

Review of NQF Staffing and Qualification Regulations

CONSULTATION SUMMARY



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

SEPTEMBER 2024

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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

A highly skilled workforce is integral to the delivery of high-quality early childhood education and care, and most importantly children’s health, safety, and wellbeing.

This review is one of the 21 actions within [Shaping Our Future: The National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy](#) and has involved a comprehensive review of National Quality Framework (NQF) staffing and qualification regulations, with a focus on the requirements for early childhood teachers, expiring transitional provisions and qualifications of Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) educators. It has identified opportunities to improve consistency, support quality, and reduce the complexity of the current qualification and staffing requirements, recognising the challenges faced in meeting these requirements, particularly in regional and remote Australia.

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority ([ACECQA](#)) conducted an extensive consultation process on behalf of all governments between May and August 2023, including a survey, public webinars, and engagement with key stakeholders.

Consultation findings and ongoing engagement with State and Territory governments informed the development of options, which have been endorsed by Education Ministers. The options considered the impact of changes on the workforce and alignment with other actions of [Shaping Our Future](#) and relevant national reviews.

It should be noted that some of the feedback raised was out of the scope of this review, including challenges around staff shortages, pay and conditions, and the content and quality of qualifications. This feedback links to other actions that are being progressed under [Shaping Our Future](#).

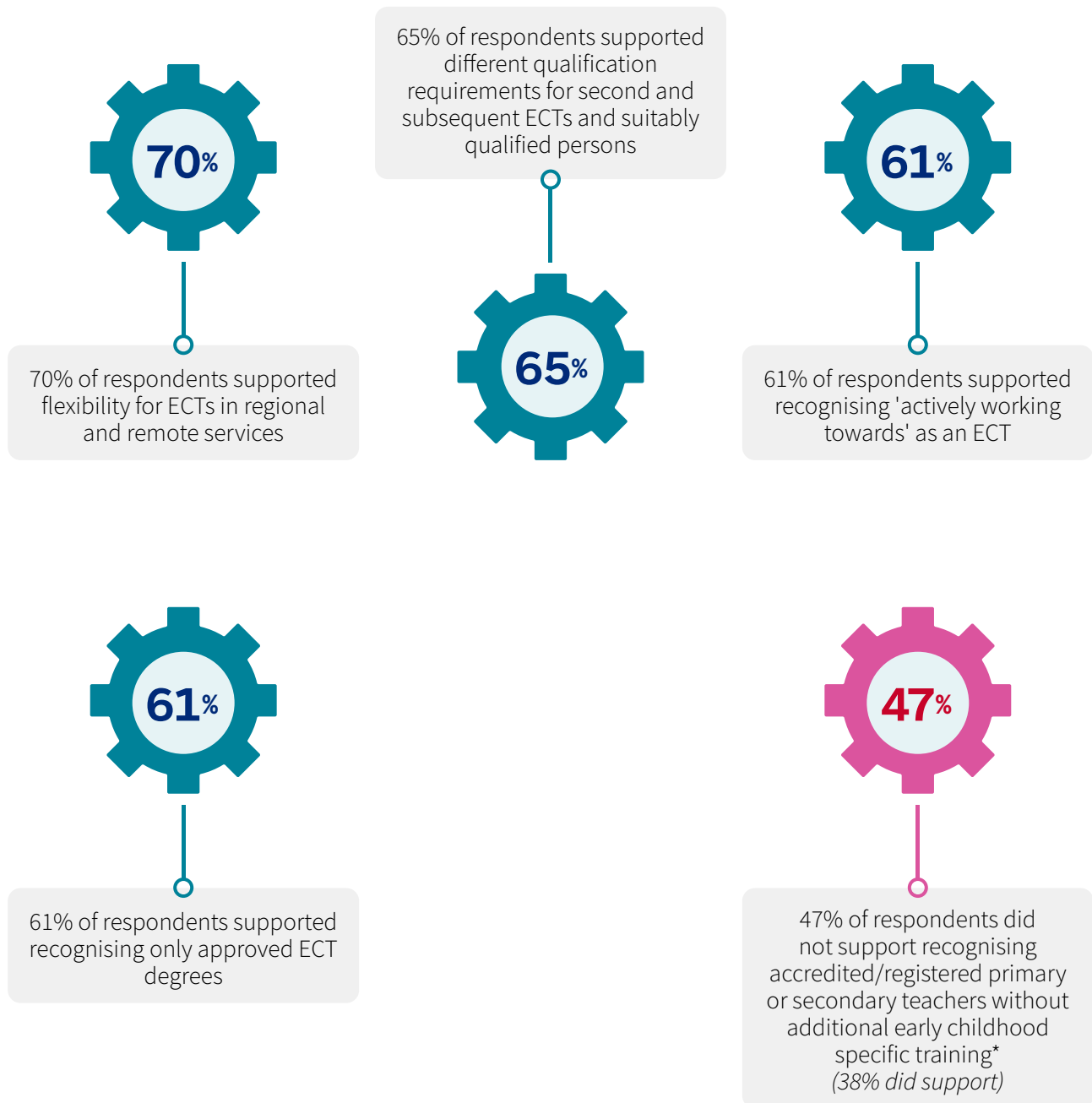
HOW DID WE CONSULT?



WHO DID WE HEAR FROM IN THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY?

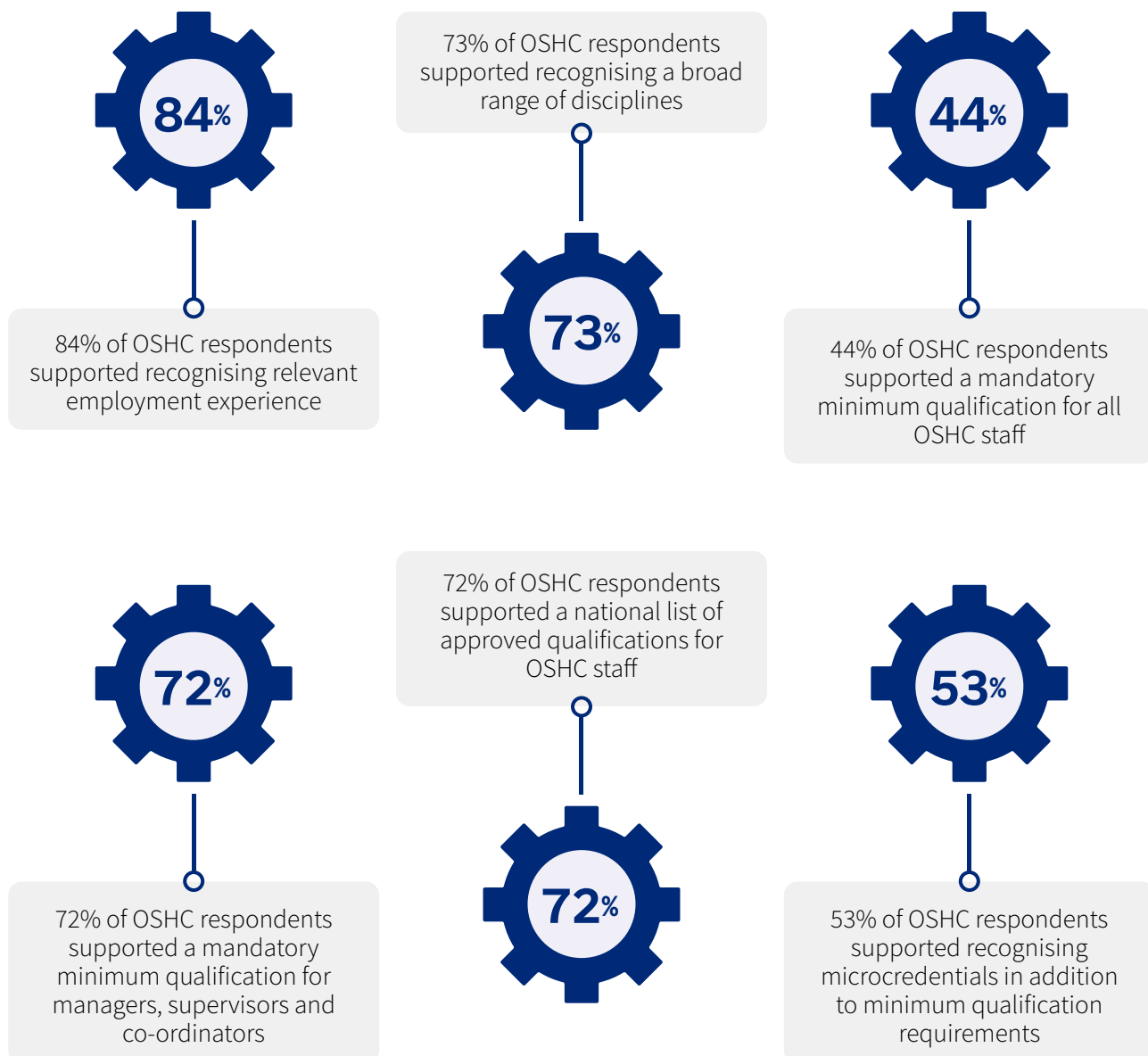


WHAT DID WE HEAR ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS?



Source: Support for options for qualification requirements for early childhood teachers, summary national survey responses. ACECQA Public Consultation Survey data, August 2023. *The 'recognition as an equivalent early childhood teacher' provision requires registered/accredited primary or secondary teachers to complete at least an approved certificate III level early childhood education and care qualification.

WHAT DID WE HEAR ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS FOR OSHC EDUCATORS?



Source: Support for options for qualification requirements for OSHC educators, summary national OSHC survey responses. ACECQA Public Consultation Survey data, August 2023.

THEMES AND INSIGHTS

The workforce is committed to quality improvement and values their professional identity.

The sector supports flexible approaches to staffing and qualification requirements to address ongoing shortages.

Approved providers were more likely to support flexibility than teachers and educators.

There is a strong aspiration for a nationally consistent approach to OSHC educators.



OTHER ISSUES

Workforce shortages, and the role of pay and conditions, continue to be a core concern for staff.

Staff advise they continue to struggle with the impact of administrative burden, workload, and burnout.

Enhanced and updated data could deliver additional information to inform future decisions.

Concerns about the quality of training and assessment continue to be a key issue for respondents.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?



A challenge identified during this review is the balance between higher qualification requirements that support high quality outcomes for children while recognising that acute workforce shortages can impact accessibility and affordability. This is particularly relevant for families at risk of vulnerability or disadvantage, where children have the most to gain from high quality education and care.

The children's education and care workforce needs to be supported and valued for children to experience strong, positive relationships with educators. As such, any recommended options and actions need to carefully mitigate any potential risks to the profession.

The Review has been provided to Education Ministers who are considering the necessary options to improve the identified workforce challenges.

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through high quality education and care.*



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National Children's Education
and Care Workforce Strategy