates on safe transportation of children for services to refer to and use to support them in implementing new regulatory requirements
- information and practical considerations for services on minimising risks to children during transportation.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) resources

We delivered the final set of resources to support approved providers, nominated supervisors, coordinators, and all service staff to understand and implement their obligations under the DDA. The team meeting package includes six self-paced sessions to support services to unpack disability discrimination, reflect on current practice and plan for continuous improvement. The recruitment package focuses on the importance of recruiting for mindset as well as developing accessible recruitment processes in your service.

Nationally available resources

We wish to thank the NSW Department of Education for allowing us to make available the extensive collection of resources that we have developed as part of the Quality Support Program (QSP) to support children’s education and care services rated Working Towards NQS. Services around Australia have free access to these well-regarded resources via the Meeting NQS webpage on the ACECQA website. To date, this webpage has been viewed over 134,000 times across Australia.

KEY PROJECTS

Quality Support Program, Dual Program Pathways

The NSW Department of Education, as the Regulatory Authority for children’s education and care services in NSW, continued to engage us in the delivery of the Quality Support Program (QSP). This year, the highly successful professional learning program was expanded to incorporate two additional professional learning pathways. For 2022–23, 289 services participated in the three QSP pathways:

- **The Quality Support Pathway** is a 14-week tailored program supporting eligible children’s education and care services with a current rating of Working Towards NQS. This pathway supports services’ ability to meet and/or exceed the NQS and focuses on priority quality areas. The program utilises a blended approach to professional learning and our team of support facilitators work alongside service leaders to build knowledge of the NQS, co-design quality improvements and support ongoing reflection, and confidence in embedding quality practices.
- **The Compliance Support Pathway** is a 6-week tailored program supporting children’s education and care services with identified compliance support needs. The Compliance Support Pathway supports services to understand the root cause of non-compliance instances and to co-design implementation plans, processes, behaviours, and management systems that support children’s health and safety, as well as good governance and leadership. In doing so, this pathway aims to build participants’ capabilities in ensuring compliance with the National Law and National Regulations and to support services to implement a whole-service approach to compliance.
- **The State Regulated Services (SRS) Pathway** is a 10-week tailored program providing support to NSW services that are out of scope of the NQF. The SRS Pathway was introduced to support out of scope services as they begin to align their practices and operations with the NQF and prepare to participate in the assessment and rating process for the first time.

We have delivered the QSP in partnership with the NSW Department of Education over the last five years, and we continually reflect on and review our approach to professional learning and support. This year, we bolstered participants’ opportunities to collaborate and learn with, and from each other, through: online networking sessions, communities of practice and participant-led group learning opportunities. We continued to offer our tailored professional learning and support, and alongside each service leadership team engaging in weekly coaching sessions with a dedicated ACECQA support facilitator, we also provide the following opportunities:

- workshops
- webinars
- in-person service visits
- online video, phone and email support
- the QSP Service Tool Kit
- access to specially designed eLearning modules, and
- access to ACECQA’s bespoke online resources.

The benefits of the QSP are evident from the continuous and rigorous reporting we undertake on the program. Some of the key highlights from the Quarter 4 report, delivered in July 2023, include:

- 97.3 per cent of Quality Support Pathway participants strongly agree or agree they are prepared for NQF assessment and rating
- 88.3 per cent of Compliance Support Pathway participants strongly agree or agree they have improved their understanding of the National Law and Regulations
- 91.8 per cent (Avg) of State Regulated Services Pathway participants found the aspects of the program very helpful or helpful.

The ACECQA website has additional information available about the [Quality Support Program](#).

2.7 SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS



Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) Professional Development Program

In 2022, we were engaged to deliver 12 two-day professional development sessions online for ELACCA members on 'Leading and improving quality practice: Children's health, safety and the physical environment'. The sessions aimed to empower service leaders and area managers to better understand the National Quality Standard, with a focus on Quality Areas 2 and 3. Participants gained an in-depth understanding of the assessment and rating processes, including Exceeding National Quality Standard themes and self-assessment tools to support compliance and continuous quality improvement.

In 2023, we delivered an additional one-day condensed program to further support area managers and service leaders in ELACCA member organisations. The session had 24 participants, many of whom were service leaders from outside school hours care services.

In Home Care Quality and Safety Project

In Home Care (IHC) is an approved service type under the Australian Government Child

Care Package that provides a flexible form of education and care that takes place in the family home, specifically for families who are unable to access other types of approved care, including geographically isolated families and families with complex or challenging needs.

In April 2023, we were commissioned by the Australian Government to deliver the IHC Quality and Safety Project, a two-year project to develop a refreshed national IHC Quality and Safety framework, supported by a professional development program to embed quality practice. The project will build on strengths of the current IHC framework and identify opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden for IHC Providers working across multiple jurisdictions and identify opportunities to better align IHC with best-practice quality and safety practices, such as the NQF.

The project supports [ACECQA's Strategic Plan 2020-2024](#) overarching vision of children having the best start in life by strengthening the capability of the children's education and care sector to deliver high quality services. This vision extends to all children, including those who are unable to access other forms of children's education and care.

AUTHORISED OFFICER TRAINING

In 2022-23, we continued to fulfil our responsibilities under the National Law to train and support authorised officers. We provided six sessions of the national authorised officer training program to 95 authorised officers, while continuing to support, resource and oversee the reliability and drift testing systems for the regulatory authorities across all states and territories. The face-to-face component of the national authorised officer training package continued to be delivered over four days, using an online format.

AUTHORISED OFFICER TESTING AND SUPPORT

In addition to the 196 reliability tests deployed as part of national authorised officer training, we also assigned 478 drift tests to existing authorised officers to ensure their ongoing reliability and to support a nationally consistent approach to the quality assessment and rating process.

In 2022-23, we updated a number of practice assessments, reliability and drift tests to further

strengthen national consistency. There were three reliability tests, and seven drift tests in rotation this year.

In January 2023, all ACECQA authorised officer testing was transferred to the ACECQA LMS. Through partnerships with all states and territories, the drift test schedules for all authorised officers were closely monitored and managed to ensure reliability status of officers was maintained.

We provided support calls to new authorised officers throughout the reliability testing phase of their training. With LAN collaboration, the reliability testing process was updated to shorten testing time, increase testing validity and provide additional support options for authorised officers. A comparison of the data from financial year 2021-22 and 2022-23 demonstrates a 20 per cent increase in officers testing reliable within the first phase. This increase, coupled with the agreed streamlining of testing timeframes and strengthening of the training materials, has resulted in more authorised officers being available to undertake assessment and rating within two weeks.



2.8 EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

RESOURCING

We have built on the suite of resources and training available to support authorised officers and regulatory authority staff by developing and reviewing resources including a number of guidance notes and eLearning courses. We also developed and published four editions of the RA Update which is a quarterly publication written to further meet the needs of state and territory authorised officers and regulatory authority staff.

KEY PROJECTS

Regulatory Empowerment and Learning (REAL) Program

In 2022–23, we delivered the REAL program in collaboration with our New South Wales regulatory partners. The program leveraged the success of a similar program we delivered in Queensland (the Supporting Regulatory Quality and Consistency [SRQC] program) and included facilitating workshops on the NQF Fundamentals, Quality Area 1, Administrative Law and Regulatory Core Skills. The training workshops were a combination of online and face-to-face sessions providing opportunities for professional conversations, which were notable benefits provided in participant feedback. Regulatory Core Skills consolidated the learning from the eLearning modules and provided an opportunity to further unpack the refreshed or new knowledge through a reactive scenario.

To ensure comprehensive skill development, we designed a range of resources, including eLearning modules specifically tailored to meet the NSW Occupation Specific Regulatory Capability Set at an adept level. These modules were structured into three progressive levels, Foundational, Technical, and Advanced.

We also created supporting materials to complement the program. The Manager's Toolkit and Mentoring Framework resources were developed to serve as comprehensive roadmaps, providing leaders and managers with easy access to all the learning resources available. These materials were designed to align with the professional development plans of the regulatory authority, enabling leaders to effectively support and guide their teams.

The project's engagement and evaluation report highlights the positive growth and outcomes achieved through the REAL Program. Through comprehensive data analysis and feedback collection, the report identified that the program has been successful in delivering its intended objectives, resulting in tangible benefits for participants.

NQF APPLICATIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS

One of our key functions is determining and approving the qualifications needed to work in services under the NQF.

We maintain a [list](#) of current and formerly approved qualifications, as well as state and territory specific lists of qualifications for working with school age children. Individuals who do not hold qualifications on our published lists and are not recognised by former state and territory laws can apply to us to have their qualifications assessed for equivalence.

In 2022–23, we received 1011 applications from individuals seeking to have their qualifications assessed, up from 719 applications last year. The volume of applications reflects a return to the figures prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions and controls on immigration and Australia's borders.

Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of the applications in 2022–23 were from individuals seeking equivalence to early childhood teaching qualifications. The remainder were for diploma level qualifications (20 per cent), certificate III level qualifications (eight per cent) and qualifications for working with school age children (five per cent).

The most common countries for individual applicants to hold qualifications from continued to be New Zealand (20 per cent) and the UK (18 per cent). Almost one quarter (24 per cent) of the applications were from individuals looking to work in NSW, followed by Queensland (16 per cent), Victoria (16 per cent) and Western Australia (14 per cent).

In 2022–23, we approved 399 early childhood teachers, 278 diploma level educators, 105 certificate III level educators and 42 educators working with school age children. The overall approval rate was 59 per cent, down from 64 per cent last year.

NQF APPLICATIONS FROM ORGANISATIONS

Organisations, such as universities and registered training organisations, can apply to have an early childhood education program or relevant training added to our approved lists.

In 2022–23, we received 22 applications from organisations wanting their qualifications or training assessed for equivalence, down from 27 applications last year. Most applications were for early childhood teaching qualifications, with two applications for diploma level qualifications and one for asthma management training. Of the 22 applications received, all had been finalised by 30 June 2023. All of the finalised applications were approved.

SKILLED MIGRATION APPLICATIONS

In 2022–23, we received 318 applications from individuals wanting their skills, qualifications and employment experience assessed for skilled migration purposes, a significant increase to the 171 applications last year. Approaching two-thirds (63 per cent) of the applications were for the 'Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only)' occupation.

Of the 318 applications received, 242 had been finalised by 30 June 2023, of which 140 were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of 'Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only)', 37 were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of 'Child Care Centre Manager' and 59 were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of 'Child Care Worker'. The overall approval rate was 97 per cent, higher than last year's rate of 90 per cent.

There was a significant increase in the number of applications received for the Child Care Worker occupation. This occupation falls within individual Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs). In 2022–23, we started accepting applications for an additional six DAMAs, namely the East Kimberley, South West and Pilbara Regions in Western Australia, Townsville, Great South Coast Region of Victoria and South Australia Regional.

On 25 November 2021, the Australian Government announced certain concessions to support international graduates affected by the COVID pandemic restrictions. The announcement included changes to the eligibility requirements for the Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa. For this reason, from 1 July 2022 to 1 July 2023, international graduates were able to apply directly to the Department of Home Affairs for the 485 visa and did not require a provisional skills assessment from ACECQA. ACECQA will recommence completing Provisional Skills Assessment for the Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa from 1 July 2023.

We publish quarterly updates of data relating to our NQF and skilled migration applications as part of our [operational activity report](#).

In 2022–23, we continued to support the Australian Government with two incentives intended to maximise the contribution of Australia’s onshore migrant workforce where there is a shortage of skilled labour. The incentives are:

- Skills Assessment Opportunities for Migrants – this incentive offers eligible onshore migrants a free, fast-tracked skills assessment
- Employability Assessments – this incentive offers onshore migrants, who have previously received a suitable skills assessment in a priority occupation, a free employability assessment and access to subsidised training to gain the specific skills required in the Australian job market.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

In September 2021, Education Ministers approved the publication of [Shaping Our Future](#), a ten-year strategy (2022–2031) to ensure a sustainable, high quality children’s education and care workforce. A complementary implementation and evaluation plan was published in September 2022, along with a summary of workforce related initiatives.

Both the plan and the strategy itself represent a joint partnership between all governments and the children’s education and care sector, in



recognition that all stakeholders have a role to play in advancing the goal of a highly skilled and professionally valued workforce.

We continue to lead and coordinate a number of actions under the strategy, notably:

- providing access to core professional development for educators and teachers, including an [Induction to the NQF](#) training package (FA3-1)
- [reviewing the staffing and qualification requirements](#) under the NQF, with a focus on early childhood teachers and outside school hours care educators (FA5-1)
- developing an [online reporting dashboard](#) to track progress against the strategy, and facilitating the inaugural biennial national workforce forum to be held in late 2023 (FA6-3).

To support the national workforce strategy, we also publish and maintain an online [workforce snapshot](#) that provides an overview of the sector workforce.

REVIEW OF NQF STAFFING AND QUALIFICATION REGULATIONS

[Shaping Our Future](#), the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2031, commits to a comprehensive review of the current NQF staffing and qualification regulations to improve consistency, support quality, and reduce complexity, with a focus on the requirements for early childhood teachers, outside school hours care educators, and expiring transitional staffing provisions. This review also presents an opportunity to consider how

longstanding and increasingly pressing workforce challenges can be alleviated and look at longer-term approaches to support a sustained, high-quality education and care workforce.

In late 2022, we were commissioned to undertake this review on behalf of all governments. Consultation commenced in May 2023 for a period of 14 weeks, with public consultation webinars facilitated in each state and territory, and targeted consultations with key national and jurisdiction sector organisations. The results of this consultation will inform the development of options for governments to consider at the end of 2023.



PART 3

Financial Report and Financial Statements

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT

To the Education Ministers

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority for the year ended 30 June 2023 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*.

The financial statements of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2023 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by Chair, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and his delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board’s APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

The Board’s responsibility for the financial statements

The Board are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*. The Board are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Board are responsible for assessing the ability of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board either intend to liquidate the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Amy Wicks
Audit Principal
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
29 September 2023

STATEMENT BY CHAIR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority ('ACECQA'):

- comply with Section 279 subsection (3) of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and relevant Australian Accounting Standards;
- are based on properly maintained financial records; and
- present a true and fair view of the financial position of ACECQA as at 30 June 2023 and the results of its financial performance and cash flows for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board.



Annette Whitehead
Chair of the Board
29 September 2023



Gabrielle Sinclair
Chief Executive Officer
29 September 2023



Angela Buchanan
Chief Operating Officer
29 September 2023

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AS AT YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 \$,000	2022 \$,000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
Expenses			
Employee benefits	1.1A	17,533	15,144
Suppliers	1.1B	9,878	6,705
Finance costs	1.1C	59	21
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2A	1,193	1,236
Total expenses		28,663	23,106
Own-source revenue			
Revenue from contracts with customers	1.2A	15,808	14,659
Interest	1.2B	601	55
Other revenue		-	28
Total own-source revenue		16,409	14,742
Net cost of services		12,254	8,364
Funding and other revenue from Governments	1.2C	13,441	14,485
Surplus		1,187	6,121
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income		1,187	6,121

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY
FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 \$,000	2022 \$,000
ASSETS			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	6,329	10,702
Trade and other receivables	2.1B	2,909	1,754
Other investments	2.1C	15,794	9,289
Total financial assets		25,032	21,745
Non-Financial Assets			
Buildings – Right of Use	2.2A	6,445	729
Leasehold improvements	2.2A	2,695	95
Plant and equipment	2.2A	347	248
Inventory		26	3
Prepayments		641	356
Total non-financial assets		10,154	1,431
Total assets		35,186	23,176
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Suppliers – Trade creditors and Accruals		1,326	841
Other payables	2.3	2,536	1,040
Total payables		3,862	1,881
Interest bearing liabilities			
Leases	2.4	9,331	800
Total interest bearing liabilities		9,331	800
Provisions			
Employment provisions	3.1	2,947	2,557
Other provisions	2.5	-	79
Total provisions		2,947	2,636
Total liabilities		16,140	5,317
Net assets		19,046	17,859
EQUITY			
Retained surplus		19,046	17,859
Total equity		19,046	17,859

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
Notes	\$,000	\$,000
TOTAL EQUITY		
Retained surplus		
Opening balance as at 1 July	<u>17,859</u>	<u>11,738</u>
Comprehensive income		
Surplus	1,187	6,121
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income	<u>1,187</u>	<u>6,121</u>
Closing balance as at 30 June	<u>19,046</u>	<u>17,859</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
Notes	\$,000	\$,000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash received		
Receipts from Government	13,441	14,485
Sales of goods and rendering of services	16,853	14,290
Interest	359	63
Net GST received	272	102
Total cash received	<u>30,925</u>	<u>28,940</u>
Cash used		
Employees	(16,966)	(15,031)
Suppliers	(10,667)	(6,597)
Interest payments on lease liabilities	(58)	(18)
Total cash used	<u>(27,691)</u>	<u>(21,646)</u>
Net cash from operating activities	<u>3,234</u>	<u>7,294</u>
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Cash received		
Proceeds from Lease Incentive	2,725	-
Total cash received	<u>2,725</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash used		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(3,036)	(114)
Investments	(6,505)	(3,000)
Total cash used	<u>(9,541)</u>	<u>(3,114)</u>
Net cash (used by) investing activities	<u>(6,816)</u>	<u>(3,114)</u>
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Cash used		
Principal payments of lease liabilities	(791)	(1,019)
Total cash used	<u>(791)</u>	<u>(1,019)</u>
Net cash (used by) financing activities	<u>(791)</u>	<u>(1,019)</u>
Net increase in cash held	<u>(4,373)</u>	<u>3,161</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	<u>10,702</u>	<u>7,541</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	2.1A <u>6,329</u>	<u>10,702</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

OVERVIEW

ACECQA is structured to undertake the full range of functions set out in the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 ('the National Law') and its related regulations, focusing on key priorities in accordance with the Letter of Expectation for 2021-23 issued by the Education Ministers Meeting.

ACECQA is an independent national statutory authority and a not-for-profit entity.

ACECQA is domiciled and incorporated in Australia. The registered office is located at Level 14, 1 Oxford St, Darlinghurst, NSW 1300.

The continued existence of ACECQA in its present form is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

THE BASIS OF PREPARATION

The financial statements are required by Section 279 subsection (2) of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- (a) *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015 (FRR)*; and
- (b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations - including simplified disclosures for Tier 2 under AASB 1060 issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian Dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

NEW ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Two amending standards (AASB 2021-2 and AASB 2021-6) were adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard. These amending standards have been adopted for the 2022-23 reporting period and did not have a material effect on ACECQA's financial statements.

Standard / Interruption	Nature of change in accounting policy, transitional provisions, and adjustment to financial statements.
<i>AASB 2021-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Disclosure of Accounting Policies and Definition of Accounting Estimates (AASB 2021-2) and</i>	AASB 2021-2 amends AASB 7, AASB 101, AASB 108, AASB 134 and AASB Practice Statement 2. The amending standard requires the disclosure of material, rather than significant, accounting policies and clarifies what is considered a change in accounting estimate.
<i>AASB 2021-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Disclosure of Accounting Policies: Tier 2 and other Australian Accounting Standards (AASB 2021-6)</i>	AASB 2021-6 amends the Tier 2 reporting requirements- set out in AASB 1049, AASB 1054 and AASB 1060 to reflect the changes made by AASB 2021-2. These amending standards have no material impact on ACECQA's financial statements for the current reporting period or future reporting periods.

TAXATION

ACECQA is not subject to income tax. ACECQA is liable for Payroll Tax, Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

IMPACT OF COVID-19

As at 30 June 2023, ACECQA assessed the impact of COVID-19 on its assets and liabilities. It has been determined there are no known events that would have a material impact on the financial statements.

EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

No events have occurred after balance date that should be brought to account or noted in the 2022-23 financial statements.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This section analyses the financial performance of ACECQA for the year ended 30 June 2023.

2023
\$,000

2022
\$,000

1.1 EXPENSES

1.1A: Employee Benefits

Wages and salaries	15,269	13,652
Superannuation	1,679	1,375
Leave and other entitlements	585	117
Total employee benefits	17,533	15,144

Accounting Policy

Accounting policies for employee related expenses are contained in the People and relationships section.

1.1B: Suppliers

Goods and services

Audit fees paid	60	60
Consultants	763	1,509
Contractors	3,151	409
Travel	393	94
Information and communication technology	3,735	2,892
Publishing	95	101
Other	704	853
Total goods and services	8,901	5,918

Prior year comparatives have been modified to reclassify Audit fees of \$60,000 from "Other" Goods and Services in 2022.

Other expenses are general administration costs including stakeholder engagement, professional development and recruitment.

Other suppliers

Workers compensation expenses	98	108
Payroll tax expenses	866	666
Short-term lease	13	13
Total other suppliers	977	787
Total suppliers	9,878	6,705

Accounting Policy

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

ACECQA has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000 per asset).

ACECQA recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

2023
\$,000

2022
\$,000

1.1C: Finance costs

Interest on lease liabilities	58	19
Unwinding of discount - make good provision	1	2
Total finance costs	59	21

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes 2.4 and 2.5.

1.2 OWN-SOURCE REVENUE AND GAINS

Own-source revenue

1.2A: Revenue from contracts with customers

Sales of goods	108	68
Rendering of services	15,700	14,591
Total revenue from contracts with customers	15,808	14,659

Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers

Major products / services:

Sales of publications	108	68
Assessment services	508	649
Service delivery	15,188	13,851
Training services	4	91
Total	15,808	14,659

Type of customer:

Government entities	15,192	13,920
Non-government entities	616	739
Total	15,808	14,659

Timing of transfer of goods and services:

Over time	97	798
Point in time	15,711	13,861
Total	15,808	14,659

Accounting Policy

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when control has been transferred to the buyer.

The following is a description of principal activities from which ACECQA generates its contract revenue:

Major products / services:	Principal activities	Timing of satisfaction of performance obligations	Payment term
Sales of publications	Selling National Quality Framework related resources published by ACECQA	Point in time when goods are dispatched	Payment upfront
Assessment services	Assessing applications under the Education and Care Services National Law and other assessments	Point in time when assessment decision is made	Payment upfront
Service delivery	Delivering specialised services to government partners and Education and Care sector stakeholders	Over time when the customer simultaneously receives and consumes the services as ACECQA performs or point in time when service is delivered. Where no specific performance obligation is stipulated, revenue is recognised immediately in accordance with AASB 1058	Payment upfront or 30 days from a correctly rendered tax invoice.
Training services	Providing training services to government partners and Education and Care sector stakeholders	Point in time when training is provided	Payment upfront or 30 days from a correctly rendered tax invoice

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which ACECQA expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts or both. The output method is used to measure ACECQA's progress towards complete satisfaction of a performance obligation. If a performance obligation is not satisfied over time, then it is satisfied at a point in time when ACECQA has an enforceable right to payment.

Receivables for goods and services are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed at end of the reporting period.

2023	2022
\$,000	\$,000

1.2B: Interest

Deposits	601	55
Total interest	601	55

Accounting Policy

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method.

1.2C: Funding from Governments

Funding from Commonwealth Government	13,441	14,485
Total funding from Governments	13,441	14,485

Other revenue for goods and services from contracts with governments are shown in Note 1.2A.

Accounting Policy

ACECQA recognises funding as revenue immediately in profit or loss in accordance with AASB 1058 *Income of Not-For-Profit Entities*.

Funding receivables are recognised at their nominal amounts.

1.2D: Unsatisfied obligations

ACECQA expects to recognise as income any liability for unsatisfied obligations associated with revenue from contracts with customers within the following periods:

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
Within 1 year	1,764	574
Total Unsatisfied obligations	1,764	574

The above unsatisfied obligations disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Note 2.3.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY
FINANCIAL POSITION

This section analyses ACECQA's assets used to conduct its operations and the operating liabilities incurred as a result.

Employee related information is disclosed in the People and Relationship section.

2.1: FINANCIAL ASSETS

2.1A: Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash on hand or on deposit	6,329	10,702
Total cash and cash equivalents	6,329	10,702

Accounting Policy

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents includes:

- (a) cash on hand;
- (b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 12 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

2.1B: Trade and Other Receivables

Goods and services	2,638	1,707
Contract assets from contracts with customers	-	13
Interest	264	23
Other receivables	7	11
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	2,909	1,754
Less expected credit loss allowance	-	-
Total trade and other receivables (net)	2,909	1,754

The contract assets from contracts with customers are associated with direct costs to fulfil contracts with customers.

Refer Note 2.3 for information relating to contract liabilities.

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2022: 30 days).

Accounting Policy

Financial Assets

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that are held for the purpose of collecting the contractual cash flows where the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest, that are not provided at below-market interest rates, are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method adjusted for any loss allowance.

2023	2022
\$,000	\$,000

2.1C: Other Investments

Term deposits	15,505	9,000
Security deposit for bank guarantee	289	289
Total investments	15,794	9,289

Accounting Policy

Investments are term deposits held at fixed rates to maturity. Interest income from investments is recognised on an effective interest rate basis.

2.2: NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

2.2A: Property, Plant and Equipment

Reconciliation of the opening and closing balances of property, plant and equipment for 2023

	Buildings – Right of Use \$,000	Leasehold Improvements \$,000	Plant & Equipment \$,000	Total \$,000
As at 1 July 2022				
Gross book value	3,646	873	678	5,197
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(2,917)	(778)	(430)	(4,125)
Net book value 1 July 2022	729	95	248	1,072
Additions – by purchase	6,553	2,740	315	9,608
Depreciation expense	-	(134)	(222)	(356)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	(837)	-	-	(837)
Transfers	-	(6)	6	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Net book value 1 July 2023	6,445	2,695	347	9,487
Net book value as of 30 June 2023 represented by:				
Gross book value	6,552	2,740	892	10,184
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(107)	(45)	(545)	(697)
Net book value 1 July 2023	6,445	2,695	347	9,487
Carrying amount of right-of-use assets	6,445	-	-	6,445

Accounting Policy

Financial Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchase of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than \$1,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located. This is relevant to the former accommodation sublease taken up by ACECQA where there existed an obligation to pay a fixed amount in lieu of a 'make good' clause. ACECQA's new lease does not have a 'make good' clause. The cost is included in the value of ACECQA's leasehold improvements with a corresponding provision for the recognition of payment.

Lease Right of Use (ROU) Assets

Leased ROU assets relates to leased office space at 1 Oxford St, Darlinghurst. These assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for by ACECQA as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if they were owned.

Revaluations

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) are carried at fair value. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets did not differ materially from the fair value of the assets as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depended upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reversed a previous revaluation increment for that class. Upon revaluation, any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset is restated to the revalued amount.

As at 30 June 2023, there are no asset revaluation adjustments within property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets).

Continued over page →

Depreciation

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to ACECQA using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the lease term.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual value and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

Asset Class	2023	2022
Leasehold improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Right-of-use assets	Lease term	Lease term
Plant and equipment	3 to 20 years	3 to 20 years

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2023. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if ACECQA was deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

Intangibles

ACECQA's intangibles comprise purchased software for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Purchases costing less than \$100,000 (2022: \$100,000) are expensed in the year of acquisition other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total.

Software is amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life.

All software assets were fully amortised as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022.

2.2B: Fair Value Measurements

Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period

	2023 \$,000	2022 \$,000
Non-financial assets		
Leasehold improvements	2,695	95
Plant and equipment	347	248
Total non-financial assets	<u>3,042</u>	<u>343</u>
Total fair value measurements of assets in the statement of financial position	<u>3,042</u>	<u>343</u>

All property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) is measured at fair value in the Statement of Financial Position. When estimating fair value, market prices were used where available. Where market prices were not available, depreciated replacement cost was used.

The remaining non-financial assets and liabilities reported by ACECQA in the Statement of Financial Position do not apply the fair value hierarchy.

2.3: PAYABLES

2.3: Other Payables

Salaries and wages	402	304
Superannuation	104	32
Contract liabilities from contracts with customers	1,764	574
Net GST payable	145	63
Accruals and other payables	121	67
Total other payables	<u>2,536</u>	<u>1,040</u>

The contract liabilities from contracts with customers are associated with revenue received in advance under contracts with customers where performance obligations are not satisfied

Refer Note 2.1B for information relating to contract assets from contracts with customers.

Accounting Policy

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

2.4: INTEREST BEARING LIABILITIES

2.4: Lease

Lease liabilities	9,331	800
Total leases	<u>9,331</u>	<u>800</u>

Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows

Within 1 year	906	804
One to two years	948	-
Two to three years	992	-
Three to four years	1,037	-
Four to five years	1,084	-
More than 5 years	6,181	-
Total leases	<u>11,148</u>	<u>804</u>

Leasing commitment - office accommodation

ACECQA has one lease for its office space. ACECQA relocated its office upon expiry of the lease at 175 Liverpool St, Sydney. The new lease at 1 Oxford St, Darlinghurst commenced on 26 April 2023 for a period of 10 years and 2 months.

The total cash outflow for the lease for the year ended 30 June 2023 was \$870k inclusive of GST (2022: \$1,141k).

Accounting Policy

For all new contracts entered into, ACECQA considers whether the contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'.

Once it has been determined that a contract is, or contains a lease, the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, if that rate is readily determinable, or an incremental borrowing rate consistent with the NSW Treasury Corporation rate.

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification to the lease. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset or profit and loss depending on the nature of the reassessment or modification.

2.5: OTHER PROVISIONS

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
2.5: Provision for make good		
As at 1 July	79	77
Additional provisions made	-	-
Payments	(80)	-
Unwinding of discount	1	2
As at 30 June	-	79

ACECQA paid \$80k in lieu of a make good clause at the expiry of the lease at 175 Liverpool St, Sydney.

No Make good liability is required for ACECQA's new lease at 1 Oxford Street.

This section describes a range of employment and post employment benefits provided to ACECQA's staff and ACECQA's relationships with other key people.

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
3.1: Employment Provisions		
Leave	2,776	2,397
On-costs	171	160
Total employment provisions	2,947	2,557

Accounting Policy

Liabilities for short-term employee benefits and termination benefits expected within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

Unless otherwise stated, other long-term employee benefits are measured as the net total of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting period.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will apply at the time the leave is taken, including the employer superannuation contribution rates and applicable on-costs, to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The liability for long service leave has been determined using the shorthand method. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Superannuation

The amount charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income represents the contributions made or to be made by ACECQA to employees' externally managed superannuation funds as nominated by them.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June 2023 represents outstanding contributions due but not yet paid.

On-costs

Employment on-costs are payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance which are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as liabilities and expenses when the employment to which they relate has occurred. Employment on-costs are included as part of 'Other suppliers' and are not included as part of 'Employee benefits'. The employment provisions include only the leave provision and its related on-costs.

3.2: KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
3.2A: Senior Executive Remuneration		
Short-term employee benefits	1,591,424	1,468,238
Post-employment benefits	174,454	175,006
Other long-term benefits	48,251	71,157
Total employment benefits	<u>1,814,129</u>	<u>1,714,401</u>

ACECQA's key management personnel are ACECQA Board members and Senior Executives.

The total number of key management personnel that are included in the above table are 7 in 2023 (2022: 7).

Staff who have acted in a Senior Executive role for a period of less than three months have been excluded in the note.

Short-term employee benefits include salaries, paid annual leave and sick leave, accrued annual leave entitlements, benefits under salary sacrifice arrangements and non-monetary benefits. Post-employment benefits include superannuation. Other long-term benefits include accrued long service leave entitlements.

3.2B: Board Member Remuneration

Total Board remuneration	<u>257,750</u>	<u>204,320</u>
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Board remuneration is the payments received or due and receivable by ACECQA Board members in 2022-23. 2022-23 includes adjustment following Policy review in remuneration for Board members Superannuation Guarantee Charge of \$38,383.

Remuneration for the Board is determined by the Education Ministers Meeting.

There were changes to the composition of the ACECQA Board in 2022-23. The highest number of Board members in 2022-23 was 13 (2021-22: 13).

3.3: RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Related party relationship

ACECQA is a national statutory body predominantly funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. Its Board Members are appointed by the Education Ministers Meeting. Related parties to ACECQA are Board Members and Senior Executives.

Transactions with related parties

Giving consideration to relationships with related entities, and transactions entered into during the reporting period by ACECQA, it has been determined that there are no related party transactions to be separately disclosed.

This section analyses how ACECQA manages financial risks within its operating environment.

4.1 CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

4.1: Contingent Assets and Liabilities

A bank guarantee was provided by ACECQA to the sublessor in relation to its leased premises at 175 Liverpool St, Sydney. The value of the bank guarantee is \$289,124 (2022: \$289,124) and will be released in FY2024 upon settlement of the outgoings.

The bank guarantee is secured by a term deposit of the same amount.

ACECQA had no other quantifiable or unquantifiable contingent assets or liabilities as at 30 June 2023 (2022: nil).

4.2: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

4.2A: Categories of Financial Instruments

Financial assets at amortised cost

	2023 \$,000	2022 \$,000
Cash and cash equivalents	6,329	10,702
Trade and other receivables	2,909	1,741
Term deposits	15,505	9,000
Security deposit for bank guarantee	289	289
Total financial assets at amortised cost	25,032	21,732
Total financial assets	25,032	21,732

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost

Trade creditors	1,326	841
Other payables	121	67
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	1,447	908
Total financial liabilities	1,447	908

Financial assets exclude GST receivables and contract assets.
Financial liabilities exclude GST payables and contract liabilities.

Accounting Policy

Financial Assets

ACECQA classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- financial assets measured at amortised cost
- financial assets at fair value through profit or loss
- financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.

The classification depends on both ACECQA's business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when ACECQA becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

Financial Assets at Amortised Cost

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

- the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount.

Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest method.

Effective Interest Method

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on Expected Credit Losses, using the general approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade and contract receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses.

A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the writeoff directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

OTHER INFORMATION

Accounting Policy
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective interest basis.

Trade and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
4.2B: Net Gains on Financial Assets		
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Interest revenue	<u>601</u>	<u>55</u>
Net gains on financial assets at amortised cost	<u>601</u>	<u>55</u>

5.1: CURRENT/NON-CURRENT DISTINCTION FOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	2023	2022
	\$,000	\$,000
Assets expected to be recovered in:		
No more than 12 months		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,329	10,702
Trade and other receivables	2,910	1,741
Other investments	15,794	9,289
Other current asset – inventory	26	3
Prepayments	631	344
Total no more than 12 months	<u>25,690</u>	<u>22,092</u>
More than 12 months		
Prepayments	10	12
Buildings - Right of Use	6,445	729
Leasehold improvements	2,695	95
Plant and equipment	347	248
Total more than 12 months	<u>9,497</u>	<u>1,084</u>
Total assets	<u>35,187</u>	<u>23,176</u>
Liabilities expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months		
Suppliers – trade creditors and accruals	1,327	841
Other payables	2,536	1,040
Employment provisions	1,422	1,268
Leases	597	800
Total no more than 12 months	<u>5,882</u>	<u>3,949</u>
More than 12 months		
Employment provisions	1,525	1289
Lease	8,734	-
Other provisions	-	79
Total more than 12 months	<u>10,259</u>	<u>1,368</u>
Total liabilities	<u>16,141</u>	<u>5,317</u>

END OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



Ref: MS21-001113

Ms Judy Hebblethwaite
Board Chair
Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
PO Box A292
SYDNEY NSW 1235

Dear Ms Hebblethwaite

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

2021–2023 Letter of Expectation (Letter)

This Letter sets out Education Ministers’ priorities and expectations for ACECQA from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023 and will replace the interim Letter issued to ACECQA in October 2020.

This Letter aligns with the provisions of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) associated regulations and strategic priorities for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector endorsed by the Education Ministers Meeting.

Ministers would like to acknowledge and congratulate ACECQA on its achievements under the interim Letter and in particular ACECQA’s flexibility in responding to national disasters and emergencies.

Purpose

The Education Ministers Meeting is responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of the National Quality Framework (NQF) for ECEC as per section 220 of the National Law. ACECQA is an independent statutory authority established under Part 11 of the National Law, with its functions detailed in section 225.

This Letter sets the strategic priorities and expectations for ACECQA in delivering its core functions as set out in section 225 of the National Law. It recognises that the ACECQA Board and Chief Executive Officer are responsible for how ACECQA exercises its core functions and achieves these strategic priorities and expectations. The intention of this Letter is that it will assist ACECQA in the development of its Forward Work Plan.

This Letter will be further amended to reflect the new arrangements arising from the implementation of reforms associated with the Review of the National Architecture for Schooling and the National Federation Reform with respect to the Education Ministers Meeting and any subcommittees.

The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7350 | alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Context

This Letter is developed in the context of evidence demonstrating that engagement in quality education and care, particularly in the early years, leads to better health, education and employment outcomes in later life. It is for this reason all governments have demonstrated commitment to the NQF as a consistent national regulatory system for the ECEC sector.

The Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) is entrusted by the Education Ministers Meeting to provide strategic policy advice on early childhood policy matters. This Letter is based on the principle that ACECQA, governments and Regulatory Authorities (RAs) will continue to strengthen their collaboration and relationship with the ECEC sector to support, promote and achieve the objectives of the NQF, including through the work of ECPG, the Regulatory Practice Committee (RPC) and its working groups. ACECQA will also continue to collaborate with ECPG and its subcommittees on relevant policy matters prior to progression to Education Ministers Meeting.

Core Priorities

The health, safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration of the strategic directions articulated in this Letter and these are the critical foundations to improved outcomes for lifelong learning through quality education and care experiences. As envisaged in the development of the NQF, the achievement of this objective and all objectives of the National Law is dependent on consistent and sustained collaboration between all stakeholders.

ACECQA in undertaking its statutory role and functions will have regard to the following core ideals:

- a transparent, fair, accountable, efficient and effective national system
- streamlined governance arrangements and clearly defined accountabilities
- collaboration with stakeholders in achieving NQF objectives
- nationally consistent implementation of the NQF, including the National Law, National Regulations and National Quality Standard (NQS)
- ongoing support of quality research and evaluation, reflecting sector priorities and providing an evidence base for national decision making, and
- a continuous focus on quality improvement.

Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities outlined below acknowledge the commitment to ensuring the NQF remains an integrated, high quality and consistent national system. Ministers expect that over the course of this Letter, new priorities may emerge, and that ACECQA will incorporate these new priorities in the delivery of its functions as set out in section 225 of the National Law. The Education Ministers Meeting also expects that ACECQA will continue to implement relevant recommendations and improvement opportunities identified in the recent ACECQA Review agreed by Education Ministers Meeting.

Support improved educational and developmental outcomes for all children

While ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance, services are also expected to work with families to improve children’s educational and developmental outcomes as guided by the NQF and Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs). Australia has seen a substantial growth in the percentage of children attending ECEC services in the last decade, but there remains a concern that children in vulnerable circumstances, with additional needs, or facing disadvantage, may not be benefiting as intended.

The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7350 | alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

A priority for this reporting period is to expand equitable outcomes for all children through high quality services. To this end, it is important for ACECQA to:

- continue to collaborate with governments through ECPG's Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children's Working Group to identify barriers to, and opportunities for increased, participation in quality early childhood and care services,
- consider how children's educational and developmental outcomes could be monitored and measured as we approach the second decade of the NQF,
- support families to understand the NQF Quality Ratings and the importance of early learning and to be active agents in the development of language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills for their children's wellbeing and future success,
- work in collaboration with governments, RAs and service providers to support continuity of children's access to services during periods of emergencies and natural disasters (pandemics, bushfires, floods etc).

Promote continuous quality improvement in service provision

Year by year, the percentage of services rated meeting the NQS or higher has grown under the NQF. In 2020, despite the challenges of the pandemic, 84 per cent of services have achieved this high standard of quality and, in a high growth sector, the focus on quality improvement cannot be diminished. Every child and family should expect high quality in every service type. To this end, it is important that ACECQA:

- continues to monitor and report on quality improvement and the challenges to quality improvement facing different service types and providers over time,
- works with governments through ECPG and RPC to collectively identify and address issues impeding quality improvement including through the ALFs Update, and revised guidance to the sector,
- as the national body, work collaboratively with the NQF Review team and governments to progress the review and facilitate nationally consistent outcomes,
- continues to identify and promote better practice and successful innovations by approved providers, service leaders, teachers and educators,
- in partnership with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), improve understanding of the NQF and the NQS by the education sector and, thereby, contribute to children's successful transition to school,
- contributes to public knowledge of, and access to information about, the quality of education and care services, and choices for families to meet their child's interests and needs.

Support efficient, consistent regulatory practice and reducing regulatory burden

An important goal of Australia's ECEC sector is to enable all children to access affordable, high quality care services. This means the NQF must continue to be flexible to encourage innovation while ensuring standards are consistently applied and met, and that regulatory effort is proportional to risk. ACECQA is uniquely placed, through its collaboration with regulators and established relationships with the sector, to support national initiatives that promote reduction in unnecessary regulatory burden for services, proportionality in regulatory interventions and a consistent focus on intended outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that ACECQA:

- continues to resource and facilitate the effective operation of the RPC and its contribution to better results for children and consistency of outcomes,

The Hon Alan Tudge MP

Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7350 | alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

- works with governments on initiatives to reduce costs to services such as the Joined Up Approvals Project which is being delivered jointly with the Australian Government,
- in collaboration with the Australian Government, develops an Early Childhood Education and Care Services website, providing families with a single platform to access information on fees, vacancies, services and quality. The website will introduce a comparative tool for child care services and a simple calculator providing out of pocket cost information, further enhancing benefits to families,
- maintains a strategic program of development of the NQA ITS to continue meeting the needs of governments, regulators and service providers,
- identifies further opportunities to leverage its expertise in ECEC data to inform strategic planning and manage emerging issues/risks, and to build the evidence base for future legislative and regulatory reviews.

Support governments and the ECEC sector to develop and sustain a professional workforce

One of the most important components of high-quality education and care is the professional skills and practice of early childhood teachers and educators. While the entry-level qualifications and child to staff ratios required by the NQF are a solid start, the challenge is to work with all stakeholders to remove unnecessary barriers to entry and retention of the workforce to ensure Australia has an education and care workforce that is enduring and highly regarded. ACECQA's contribution to the achievement of this goal includes:

- assisting in the co-design and implementation of the Children's Education and Care National Workforce Strategy noting this will be a multi-year strategy and action plan,
- identifying initiatives that will raise the profile and public standing of early childhood teachers and educators in both non-school and school settings,
- working with governments and their statutory bodies to reduce administration complexity for overseas trained teachers and educators who seek to work in Australia's ECEC sector.

Funding and reporting

This Letter acknowledges the Australian Government's funding announcement of December 2019, which provides ACECQA with ongoing operational funding to progress its functions under the National Law, with \$46 million provided over a three-year period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023.

ACECQA is expected to continue to seek opportunities for commissioned work and to provide new programs, services and resources through cost recovery and commercially, consistent with its statutory functions. Such work should be focused on meeting the unique needs of RAs and stakeholders, and on advancing the strategic priorities set out in this Letter. However, any such work undertaken should not detract from ACECQA's performance of its core functions under section 225 of the National Law to support the implementation and administration of the NQF.

ACECQA will also provide the Education Ministers Meeting with annual progress reports on its Forward Work Plan, identifying any proposed changes that may be required to ensure it is able to deliver on Education Ministers Meeting priorities.

The Hon Alan Tudge MP

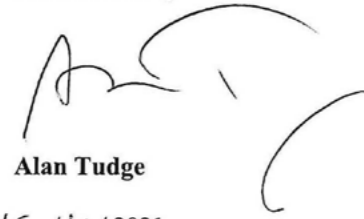
Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7350 | alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

APPENDIX B: ACECQA CHAIR'S RESPONSE TO LETTER OF EXPECTATION 2021–2023

Conclusion

We look forward to continuing to work with you in improving the quality of ECEC nationally to ensure children's optimal health, safety, well-being and development.

Yours sincerely



Alan Tudge

15/10/2021

The Hon Alan Tudge MP

Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7350 | alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au



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21 October 2021

The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Chair
Education Ministers Meeting
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister

Thank you for the 2021-23 Letter of Expectation setting Education Ministers' priorities and expectations for the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023.

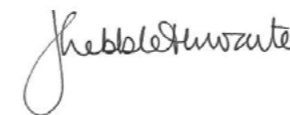
We are pleased to have met the expectations of Education Ministers under the previous interim letter and thank you for acknowledging our efforts, particularly in response to national disasters and emergencies.

During these challenging times, we have continued to work closely with governments, regulatory authorities, service providers, peak bodies and higher education institutions to successfully deliver our statutory functions and expand our suite of programs and resources in response to new Ministerial priorities and emerging needs of children, families and communities.

We are preparing a reporting plan which details how we will deliver the priorities and expectations detailed in your letter.

This is the final Letter of Expectation I will receive, as I will conclude my second and final term as Chair in December. It has been an honour to help lead this world class organisation and I have the utmost confidence that my Board colleagues, the next Chair and the Executive team will ensure that ACECQA continues to deliver Ministers' priorities and exceed expectations.

Yours sincerely



Judy Hebblethwaite
Chair

Children have the best start in life through high quality early childhood education and care

APPENDIX C: ACECQA BOARD MEMBERSHIP

MS ANNETTE WHITEHEAD

CHAIR



Annette Whitehead has 40 years of experience in social policy development and program management across a range of government agencies. She has held strategic leadership positions in several portfolios

including ageing, disability, early childhood, child safety, and education and training.

Annette has expertise in implementing key service delivery reforms across government in consultation with diverse stakeholder groups including the non-government sector. These included the Queensland Government's reforms to senior assessment and tertiary entrance as well as the introduction of the preparatory year of schooling.

As Deputy Director-General, Policy, Performance and Planning in the Queensland Department of Education, Annette led policy development in early childhood, schooling, training and employment as well as Indigenous education, and was responsible for the Department's legislative and research agenda, ensuring high performance through strong governance and a performance culture.

Additionally, as Deputy Director-General, Annette held responsibility for providing secretariat support to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board as well as the regulation of education providers and registered courses for overseas students.

Annette previously served as a member of the Construction Skills Queensland Board on behalf of the Queensland Government.

DR ANNE GLOVER AO

DEPUTY CHAIR



Anne Glover is an international education and development consultant with extensive experience in designing, implementing and evaluating development programs. Anne specialises in systemic reform and

the development of fair and efficient education systems. For more than 20 years she has worked with regional governments – Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Vanuatu – to develop and implement education reform agendas at national, state and local levels.

Anne also has specific expertise in early childhood care and education. A child advocate with a long commitment to promoting and protecting children's rights and working proactively to support children's access to and participation in education, Anne has more than 30 years' experience in the early childhood education and care sector as a practitioner, academic, researcher and mentor. Beginning her academic career at the University of South Australia in 1983, Anne has been responsible for early childhood program and course development and coordination, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and supervising higher degrees. A keen researcher committed to rigorous and ethical research, she was a Foundation Member of the UniSA Early Childhood Research Group and the Paediatric Wellbeing Research Group, and is currently an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at UniSA.

Anne is actively engaged in various organisations concerned with children's wellbeing and is the Presiding Member of the SA Child Development Council.

MR SELWYN BUTTON¹



Selwyn Button is a Gungarra man from South West Queensland, raised in Cherbourg.

Selwyn is a Partner with PwC's Indigenous Consulting (PIC) and the former Registrar of the Office of the

Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC), the regulatory body supporting more than 3000 Indigenous corporations nationally. Selwyn has extensive experience in Queensland health and education sectors. From 2014 to 2018 he was Assistant Director-General of Indigenous Education in state schools, where he oversaw significant improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Prior to that he was CEO of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC), chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane Limited, and director of the Indigenous health policy branch within Queensland Health. He is a former teacher and Queensland police officer.

Selwyn has served on numerous councils and committees including Oxfam Australia, Queensland Council of Social Service, and the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee. He is Chair of The Lowitja Institute and a director for Queensland Rugby Union.

MS MAREE BREDHAUER



Maree Bredhauer has over 40 years' experience in school, corporate and community leadership - in primary school and early childhood settings across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors in the Northern Territory. Maree's

experience includes 14 years as primary school principal, six years as executive manager of a large not-for-profit organisation and six years as Mayor of Litchfield Municipality.

As President of the NT Schools Principals' Association (2011–13), Maree's role included bringing together primary school leaders to work with the highest levels of collegiality, to enhance the quality of educational leadership and to influence the direction of the Northern Territory educational agenda. During this time Maree held an executive role in the creation of the Northern Territory Centre for School Leadership. This centre was formed as a partnership organisation between Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Department of Education to deliver high quality educational leadership programs to emerging and experienced school leaders.

In June 2014, Maree left her position as General Manager Early Childhood Policy and Regulations in the NT Department of Education to work in the not-for-profit sector as Executive Manager of Early Childhood Australia NT Branch. Under Maree's leadership this organisation was highly successful in areas of advocacy and business development.

Currently Maree has several board and NT Government strategic advisory group membership positions within early childhood, public sector leadership and community banking. She also works as an allied health business mentor. Maree is a member of the Early Childhood Australia NT Advisory Committee, NT Government Key Stakeholder Advisory Group, CDU-Pathways to Politics Advisory Group and the Coolalinga Bendigo Community Bank Board.

¹ Selwyn Button resigned from the Board effective 22 March 2023

MR MARK CAMPLING



Mark Campling has over 40 years of experience in education. During this time, he has been a principal of a range of schools. He was also the Assistant Director-General of Education for Queensland, where he led the

development and implementation of statewide teaching and learning initiatives including reviews, the supervision and coaching model for school principals, Curriculum into the Classroom, as well as overseeing the implementation of the state schooling response to the National Partnerships initiative.

In his final four years as a senior public servant, Mark was the Regional Director of Education for the Metropolitan Region in Queensland. As part of this role, he had accountability and responsibility for all state schools, training facilities and early childhood centres.

During his career Mark has chaired the Queensland Sports Board, was a member of the Executive Management Board for Education in Queensland and chaired a range of cross-government committees tasked with addressing the needs of students in out of home care and student disengagement.

In 2018 Mark retired from fulltime work and established a consultancy where much of his work has focused on coaching senior public servants, school leaders and their teams, as well as working with systems in their change management processes. He has also facilitated many communities of practice across Queensland in K-2, where the focus has been quality, transition, partnerships and improved performance.

PROFESSOR MARC DE ROSNAY



Marc de Rosnay is the Professor of Child Development and Academic Director at Early Start, University of Wollongong. He leads transformational early childhood initiatives involving the university and community, with the

goal of improving developmental, educational, and social opportunities for vulnerable children. With the team at Early Start, Marc works to translate current evidence on child development and early learning into everyday care and professional practices, and to develop systems to support children, families and educators in regional and remote contexts. He also provides support for various community and charity organisations, as well as state and Australian government initiatives.

In 2003, Marc was awarded a Churchill College Fellowship (University of Cambridge) in recognition of his original work on emotion understanding and development in infancy and early childhood. In 2006 he moved to the School of Psychology, University of Sydney, where he held an Australian Research Council (ARC) Postdoctoral Fellowship between 2007 and 2010.

Marc's own research focuses on how children become socially and emotionally competent, with a particular interest in the ways in which we understand and care for children, on the one hand, and the ways in which they understand us, on the other. In addition to his scholarly outputs, Marc has worked consistently to communicate research about early childhood and development into the public forum and has taken a leading scientific role in various documentaries (including the Life At series on ABC television).

MS KATE HAMOND²



Kate Hamond has management experience and expertise in consumer protection, community sector management, education, governance and the regulation of various professions and industries.

Kate served for seven years as Victoria's statutory Legal Ombudsman, regulating barristers and solicitors through complaint handling, investigations and prosecutions. She was CEO of the national peak industry body for retirement villages, a Victorian Commissioner for the regulation of liquor and gambling and, in semi-retirement, has recently undertaken consultancies in the management of an early childhood community centre and a community legal centre.

Kate commenced her career as a primary teacher, followed by management of a municipal family day care service and TAFE teacher/supervisor in early childhood development. She moved to the regulatory sector, initially managing a community consumer agency specialising in public protection policy and advocacy, followed by her appointment as senior policy advisor to the director of Fair Trading and Business Affairs. Establishing an independent consumer advocacy consultancy, Kate supported not for profit community groups and small businesses in governance, sound financial management, dispute resolution system development, strategic planning, grant applications and acquittals, team building and effective stakeholder engagement. Concurrently Kate presented the ABC Radio Consumer Watch program for five years.

As a teacher, parent, advocate, manager and regulator, for over 45 years Kate has maintained strong relationships with government and community through voluntary service on statutory and not for profit boards, and ministerial advisory committees. She is passionate about the support and protection of vulnerable people, and the application of exemplary ethics and operational integrity.

² Kate Hamond resigned from the Board effective 4 June 2023

MS AKIKO JACKSON



Akiko Jackson is an internationally experienced non-executive director and strategy adviser with more than 30 years of experience as an executive in the financial services industry including

CBA, Macquarie Bank and Westpac; Shinsei Bank and Mitsubishi Tokyo UFJ Financial Group in Japan; and as a strategy management consultant in the US and Australia. She has worked in both the private and public sectors, in both large corporations and start-ups and has extensive experience in risk management, large scale and digital transformation, strategy development, equity raising and leadership development. Akiko is a Fulbright Scholar with an MBA from Stanford University, and a Bachelor of Law from Keio University, Tokyo. She is bilingual in English and Japanese.

Akiko is a non-executive director of Pepper Money and Foundation & Friends (F&F) of the Botanic Gardens and a member of the Portfolio Advisory Council of Services Australia. She also chairs the F&F Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, is a member of the Infrastructure NSW Audit & Risk Committee, and the Pepper Money Audit & Risk Committee and Nomination & Remuneration Committee. Akiko is on the coaching panel and an executive coach to senior executives in the Victorian public sector.

Her past non-executive director and strategy advisory roles include non-executive director of 86 400, member of the Advisory Committee of the Australian Treasury and Strategy Advisory Committee of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and Chair/Senior Reviewer of Capability Reviews of multiple Commonwealth Departments.

MS SANDRA LAMBERT AM



Sandra Lambert has more than 35 years of experience working in the public sector and education. She was a teacher and principal before moving into a number of roles in educational administration in the

ACT Government, including as Executive Director of Schools and Training responsible for policy and programs in government schools at all levels. She then worked in other senior executive ACT Government roles and was the Chief Executive of the then ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services from 2002–2010, where she was responsible for children’s services across public and private sectors.

After 2010, Sandra held a variety of positions including on the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, the Cultural Facilities Corporation, the Land Development Agency Board (LDA) and as Chair of the Risk, Business Continuity and Security Committee in the then Department of Human Services (DHS). She then spent almost two years in New York, New York State and California working as a consultant in educational leadership and English language arts.

On returning to the ACT in 2015, she resumed her role on the LDA and was Deputy Chair for its final year of operation. Currently Sandra is Chair of the ACT Remuneration Committee, a member of the ACT Homes for Homes Advisory Group and works as an executive leadership coach. She also participated as an independent member on two of the then Department of Human Service Committees. Sandra is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Managers and Leaders and was admitted to the Order of Australia in 2012 for expertise in public sector leadership and management.

MS JENNI PERKINS



Jenni Perkins has had over 30 years of experience in social policy development, program design, community consultation, evaluation and performance reporting, and has led policy reform agendas across

disability and community services.

As Director General of the Department for Communities from 2010 to 2013, Jenni had leadership responsibility for the implementation of the NQF for children’s education and care services in Western Australia. Jenni was also responsible for the delivery of state-wide parenting information and support services, along with youth and community services.

As the acting Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia from 2013 to 2015, Jenni established collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal and community organisations to undertake a state-wide consultation with over 1200 Aboriginal children and young people.

Jenni has a strong interest and commitment to the delivery of evidence-based policy and consumer-focussed services.

MRS AMANDA PRICE-MCGREGOR



Amanda Price-McGregor has more than 20 years of experience in strategic planning, policy development, community engagement and project delivery.

She has a diverse industry background

encompassing state and national project experience in private sector consulting, and state and local government sectors with widespread experience across an array of portfolio areas. These areas include land use planning, infrastructure planning, urban and regional development, education planning, retail planning, housing, land development, engineering and buildings and tourism nationally and in her home state of South Australia.

As the managing principal and owner of a strategic planning consulting firm, Amanda has considerable expertise in high-level consulting, project management, portfolio policy-making and implementation.

Amanda has an avid interest in early childhood education and child development and has been a devoted and active board member in a community childcare centre for more than three years. She also served on the centre’s strategic development and human resources planning committees.

Amanda has a strong interest in encouraging and empowering early childhood educators to work with parents and carers to help identify children with potential growth and development delay and is a passionate advocate for early intervention to help address these challenges.

MS MADELEINE SMITH



Madeleine Smith has 35 years experience in the Victorian public service, including 20 years as an executive. Most recently Madeleine was the head of the Victorian regulatory authority for early childhood education and care

services. She was instrumental in the development of the NQF and established the regulatory authority in Victoria.

Madeleine initially trained as a social worker, working in child protection in Melbourne’s western suburbs, and at the Royal Women’s Hospital. Madeleine has extensive experience in managing complex regional services including child protection, youth justice and public housing. She has expertise in organisational change and implementing significant sector reforms.

Madeleine has been regulating early childhood services for over 20 years and is currently on leave from the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

APPENDIX D: BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

MR MICHAEL WHITE



Michael White has had over 30 years of experience in the fields of child development, child protection, youth justice and early childhood education as an academic, teacher and administrator in both the government

and non-government sectors.

Michael lectured in Human Development at the University of Tasmania and was responsible for the leadership of the Early Childhood Programs of the University for several years.

Michael was Director of Schools in Victoria and subsequently, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. In the health and human services sector he held the positions of Executive Director Children, Youth and Family Services Bureau (ACT) and State Program Manager for Children Youth and Family Support in Tasmania.

In Victoria, Michael was responsible for the development of 'whole of government' policy on children and young people, and for the creation of a system to monitor the health, safety, learning, development and well-being of all children aged 0–18. The Child and Adolescent Monitoring system remains a major research and policy resource on children in Australia.

Michael's work also includes an active interest in the economic and social context which frames the development of systemic responses to the needs of families in Australia. From 2009 to 2011, he held the position of Director in the Economics and Policy Division of PwC, focussing specifically on early childhood issues.

Meetings of the ACECQA Board 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 3/2022	25-26 August 2022	Nil	Sydney
Meeting 4/2022	24-25 November 2022	Selwyn Button Amanda Price-McGregor (25 November)	Sydney
Meeting 1/2023	20-21 March 2023	Maree Bredhauer Marc de Rosnay Kate Hamond	Sydney
Meeting 2/2023	22-23 June 2023	Amanda Price-McGregor	Sydney

APPENDIX E: BOARD SUB COMMITTEES AND ATTENDANCE

Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee

MEMBERSHIP

Akiko Jackson – Chair (from 21 March 2023)

Selwyn Button – Chair (until 21 March 2023)

Maree Bredhauer

Mark Campling (from 23 June 2023)

Marc de Rosnay (until 25 November 2022)

Jenni Perkins

Madeleine Smith (from 25 November 2022)

David Black – External member

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 3/2022	12 August 2022	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 4/2022	5 October 2022	Marc de Rosnay Jenni Perkins	Videoconference Videoconference
Meeting 5/2022	11 November 2022	Maree Bredhauer	Videoconference
Meeting 1/2023	24 February 2023	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 2/2023	2 June 2023	Nil	Videoconference

Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee

MEMBERSHIP

Annette Whitehead – Chair

Mark Campling

Michael White

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 1/2023	28 February 2023	Nil	Videoconference

Qualifications Sub Committee³

MEMBERSHIP

Anne Glover – Chair (from 26 August 2022)

Sandra Lambert

Marc de Rosnay (from 26 August 2022)

Mark Campling (temporarily from 23 June 2023)

Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee

MEMBERSHIP

Annette Whitehead – Chair

Sandra Lambert

Selwyn Button

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 2/2022	4 August 2022	Nil	Videoconference

³ Qualifications Sub Committee did not have cause to meet in 2022–23.

APPENDIX F: ACECQA'S MAJOR SPEAKING AND SECTOR ENGAGEMENTS

ACECQA ENGAGEMENT NAME	LOCATION	DATE
Educational Leadership Program – QLD Regulatory Authority	Virtual	3-4 August 2022
Critical reflection: A deeper dive – QLD Regulatory Authority	Toowoomba, QLD	15 November 2022
Early Childhood Education & Care Reference Group Meeting	Virtual	8 February 2023
Teachers in Early Education (TEE) workshop	The University of Sydney	14 February 2023
Educational Leadership Program – QLD Regulatory Authority	Virtual	16 February 2023
Educational Leadership Program – QLD Regulatory Authority	Virtual	6 March 2023
NSW Department of Education Town Hall	Virtual	9 March 2023
CCSA Rural and Remote Forum: The updated approved learning frameworks	Mudgee, NSW	15-16 March 2023
National Early Language and Literacy Coalition Forum	Old Parliament House, ACT	21 March 2023
ACT Education and Care Sector Meeting: Educational Leaders Workshop	Stirling, ACT	28 March 2023
KU Forum – The updated approved learning frameworks	Virtual	4 April 2023
Directors and Coordinators Day – KU Children's Services	Virtual	4 April 2023
TAFE NSW Children's Centre Annual Conference	TAFE NSW Blacktown Campus	5 April 2023
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Leadership Meeting	Virtual	17 April 2023
Macquarie University Faculty of Arts Graduation Ceremony	Macquarie University	10 May 2023
Australian Government Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group	Virtual	17 May 2023
GoodStart Board Meeting	Murarrie, QLD	24 May 2023
Early Childhood Australia	QLD	31 May 2023
The Importance of the Role of the Educational Leader – QLD Regulatory Authority	Virtual	14 June 2023
Department of Education ECEC Metropolitan Region Educational Leader Professional Program – 2023 – ELPP celebration day webinar	Virtual	14 June 2023

ACECQA ENGAGEMENT NAME	LOCATION	DATE
Australian Government Department of Education Senior Executive Meeting	Virtual	20 June 2023
Reconciliation Australia – National Teaching Standards and Curriculum Requirements, AITSL, ACECQA, ACARA	Virtual	26 June 2023
Reconciliation Australia – Reconciliation, the National Quality Framework and the approved learning frameworks	Virtual	29 June 2023
30 min presentation – AITSL, ACARA, ACECQA Panel webinar	Virtual	29 June 2023
REAIE Panel Discussion – Landscapes of curiosity and creativity	South Wharf, VIC	30 June 2023

APPENDIX G: GLOSSARY

ACECQA	The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ACSC	Australian Cyber Security Centre
AERO	Australian Education Research Organisation
AESOC	Australian Education Senior Officials Committee
AFR SC	Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALFs	Approved Learning Frameworks
AO	Authorised Officer
BBF	Budget Based Funded services
CCCFR	Community Child Care Fund Restricted services
CWG	Communications Working Group
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreements
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECPG	Early Childhood Policy Group
ECS	Education and Care Services
ELACCA	Early Learning and Care Council of Australia
EMM	Education Ministers Meeting
ESG	Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance
FAL	Family Assistance Law
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IHC	In Home Care
IRAP	Information Security Registered Assessors Program
ISG	Implementation Steering Group
ISM	Information Security Manual
JuA	Joined up Approvals project
LAN	Lead Assessor Network
LIN	Lead Investigators Network
LMS	Learning Management System
LWG	Legislation Working Group
NL	National Law
NQA	National Quality Agenda

NQA ITS	National Quality Agenda IT System
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
NSG	National IT Systems Steering Group
OEWG	Operational and Emerging Issues Working Group
OSHC	Outside School Hours Care
PIA	Privacy Impact Assessment
PSP	Priority Support Program
PSPF	Protective Security Policy Framework
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QSP	Quality Support Program
RA	Regulatory Authority
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
REAL	Regulatory Empowerment and Learning
RPC	Regulatory Practice Committee
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SRQC	Supporting Regulatory Quality and Consistency
SRS	State Regulated Service
WHS	Work Health and Safety



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