



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority



# NQF Snapshot

# Q2 2024

August 2024

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

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# Overview

NQF Snapshot Q2 2024 is ACECQA's 46<sup>th</sup> national report on children's education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

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

A revised, streamlined version of the NQS commenced on 1 February 2018, which also made it more challenging for a service to achieve an overall rating of Exceeding NQS (see Figure 4).

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

The data presented in this Snapshot was taken from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) at 00.30 on 1 July 2024.

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



# Snapshot highlights

17,705

children's education and care services approved to operate under the NQF

16,118 (91%)

services with a quality rating

14,508 (90%)

services with a quality rating are Meeting NQS or above

7210

providers approved to operate

5688 (79%)

providers approved to operate only one service

33

services rated Excellent by ACECQA<sup>1</sup>

21,227

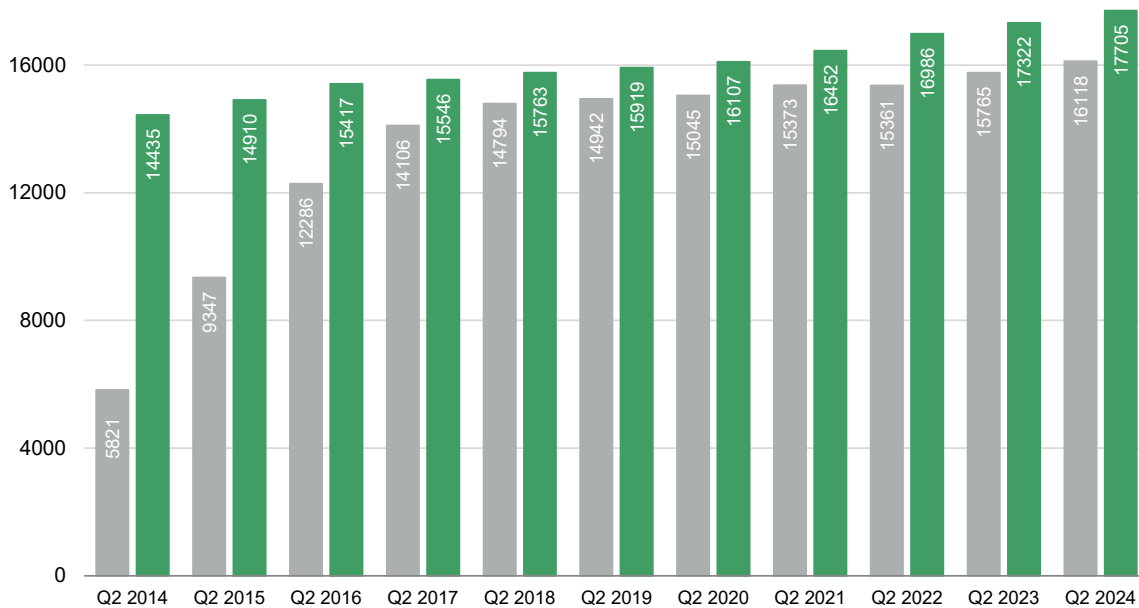
quality rating reassessments completed

68%

of services rated Working Towards NQS improved their overall quality rating at reassessment

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

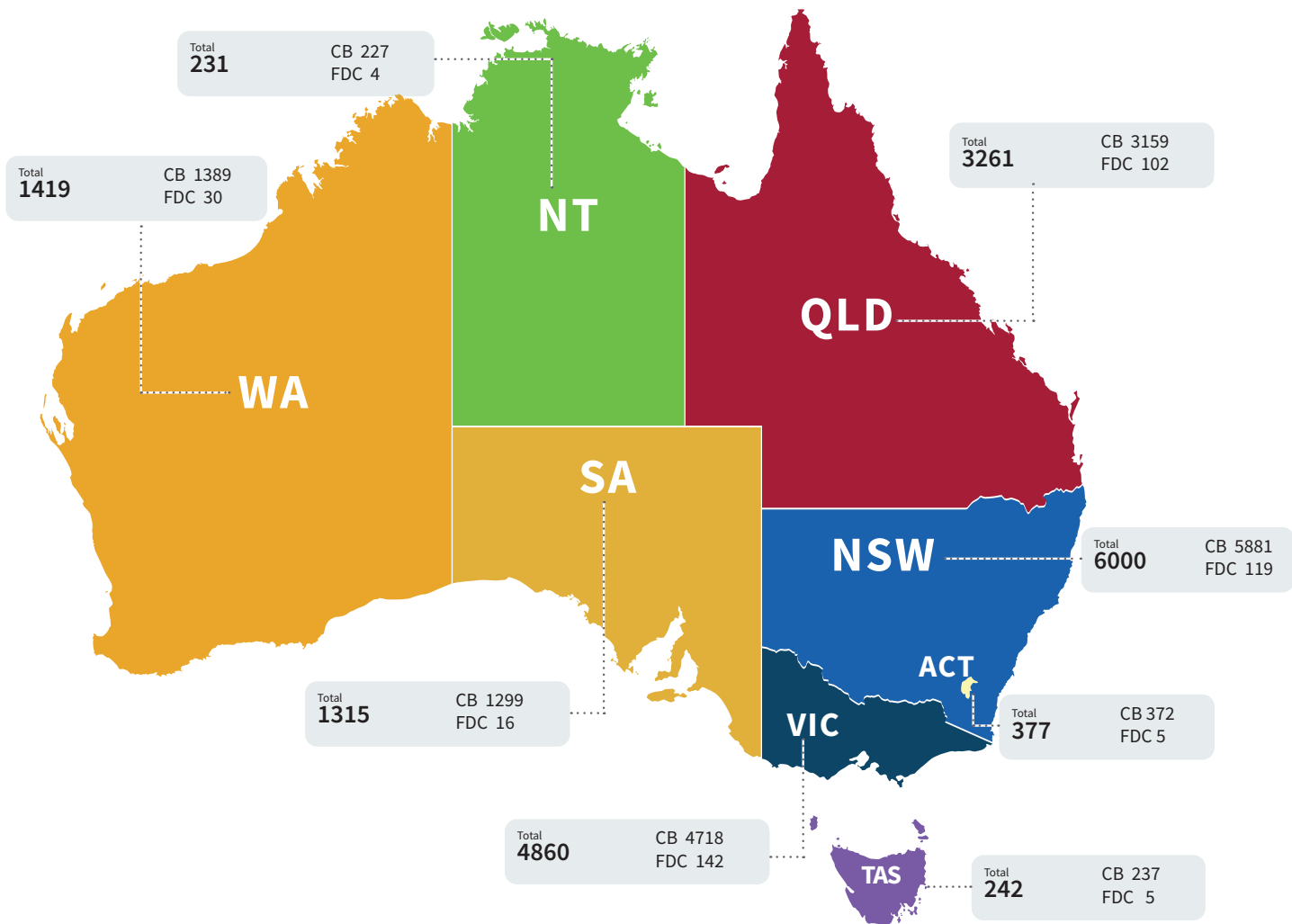
■ Number of services with a quality rating      ■ Number of approved services



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

# Profile of the sector

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



<p>Total Centre-based (CB) <sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>17,282 (98%)</b></p> <p>+2%</p> <p>Increase on Q2 2023</p>	<p>Total Family day care (FDC) <sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>423 (2%)</b></p> <p>-6%</p> <p>Decrease on Q2 2023</p>	<p><b>Total</b></p> <p><b>17,705</b></p> <p>+2%</p> <p>Increase on Q2 2023</p>
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<sup>1</sup> A centre-based service is an education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool and outside school hours care services that are delivered at a centre. It does not include Tasmanian preschools/kindergartens and most preschools/kindergartens in Western Australia that are outside the scope of the NQF, as well as other services that aren't regulated under the National Law.

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

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

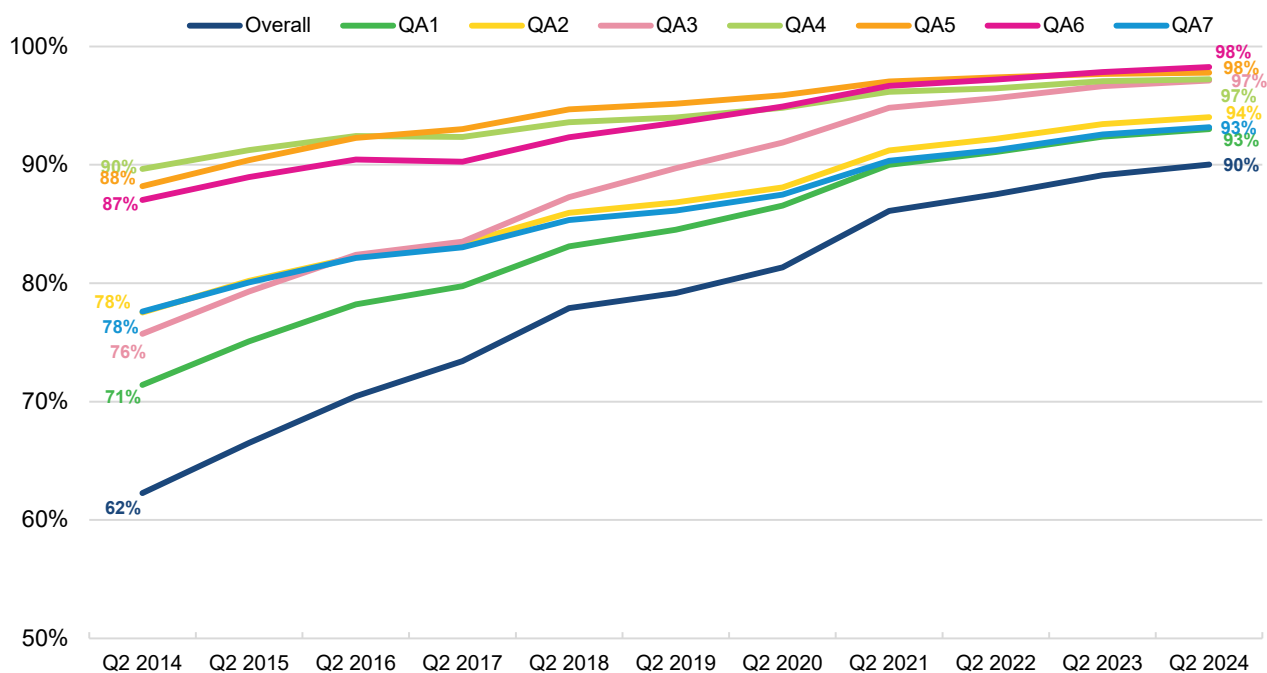


Figure 4: Proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS or above by overall rating and quality area

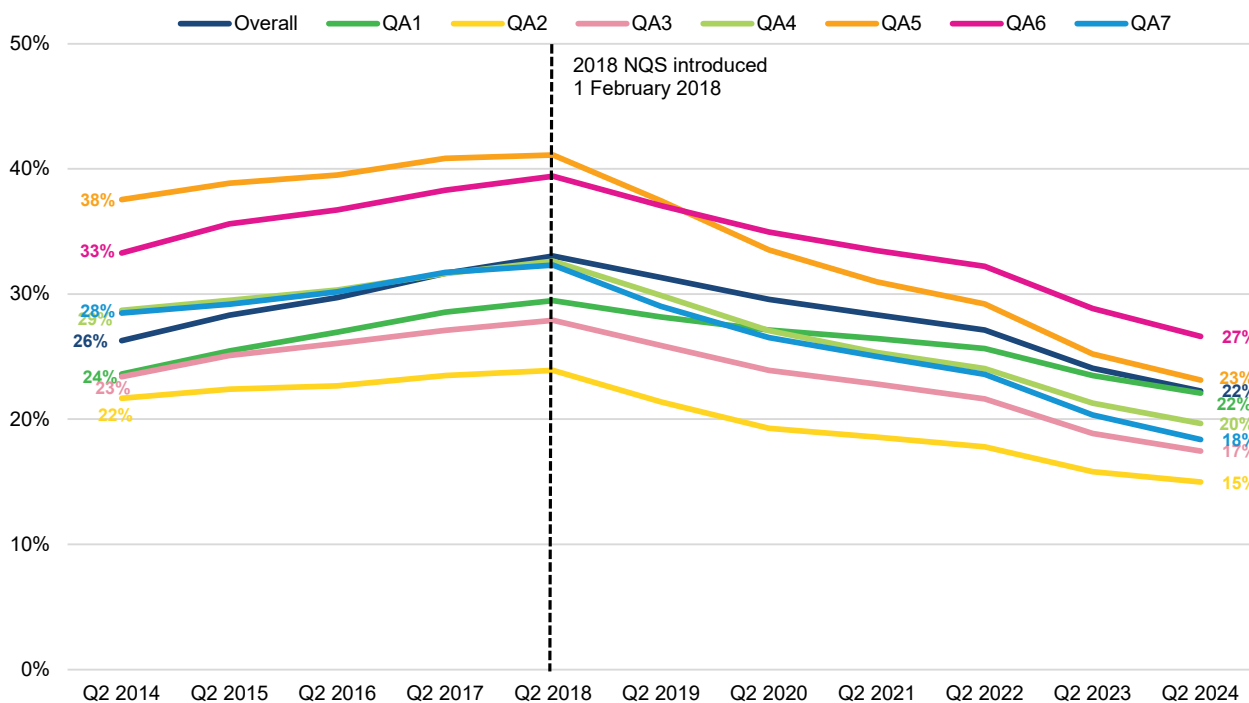




Figure 5: Proportion of services by service type and jurisdiction <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

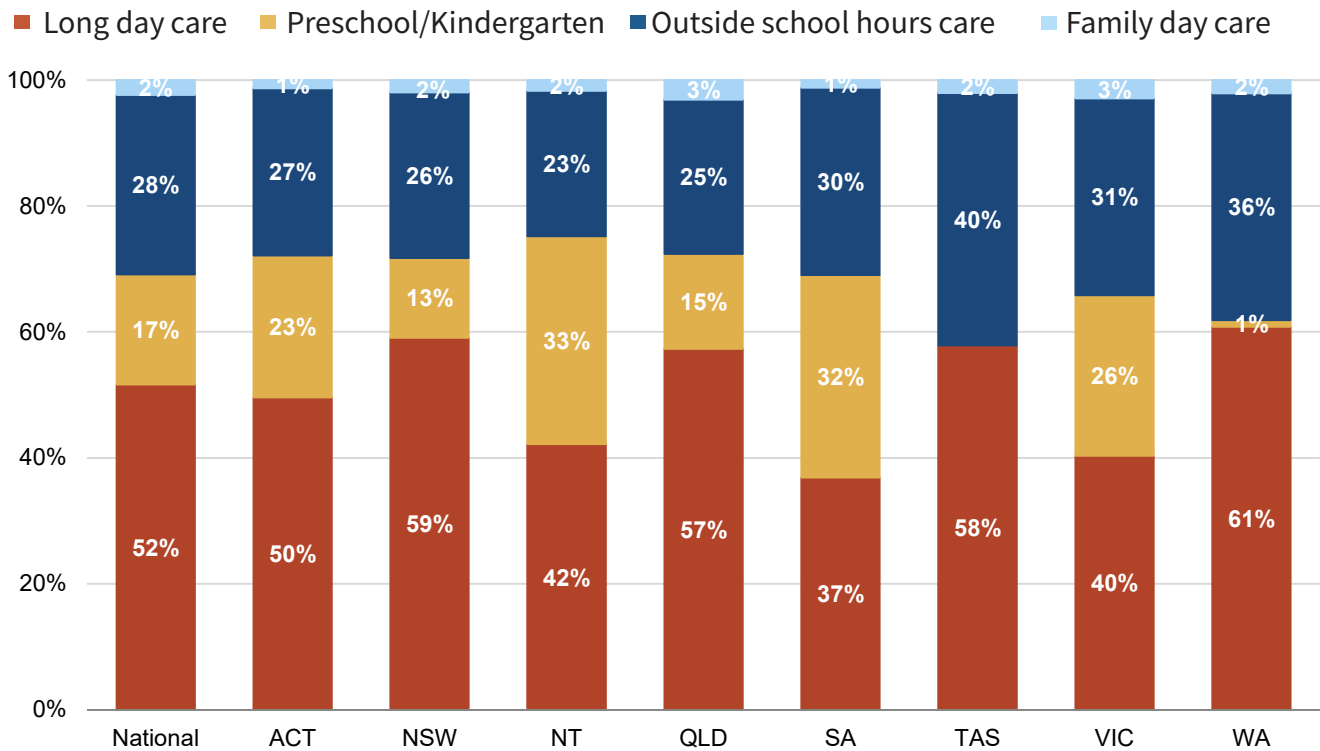


Table 1: Number of services by service type and jurisdiction

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	5	187	85	100	0	377
NSW	119	3543	762	1576	0	6000
NT	4	97	76	53	1	231
QLD	102	1869	491	799	0	3261
SA	16	485	423	391	0	1315
TAS	5	140	0	97	0	242
VIC	142	1960	1240	1518	0	4860
WA	30	862	15	510	2	1419
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>9143</b>	<b>3092</b>	<b>5044</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17,705</b>

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

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

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

4 Excludes Tasmanian preschools/kindergartens and most preschools/kindergartens in Western Australia that are outside the scope of the NQF, as well as other services that aren't regulated under the National Law.

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

Figure 6: Number and proportion of services by provider management <sup>1,2,3</sup>

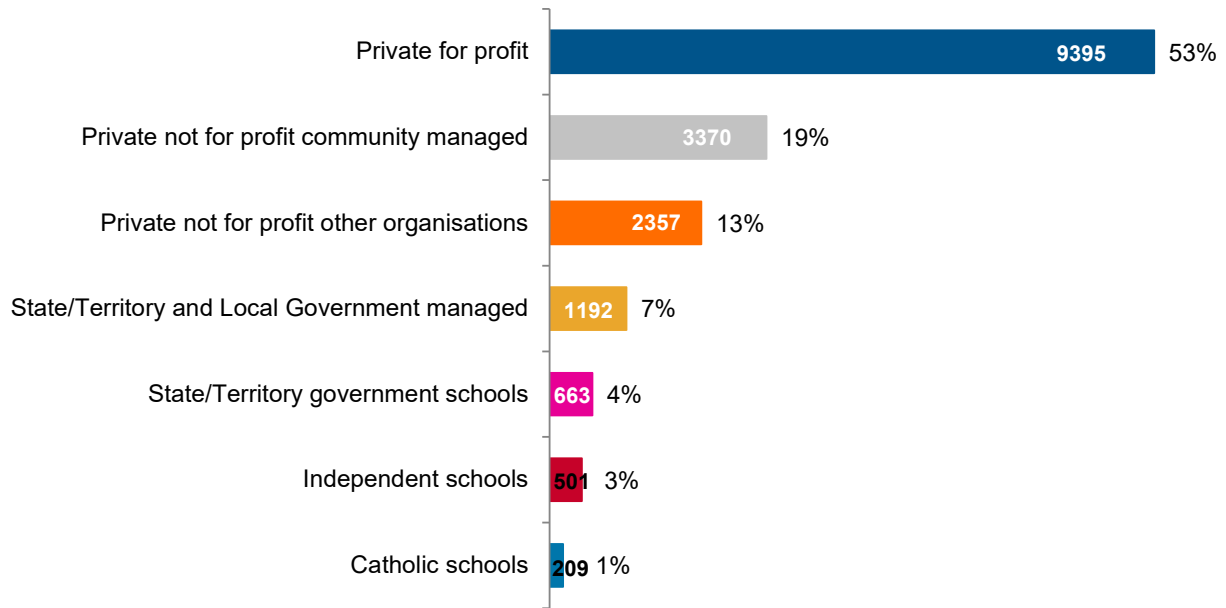


Figure 7 shows that 79% of approved providers operate a single service while 1% of approved providers operate 25 or more services.

Figure 7: Proportion of approved providers by size

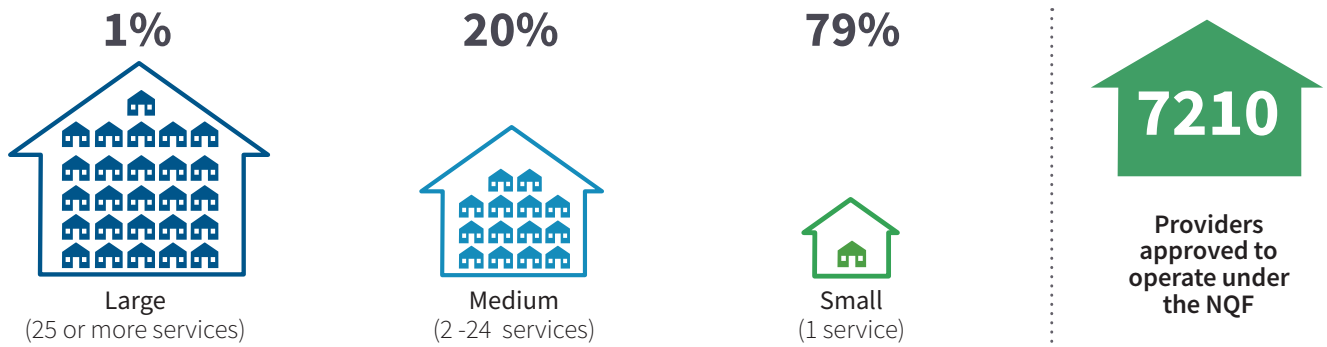
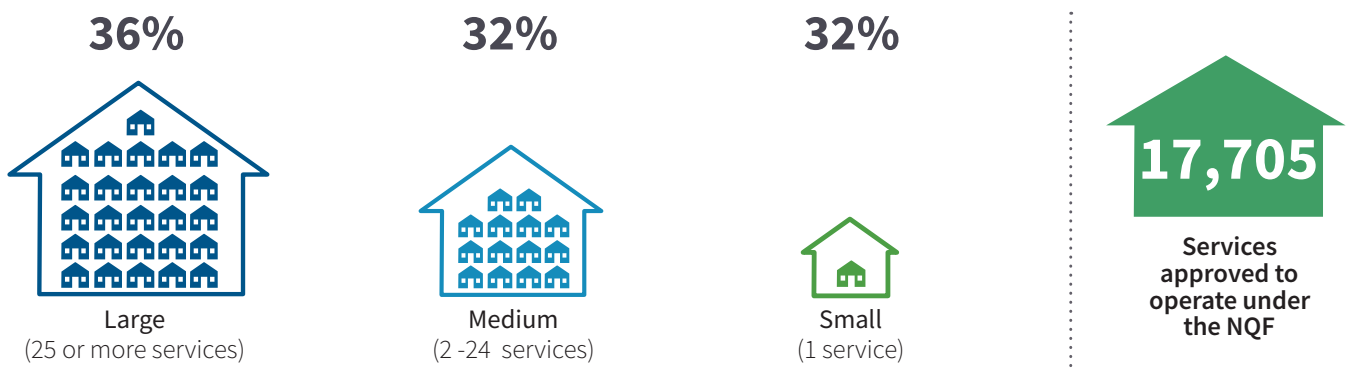


Figure 8 shows that 32% of approved services are operated by small approved providers while 36% of approved services are operated by large approved providers.

Figure 8: Proportion of approved services by provider size



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

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

<sup>3</sup> 18 services categorised as 'Not stated/Other' excluded for graphical purposes.



# Progress of assessment and rating

Table 2 includes all approved services. The proportion of services with a quality rating will not reach 100% at any one time because a small proportion of services will only recently have been approved and may not have started operating or may have only been operating for a short period of time. In general, state and territory regulatory authorities will assess and rate newly approved services within 9-18 months of operations commencing.

**Table 2: Quality ratings by jurisdiction**

	Number of services	Proportion of all services	Number of services with a quality rating	Proportion of services with a quality rating
ACT	377	2%	348	92%
NSW	6000	34%	5630	94%
NT	231	1%	217	94%
QLD	3261	18%	3060	94%
SA	1315	7%	1249	95%
TAS	242	1%	217	90%
VIC	4860	27%	4171	86%
WA	1419	8%	1226	86%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,705</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,118</b>	<b>91%</b>

**Table 3: Number of services with a quality rating by service type and jurisdiction**

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/ Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	5	171	82	90	0	348
NSW	115	3379	748	1388	0	5630
NT	3	89	74	50	1	217
QLD	81	1757	464	758	0	3060
SA	12	446	412	379	0	1249
TAS	5	131	0	81	0	217
VIC	113	1722	1144	1192	0	4171
WA	28	748	14	435	1	1226
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>8443</b>	<b>2938</b>	<b>4373</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16,118</b>

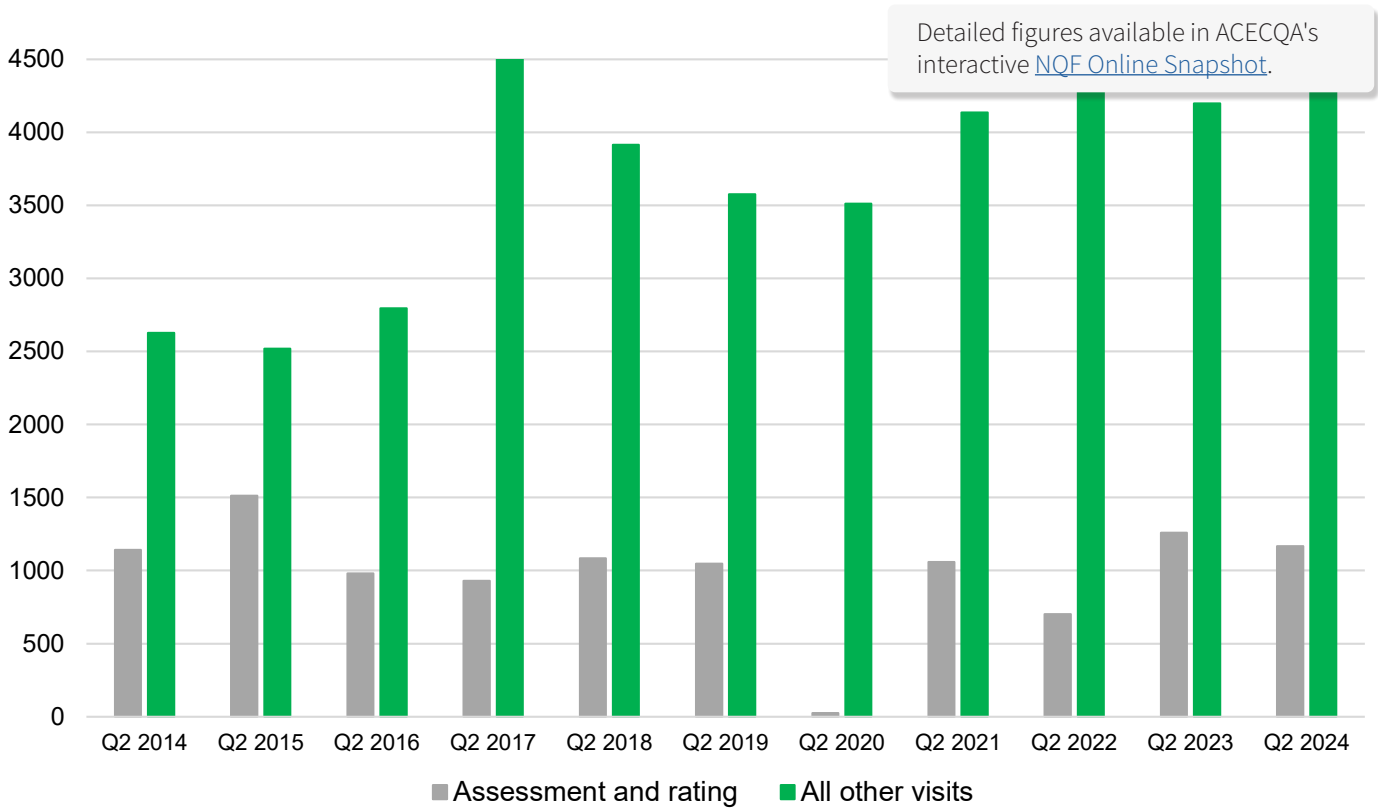
# Service visits

Figure 9 shows the total number of quality assessment and rating visits compared to all other visits undertaken by state and territory regulatory authorities each quarter. Other types of visits include checking and monitoring compliance with the requirements of the NQF, investigating complaints and responding to events such as serious incidents or changes of service ownership, as well as visits for educative purposes.

While the ratio of assessment and rating visits to all other visits has fluctuated over time, state and territory regulatory authorities have undertaken more than three times as many other types of visit than assessment and rating visits since 2017, emphasising the significant amount of regulatory work that occurs outside of quality assessment and rating.

On 2 April 2020, in recognition of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Education Ministers announced four critical areas for time-limited regulatory action, including the suspension of assessment and ratings. This resulted in the stark decline in assessment and rating visits in Q2 2020.

**Figure 9: Number of service visits (quality assessment and rating visits compared to all other visits)**



# Draft and final reports, and reviews

Table 4 shows the proportion of overall quality ratings that change between the draft and final assessment and rating report.

As part of the comprehensive assessment and rating process, service providers are issued a draft report by state and territory regulatory authorities, which includes the proposed quality ratings. Service providers are given the opportunity to provide any required feedback or clarification prior to the final report and quality ratings being issued.

More than 94% of all overall quality ratings remain unchanged between the draft and final assessment and rating reports.

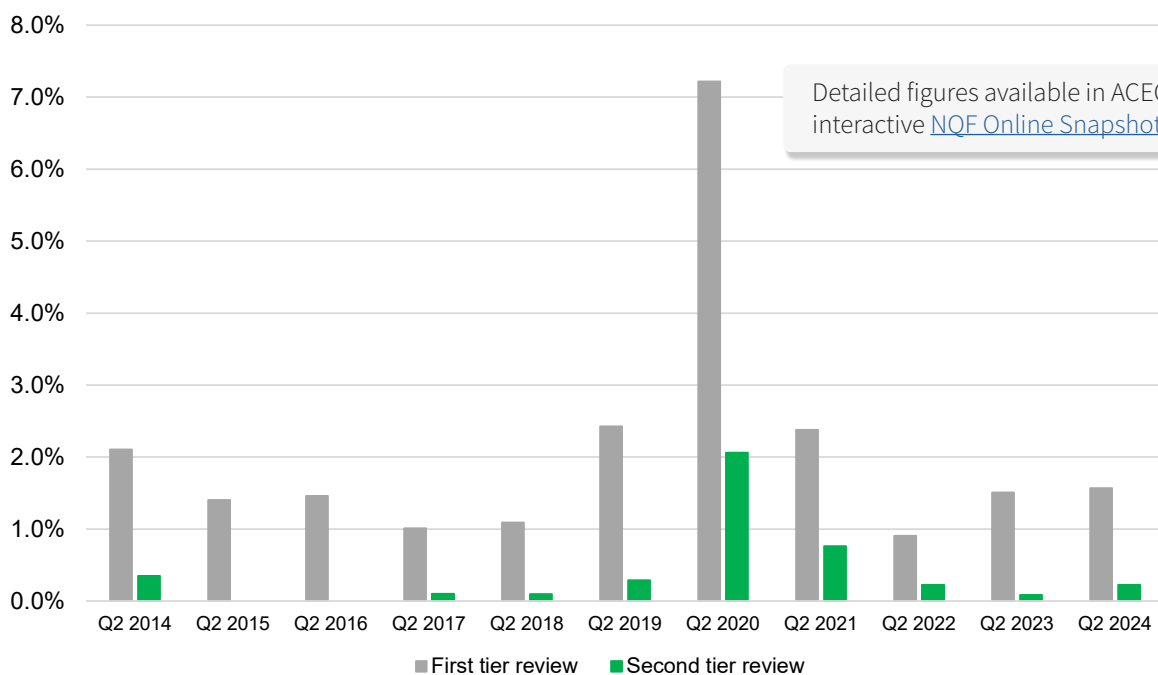
**Table 4: Proportion of overall quality ratings that change between the draft and final assessment and rating report**

Rating level	Change in rating	%
Higher	844	5.2%
Unchanged	15,241	94.7%
Lower	1	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,086</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 10 shows the proportion of quality assessment and ratings that result in a first or second tier review.

As part of the comprehensive assessment and rating process, service providers may request a (first tier) review by the relevant state and territory regulatory authority following the final report and quality ratings being issued. They may also subsequently request a (second tier) review by an expert panel convened by ACECQA.

**Figure 10: Proportion of quality assessment and ratings that result in a first or second tier review**





# Quality improvement

Table 5 presents a service's previous overall rating alongside its reassessed overall rating. For example, 4388 services previously rated Working Towards NQS improved their rating to Meeting NQS after reassessment. While 2345 services previously rated Working Towards NQS received the same rating again after reassessment.

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

		Rating after reassessment				Total
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	21	85	17	0	123
	Working Towards NQS	63	2345	4388	810	7606
	Meeting NQS	11	1238	5887	1212	8348
	Exceeding NQS	2	442	2255	2451	5150
	<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>4110</b>	<b>12,547</b>	<b>4473</b>	<b>21,227</b>


		Rating after reassessment				Improvement rate
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	17%	69%	14%	0%	83%
	Working Towards NQS	1%	31%	58%	11%	68%
	Meeting NQS	0%	15%	71%	15%	15%
	Exceeding NQS	0%	9%	44%	48%	-

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


# Overall quality ratings

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

1 Educational program and practice	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent
2 Children's health and safety	<p>Service does not meet one of the seven quality areas or a section of the legislation and there is a significant risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.</p> <p>The regulatory authority will take immediate action.</p>	<p>Service provides a safe education and care program, but there are one or more areas identified for improvement.</p>	<p>Service provides quality education and care in all seven quality areas.</p>	<p>Service goes beyond the requirements of the National Quality Standard in at least four of the seven quality areas.</p>	<p>Exceeding rated services that promote exceptional education and care, demonstrate sector leadership, and are committed to continually improving.</p> <p>This rating can only be awarded by ACECQA.</p>
3 Physical environment					
4 Staffing arrangements					
5 Relationships with children					
6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities					
7 Governance and leadership					




RATED  
**WORKING TOWARDS**  
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD



RATED  
**MEETING**  
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD



RATED  
**EXCEEDING**  
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD



RATED  
**EXCELLENT**  
by ACECQA

Table 6: Overall quality ratings by jurisdiction

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total
ACT	1	53 15%	139 40%	154 44%	1	348
NSW	7	508 9%	4003 71%	1099 20%	13	5630
NT	1	38 18%	158 73%	20 9%	0	217
QLD	0	316 10%	2157 70%	578 19%	9	3060
SA	0	203 16%	602 48%	444 36%	0	1249
TAS	0	35 16%	135 62%	47 22%	0	217
VIC	2	223 5%	2782 67%	1154 28%	10	4171
WA	0	223 18%	944 77%	59 5%	0	1226
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1599 10%</b>	<b>10,920 68%</b>	<b>3555 22%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16,118</b>

**Figure 11: Overall quality ratings by service type**

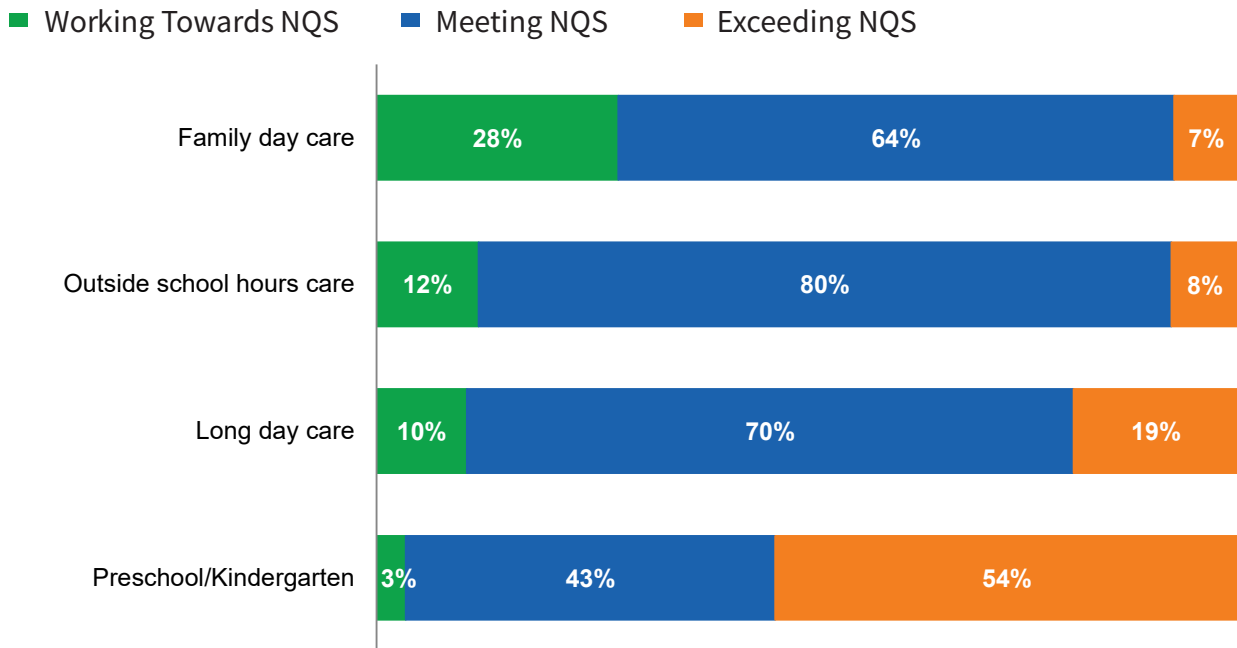
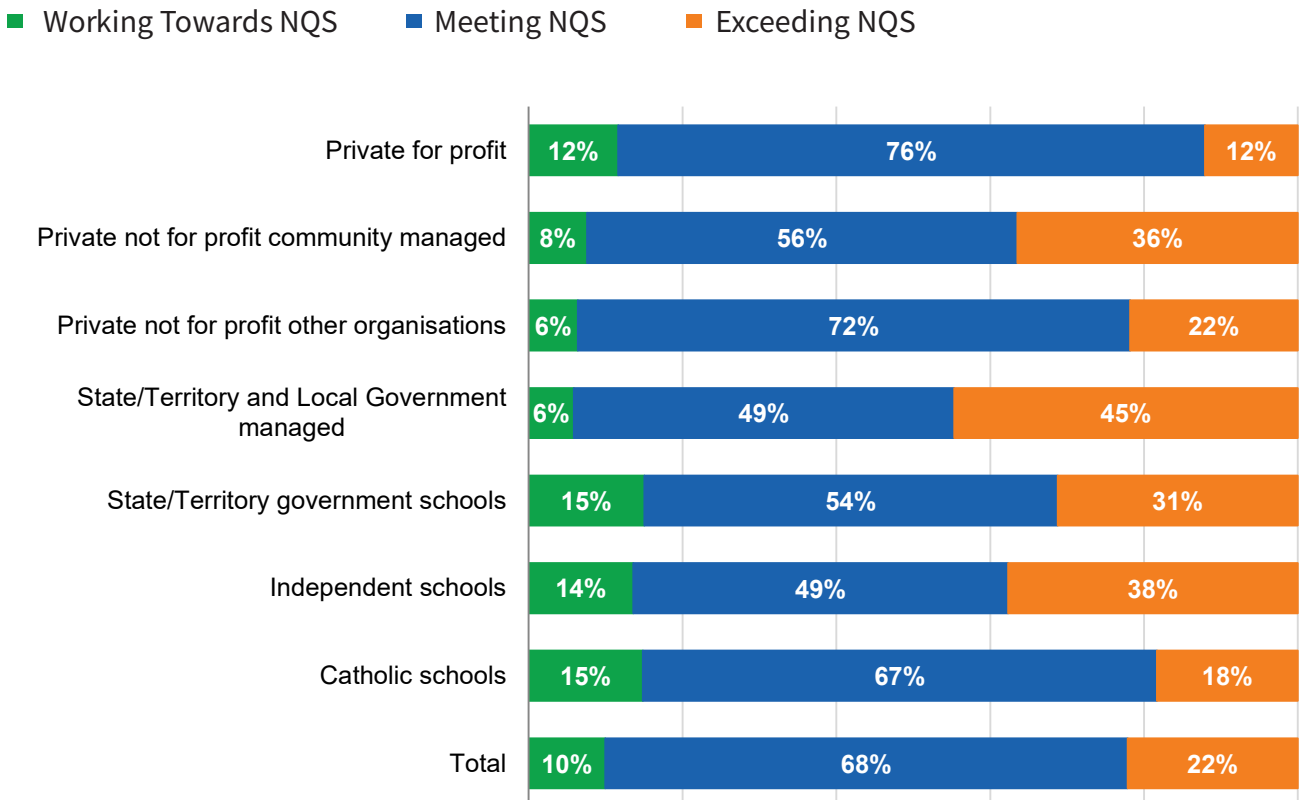


Figure 12 shows the variation in spread of quality ratings between provider management types.

These differences can reflect a range of contextual factors, such as the service profile of these provider types. For example, half of all ‘State/Territory and Local Government managed’ services are preschools/kindergartens, with preschools/kindergartens performing better against the NQS than other service types (see Figure 11). In contrast, preschools/kindergartens make up only 1% of ‘Private for profit’ services.

**Figure 12: Overall quality ratings by provider management type<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> 17 providers categorised as ‘Not stated/Other’ excluded for graphical purposes.



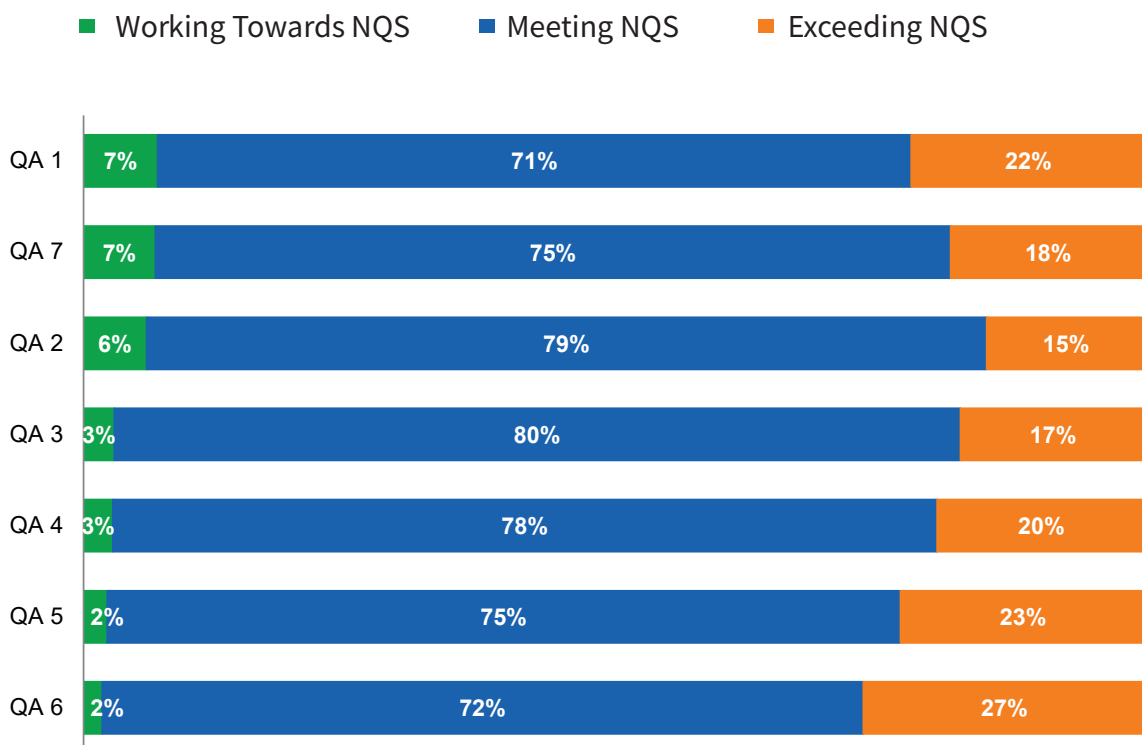
# Quality area ratings

Table 7 and Figure 13 rank the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the number and proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Table 7: Quality area ratings**

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS
Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice	2	1123	11,433	3560
Quality Area 7 - Governance and leadership	10	1088	12,060	2960
Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety	11	954	12,739	2414
Quality Area 3 - Physical environment	1	464	12,838	2815
Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements	3	443	12,502	3170
Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children	2	357	12,033	3726
Quality Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	0	280	11,550	4288

**Figure 13: Quality area ratings**

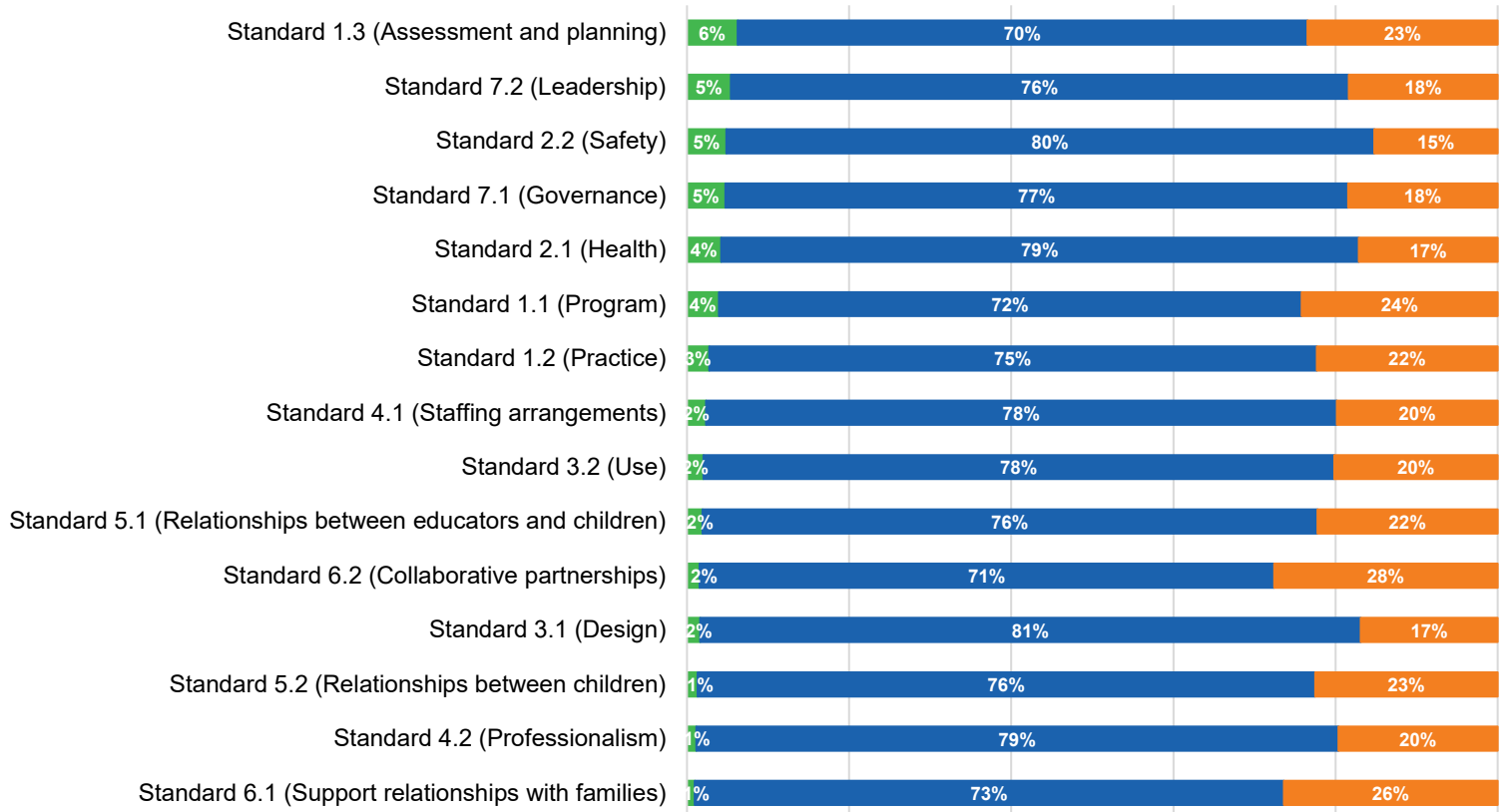


# Standard level ratings

Figure 14 ranks the 15 standards of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS for each standard.

Figure 14: Standard level ratings

■ Working Towards NQS ■ Meeting NQS ■ Exceeding NQS



# Element level results

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

**Table 8: Element level results**

NQS Element	% Not Met
1.3.1 (Assessment and planning cycle)	5.3%
1.3.2 (Critical reflection)	5.2%
7.1.2 (Management systems)	4.2%
7.2.2 (Educational leadership)	3.8%
2.1.2 (Health practices and procedures)	3.7%
2.2.1 (Supervision)	3.7%
7.2.3 (Development of professionals)	3.2%
1.1.3 (Program learning opportunities)	2.8%
2.2.2 (Incident and emergency management)	2.4%
4.1.1 (Organisation of educators)	2.2%
1.1.1 (Approved learning framework)	2.0%
7.2.1 (Continuous improvement)	2.0%
1.2.3 (Child directed learning)	1.7%
1.1.2 (Child-centred)	1.6%
1.3.3 (Information for families)	1.6%
5.1.2 (Dignity and rights of the child)	1.6%
1.2.2 (Responsive teaching and scaffolding)	1.5%
1.2.1 (Intentional teaching)	1.4%
7.1.1 (Service philosophy and purpose)	1.4%
7.1.3 (Roles and responsibilities)	1.4%

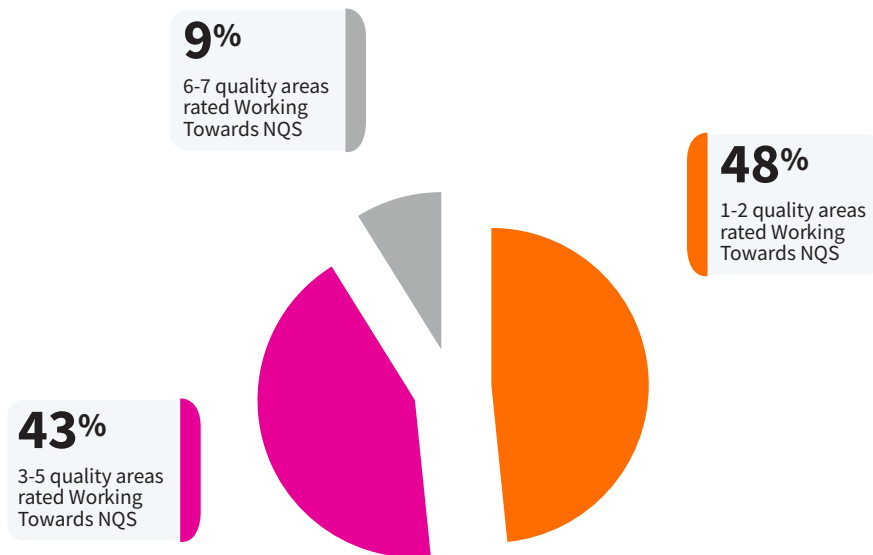
NQS Element	% Not Met
3.1.2 (Upkeep)	1.3%
3.2.3 (Environmentally responsible)	1.3%
5.2.2 (Self-regulation)	1.3%
6.2.3 (Community engagement)	1.1%
2.1.3 (Healthy lifestyle)	1.1%
5.1.1 (Positive educator to child interactions)	1.1%
3.2.1 (Inclusive environment)	1.0%
3.2.2 (Resources support play-based learning)	1.0%
2.2.3 (Child protection)	0.9%
4.2.2 (Professional standards)	0.9%
6.2.2 (Access and participation)	0.9%
2.1.1 (Wellbeing and comfort)	0.8%
6.1.3 (Families are supported)	0.6%
4.2.1 (Professional collaboration)	0.6%
3.1.1 (Fit for purpose)	0.6%
6.1.2 (Parent views are respected)	0.5%
6.2.1 (Transitions)	0.4%
6.1.1 (Engagement with the service)	0.4%
4.1.2 (Continuity of staff)	0.4%
5.2.1 (Collaborative learning)	0.3%



# Services rated Working Towards NQS

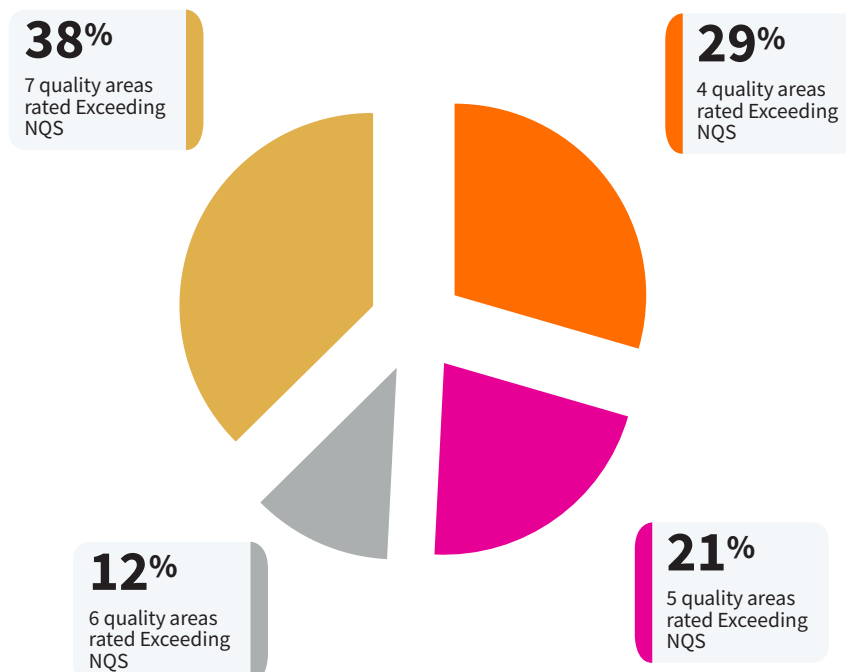
A service receives an overall rating of Working Towards NQS if any of the seven quality areas are rated Working Towards NQS. A quality area is rated Working Towards NQS if any of the standards within that quality area are rated Working Towards NQS.

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



# Services rated Exceeding NQS

Figure 16: Proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS by number of quality areas rated Exceeding NQS



# Australian Capital Territory summary

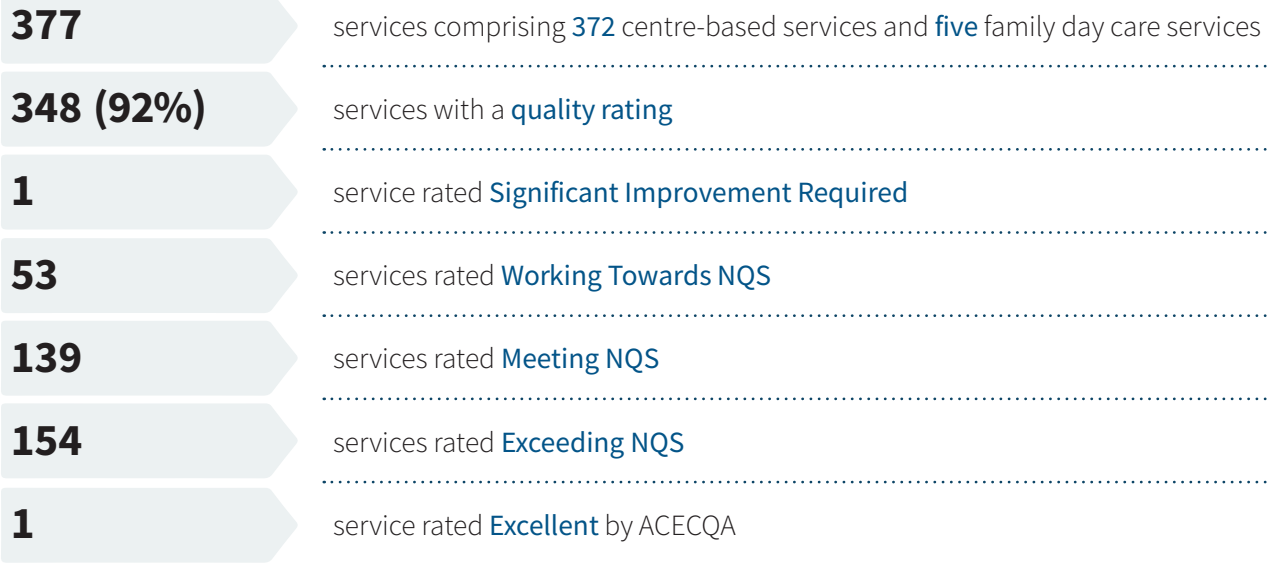
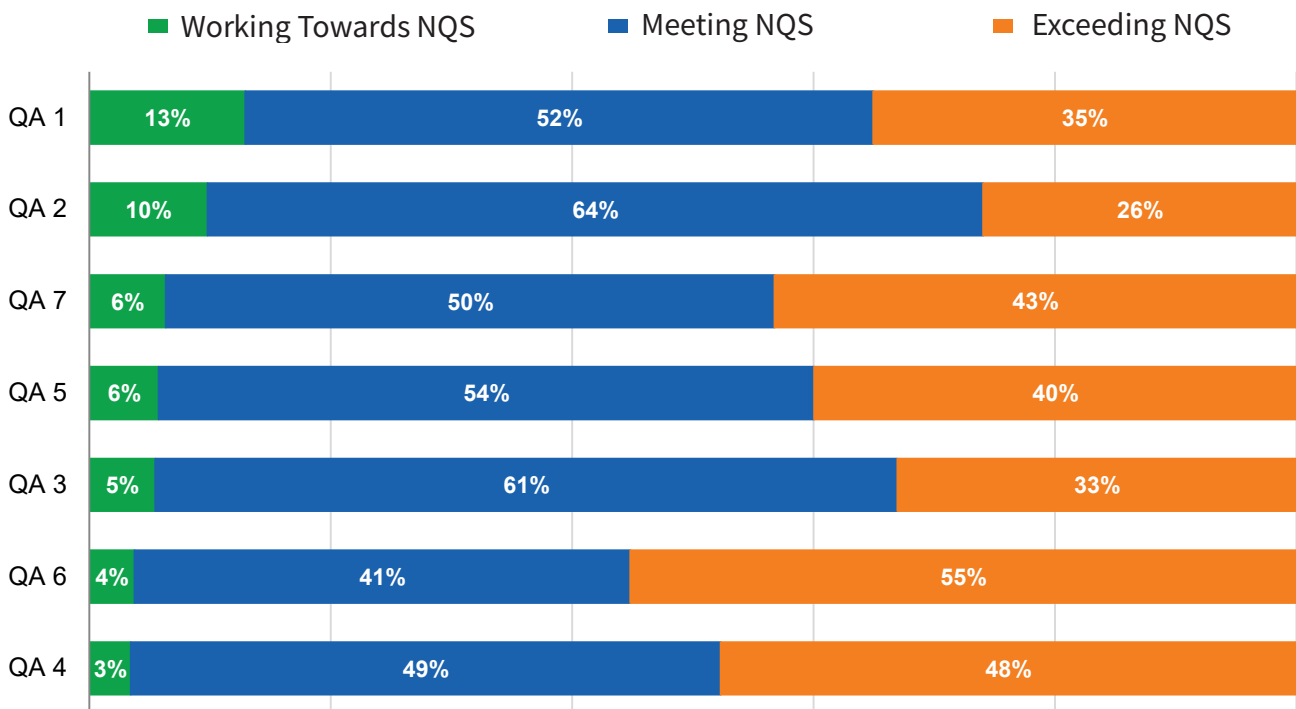


Figure 17 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Figure 17: Quality area ratings



## Contact details

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

# New South Wales summary

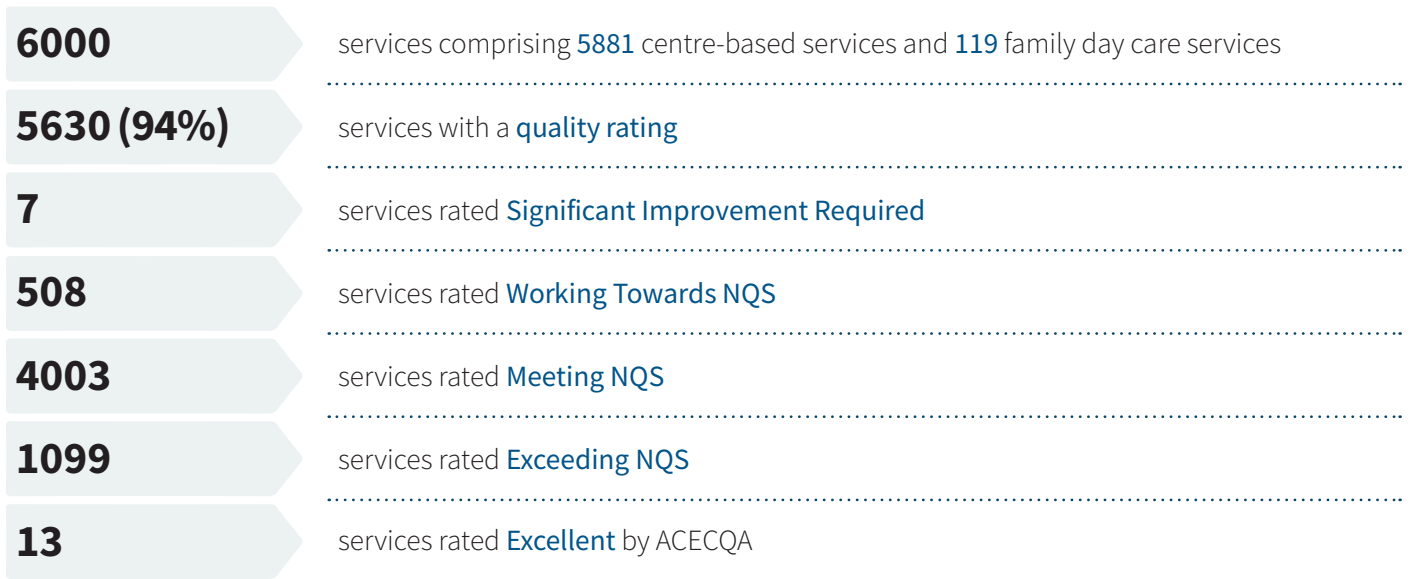
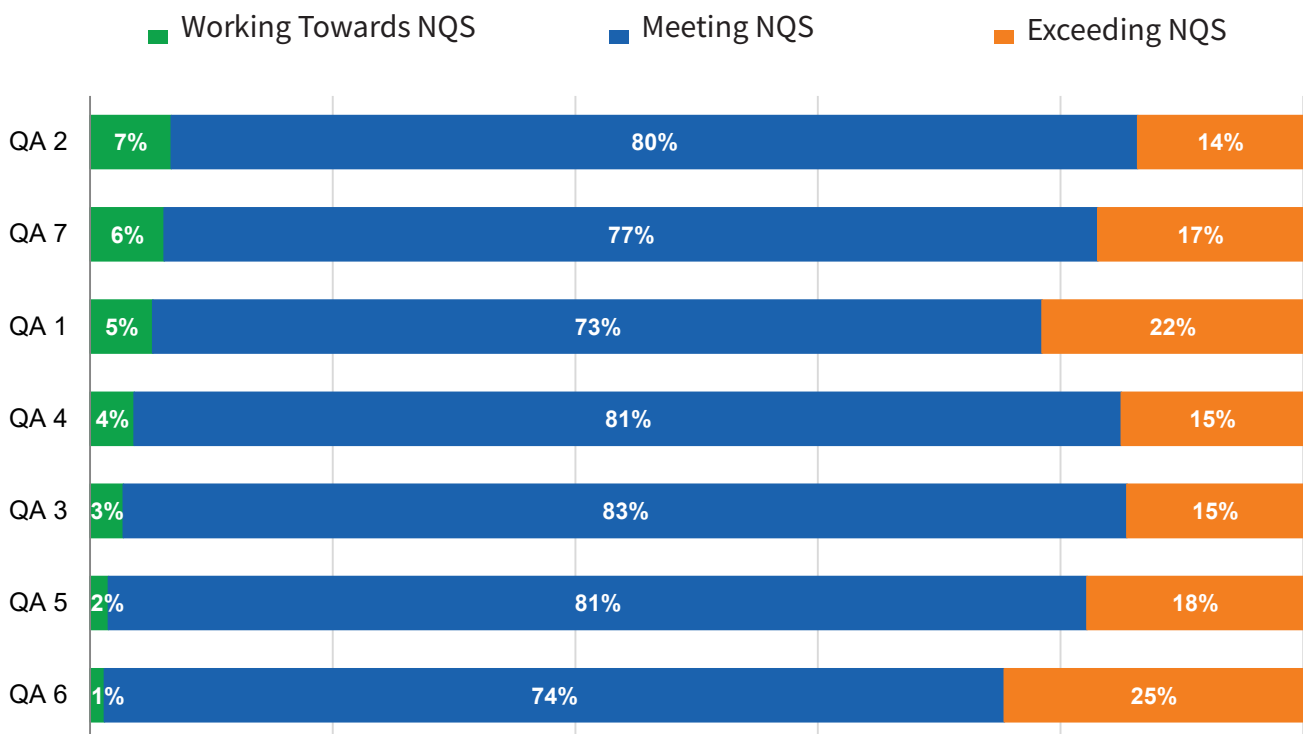


Figure 18 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Figure 18: Quality area ratings



## Contact details

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

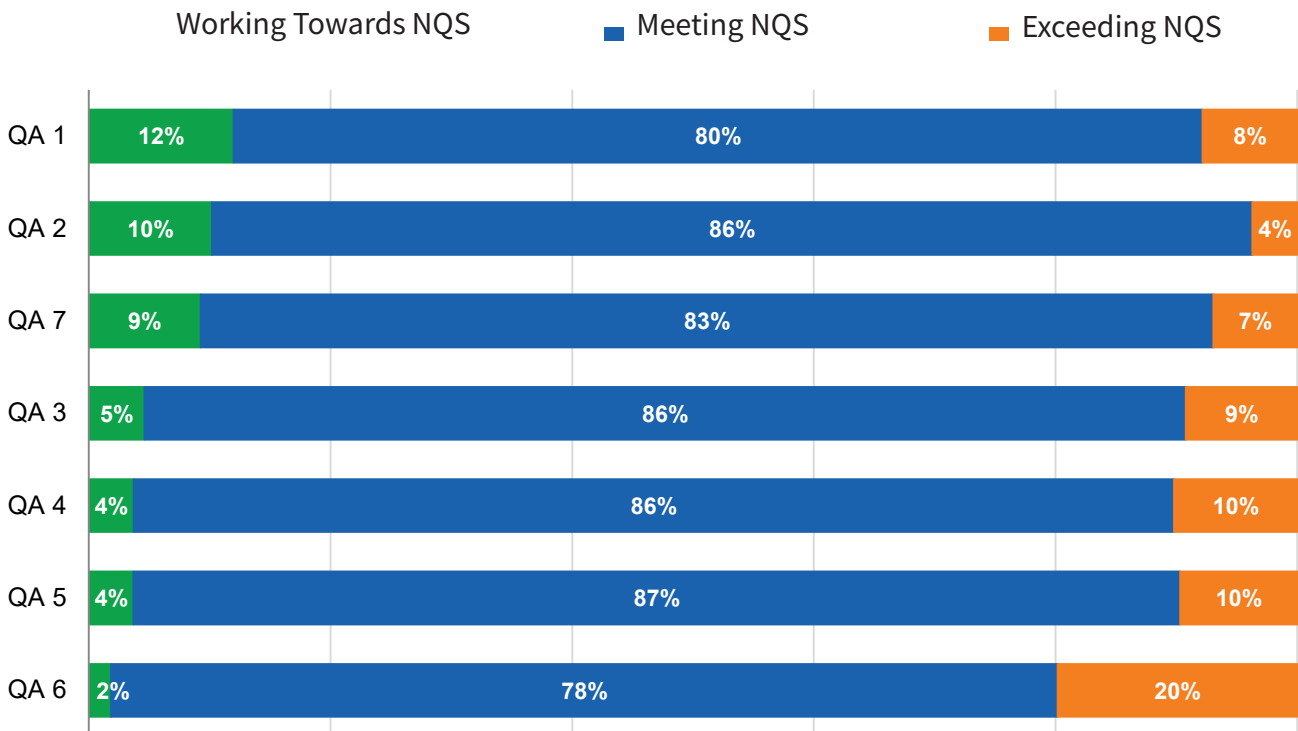


# Northern Territory summary



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

Figure 19: Quality area ratings



## Contact details

Department of Education  
Quality Education and Care NT

<https://education.nt.gov.au/committees-regulators-and-advisory-groups/quality-education-and-care-nt>

# Queensland summary

**3261** services comprising 3159 centre-based services and 102 family day care services

**3060 (94%)** services with a quality rating

**316** services rated Working Towards NQS

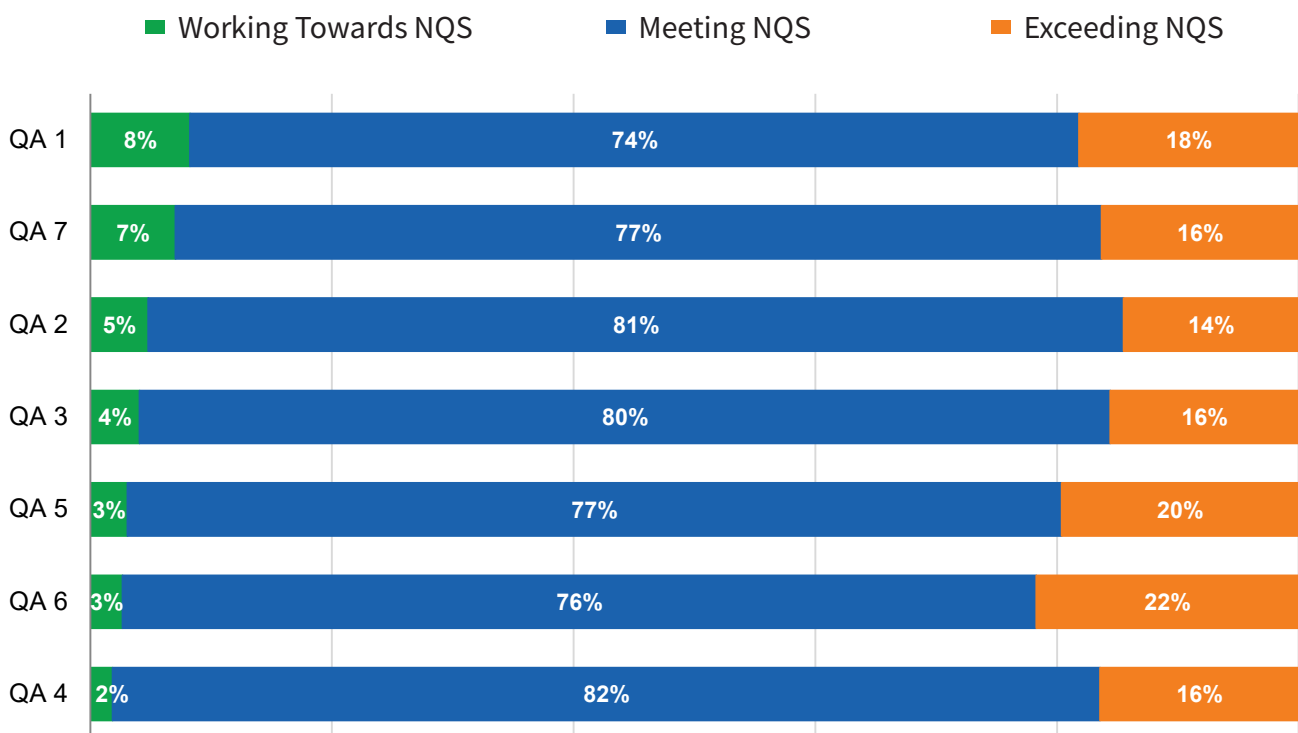
**2157** services rated Meeting NQS

**578** services rated Exceeding NQS

**9** services rated Excellent by ACECQA

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

**Figure 20: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

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

# South Australia summary

**1315** services comprising 1299 centre-based services and 16 family day care services

**1249 (95%)** services with a quality rating

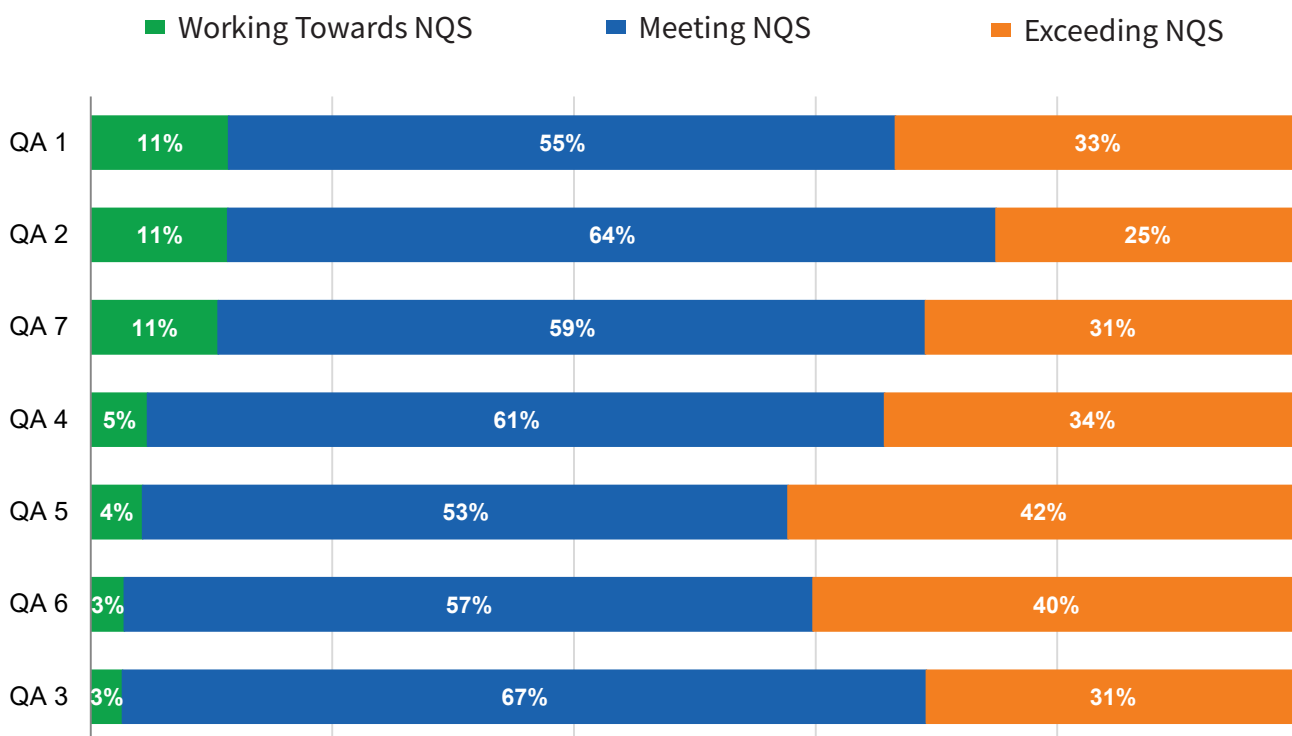
**203** services rated Working Towards NQS

**602** services rated Meeting NQS

**444** services rated Exceeding NQS

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

**Figure 21: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

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

# Tasmania summary

**242**

services comprising **237** centre-based services and **five** family day care services

**217 (90%)**

services with a **quality rating**

**35**

services rated **Working Towards NQS**

**135**

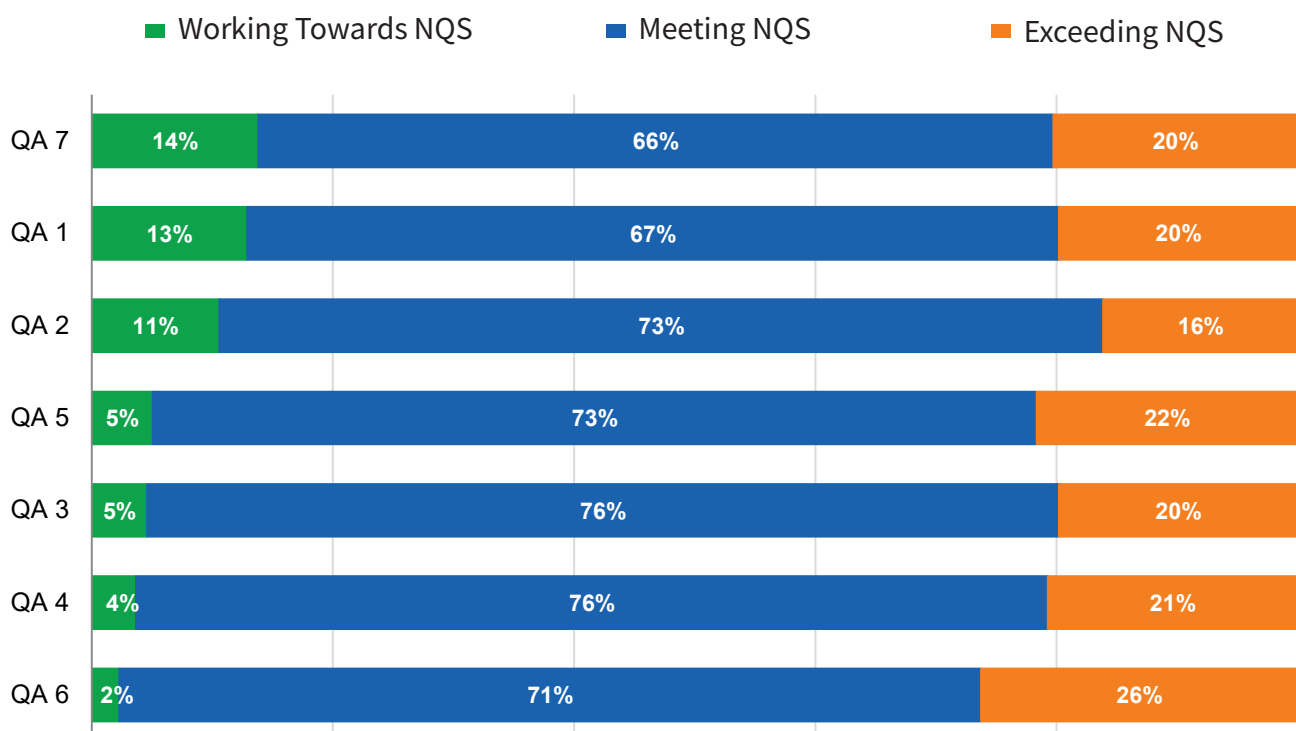
services rated **Meeting NQS**

**47**

services rated **Exceeding NQS**

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

**Figure 22: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

Department for Education, Children and Young People  
Education and Care Unit

[www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au](http://www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au)

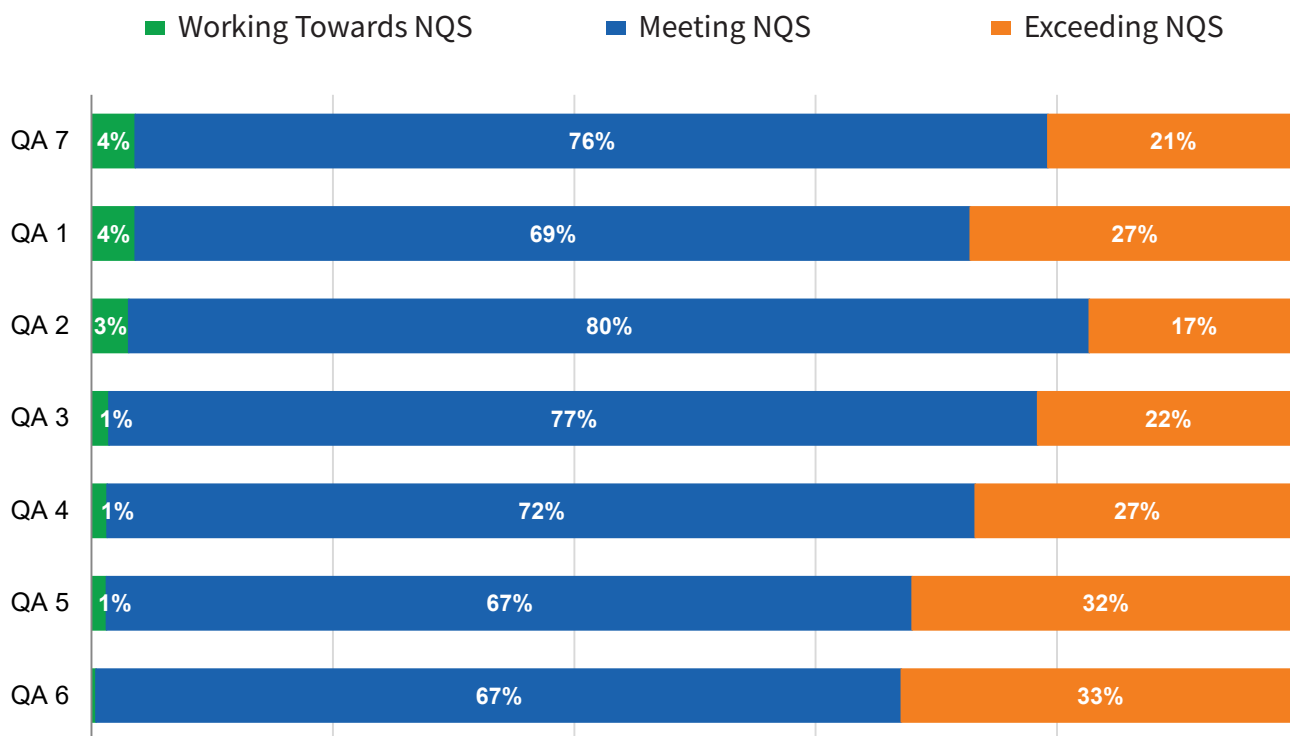


# Victoria summary



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

**Figure 23: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

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

# Western Australia summary

**1419**

services comprising **1389** centre-based services and **30** family day care services

**1226 (86%)**

services with a **quality rating**

**223**

services rated **Working Towards NQS**

**944**

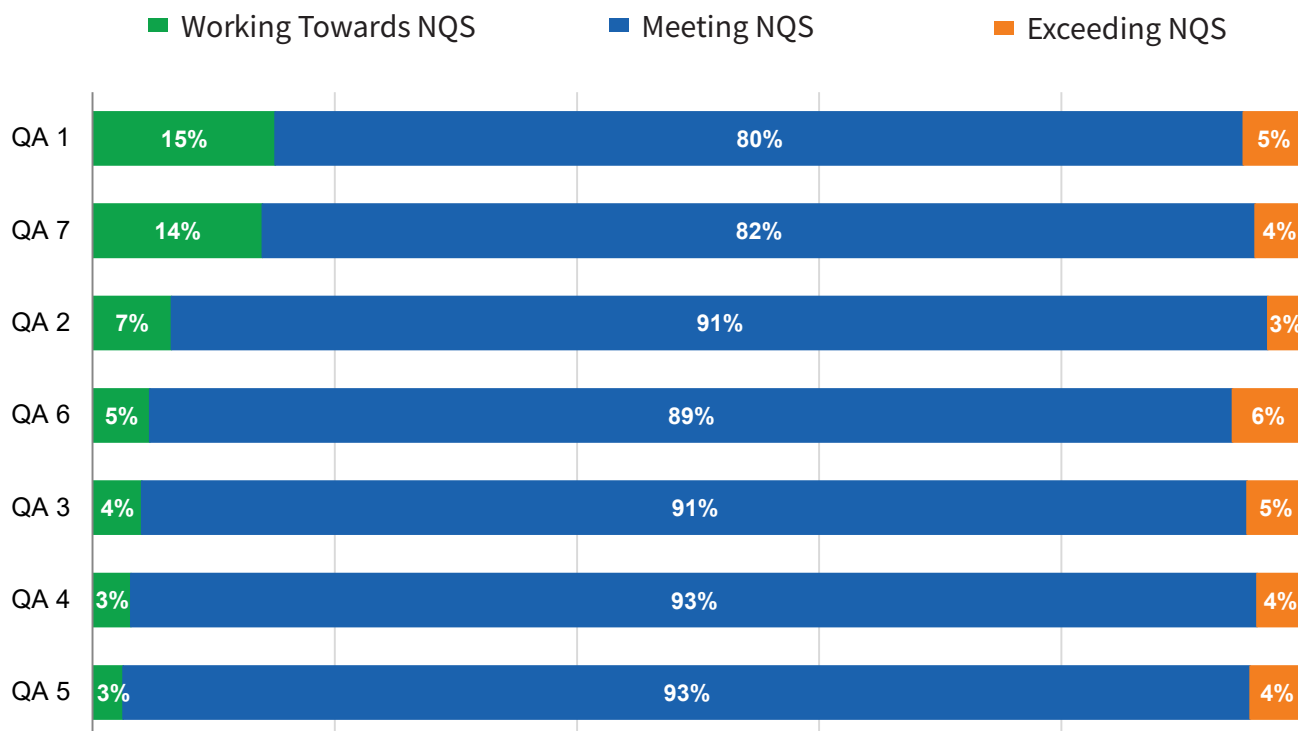
services rated **Meeting NQS**

**59**

services rated **Exceeding NQS**

Figure 24 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

**Figure 24: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

Department of Communities  
Education and Care Regulatory Unit

[www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/education-and-care-regulatory-unit](http://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/education-and-care-regulatory-unit)



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Published by ACECQA

ABN 59 372 786 746

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