



Appendix B

Chair's response to Letter of Expectation 2016–18

21 December 2016

The Hon Eva Lawler, MLA
Chair
Education Council
PO Box 202
Carlton South Vic 3053

Dear Minister

Thank you for the Letter of Expectation 2016-18, dated 5 December, outlining the Education Council's priorities and expectations for the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

ACECQA's Board has been anticipating this opportunity to review the National Authority's strategic direction, to ensure it continues to reflect the changing and emerging priorities in the implementation of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

It has been five years since the implementation of the NQF – a significant milestone and a timely opportunity to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken by all stakeholders to raise the status and quality of education and care.

Your letter acknowledges the considerable expertise acquired within regulatory authorities and ACECQA during this time and the importance of meaningful collaboration, as all jurisdictions strive to achieve the aims of the NQF.

ACECQA also places great value on the knowledge and experience gained by those in the sector working to improve outcomes for children and families, and will continue to work in partnership with all our stakeholders, recognising that significant quality improvement can only be achieved through shared goals and understanding.

Facilitating agreement among eight states and territories and the Australian Government to deliver improvements in national consistency is a demanding task, but vital if the NQF is to remain a truly national system. One of the ongoing challenges in working to identify and negotiate solutions to complex policy and operational issues is to maintain support among all jurisdictions to act in the collective best interests of the NQF.

In establishing a national authority, governments recognised the unique insights and benefits

that come with having an agency with national oversight and goals. ACECQA looks forward to continuing this work and supports the renewed emphasis on research, data collection, evaluation and reporting, workforce support and education and engagement.

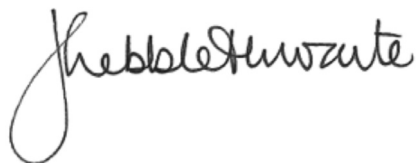
The five areas of strategic direction outlined in the Letter of Expectation provide scope for ACECQA to respond to the complex and evolving needs of the sector while continuing to meet its obligations under the National Law and the National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda. The activities identified represent a balance between extending existing areas of work already undertaken by ACECQA and identifying new opportunities to support families, educators and regulatory authorities.

ACECQA's Board and Executive welcome the opportunity to continue and further develop our strong relationships with the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC), the Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) and jurisdictions and their regulatory authorities, identifying new ways to support our joint work of improving learning and life outcomes through quality early childhood education and care.

In collaboration with ECPG, ACECQA will develop a comprehensive forward work plan and budget for submission to Education Council, detailing the work ACECQA will undertake to meet the priorities and expectations outlined by Education Council.

To be successful in our endeavours ACECQA will continue to rely on the ongoing commitment and cooperation of all jurisdictions at both the policy and operational levels and looks forward to the ongoing collaboration of all governments in delivering our shared vision for Australia's children.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Judy Hebblethwaite'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Judy Hebblethwaite
Chair