



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority™



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority

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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ISSN # 2202-8854



# OUR VISION AND VALUES

## OUR VISION

Children have the best start in life through high quality early childhood 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.



# SUPPORTING THE SECTOR 2021–22

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2425



NQA ITS  
service desk enquiries

833,000

visits to  
STARTINGBLOCKS.GOV.AU



27,046



customer service  
enquiries answered



14,665  
phone enquiries



12,381  
email enquiries

73,000

have used the new  
STARTING BLOCKS  
Fees Estimator tool  
\$\$\$

25,153

page views of

COVID-19



section of

StartingBlocks.gov.au

1118

downloads of the  
NQF Review DRIS



43,300



subscribers  
to ACECQA  
newsletter

4.7%

increase  
in ACECQA  
website users



21



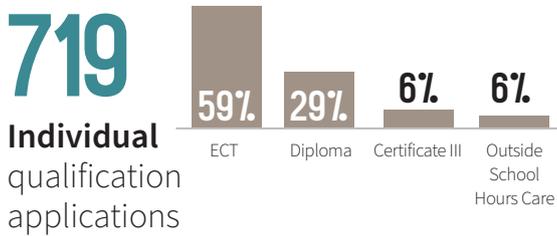
conference &  
sector event  
presentations

## ACECQA FUNCTIONS

**38** **Excellent** rated services currently

**21** applications this year

**14** awarded **Excellent** this year



**8**  finalised second tier review applications

**101**  Authorised Officers trained to undertake assessment & rating

**94%**  Authorised Officers very satisfied or satisfied with training

**19,421**  applications and **231,198** notifications submitted via NQA ITS

**171** skilled migration skills assessments  
**987** provisional skills assessments 

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10 October 2022

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 2021–22 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 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 2021–22 Annual Report has been prepared to meet the tabling requirements of that jurisdiction.

Yours sincerely

Annette Whitehead  
Chair

## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR



**ANNETTE WHITEHEAD**

Chair

On behalf of the ACECQA Board, it is a pleasure to present our annual report for 2021–22.

This report coincides with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ACECQA’s establishment – a key milestone which offers us the chance to reflect on and celebrate the achievements of the organisation. After a decade as the National Authority, ACECQA is firmly established as a key component of the architecture of the National Quality Framework (NQF). For this, I would like to congratulate the Executive and staff for their dedication in championing the importance of high-quality education and care and the goals of the NQF, and acknowledge staff who have been with ACECQA since its establishment.

ACECQA continued to progress a number of key projects on behalf of governments, including the red tape reducing “joined up approvals” project – streamlining and strengthening the provider approval process within the national IT system; the refresh of the education and care approved learning frameworks; overseeing the implementation of the 2019 NQF Review’s recommendations; development of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy’s implementation and evaluation plan; and the merging of the Australian Government’s Child Care Finder website with ACECQA’s StartingBlocks website, making it easier for families to find all the information they need about services, in one place.

As we prepare to enter the second decade of the NQF, demand for ACECQA's training and support is growing. The Board has overseen revisions to our regulatory authority training strategy to ensure training is developed and delivered in an efficient, effective and responsive way.

On behalf of the Board and the whole organisation, I would like to acknowledge outgoing Chair, Judy Hebblethwaite. Judy's leadership and expert guidance through the previous six years, including the first six months of this reporting year, have been significant factors in the success of the NQF.

I acknowledge the substantial contributions of outgoing Deputy Chair, Ann Farrell and member, Joce Nuttall, and welcome new members Mark Campling and Kate Hamond. I would also like to congratulate Anne Glover on her appointment as the new Deputy Chair.

I thank my colleagues on the Board, our CEO and staff, for their kind and supportive welcome. I look forward to working with them and continuing as a responsive organisation which provides high quality advice and services to government partners and the sector and, in turn, enables and promotes high quality education and care for children and their families.



## REPORT FROM THE CEO



**GABRIELLE SINCLAIR**

Chief Executive Officer

Whenever an organisation approaches a milestone year, it is usual practice to reflect upon the achievements accomplished during that time. For ACECQA and the National Quality Framework, having reached our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there has certainly been much to celebrate. However, as a small, national authority with a very large vision – that children have the best start in life through high quality early childhood education and care – we need to make sure we are also looking to the future, to our next 10 years and the change we need to set in motion if we are to be true to our vision and purpose.

The objectives of the NQF remain as relevant a guide for our future as when they were first set. Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children remains a central tenet of our work, whether it is supporting the day-to-day work of educators through programs such as the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) quality and safety training package that governments have asked us to deliver or improving safeguards for services operating in multi-storey buildings. Looking to the future, there are opportunities to continue supporting this objective of the NQF through our work to improve safety when transporting children, our work leading the implementation of the NQF Review outcomes, and our ongoing national audit function.

Measuring improvement in educational and developmental outcomes for children attending services remains a key challenge for our sector. Our investment strategy and plans to enhance the National Quality Agenda IT System over

the coming two years is a significant step in the right direction, and will ensure we are well placed to manage and generate reporting, adding to the insights already shared with approved providers and regulators alike through our quarterly NQF Snapshots, annual NQF Performance Report and Power BI reporting. And we will continue to work with the sector to identify further research and data that can provide greater understanding of the performance of the NQF.

There are just under 17,000 services operating nationally and, since 2013, we have seen the percentage that are *Meeting or Exceeding* the National Quality Standard increase from around 55 per cent to 88 per cent, demonstrating just how important the NQF has been in promoting continuous improvement in the provision of quality. Throughout this time, the sector's enthusiasm to participate in training and to access new resources has kept us busy developing and delivering professional development programs and services.

After four years and having worked with more than 620 services, we have completed the first iteration of the Quality Support Program (QSP) in NSW. The QSP evaluation shows 73 per cent of participating services achieved a rating of *Meeting* NQS or above. Resources from this program continue to be available on our website for any service to use and have been viewed more than 100,000 times. Building on the success of the QSP, we will deliver a new support program – the QSP Dual Program Pathways (DPP). Working again in partnership with the NSW Department of Education, this



program will enhance participants' knowledge and confidence of the NQS, particularly in the areas of compliance, regulatory standards, good practice leadership, management and governance.

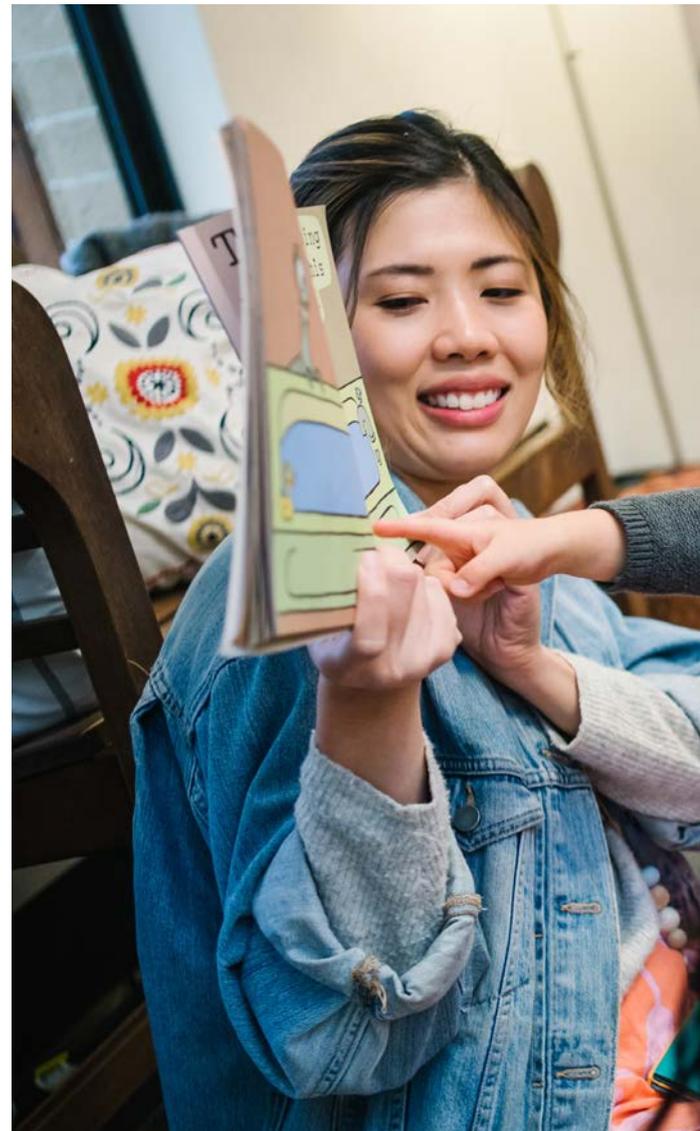
In Queensland, we have delivered a second round of our project to support regulatory quality and consistency, including training in administrative law, core regulatory skills, Quality Area 1, NQA ITS fundamentals and

regulating family day care. NSW has now engaged us to deliver a similar program for their authorised officers and parts of the content are being incorporated into our national authorised officer training program.

In the past year, 100 officers completed authorised officer training and hundreds more participated in our ongoing reliability testing program, designed to support nationally consistent approaches to assessment and rating of services.

Improving public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services is a shared responsibility for all NQF stakeholders. We're investing in the expansion of our StartingBlocks website, which is now the leading government site for families to find and compare services' quality ratings, vacancies, fees and inclusions. In the first few months of operation, more than 70,000 people had used the new fees estimator tool. Similarly, our sector information and enquiries service has responded to almost 30,000 phone calls and emails in the past year, answering questions on everything from qualification requirements, interpretation of legislation to skilled migration and applications for the Excellent rating.

Working with our government partners and sector stakeholders to enhance national integration and continue the shared responsibility for the objectives of the NQF remains a key part of our work. Beyond support for individual projects requested by governments, this report details the work we are leading on a number of shared, national



projects critical to ensuring the NQF continues to provide the right foundation on which to deliver high quality education and care for the next decade, and beyond.

The past 12 months have also seen a renewed focus on identifying ways to improve the sharing of information across the system and we expect to see reductions in regulatory and administrative burden as a result. The national regulatory practice committee is considering refinements to streamline assessment and rating practices that will improve systems for



services and regulators alike, while maintaining the NQF's overriding emphasis on quality.

None of this work would be possible without our dedicated Board and staff whose values and ability make working at ACECQA such a pleasure. It is a privilege as CEO to be able to thank staff for their commitment and hard work. This year, we also acknowledge our people who have been with the Authority for 10 years – their expertise and continuity of service brings valuable skills and knowledge to enrich our ability to provide quality advice and

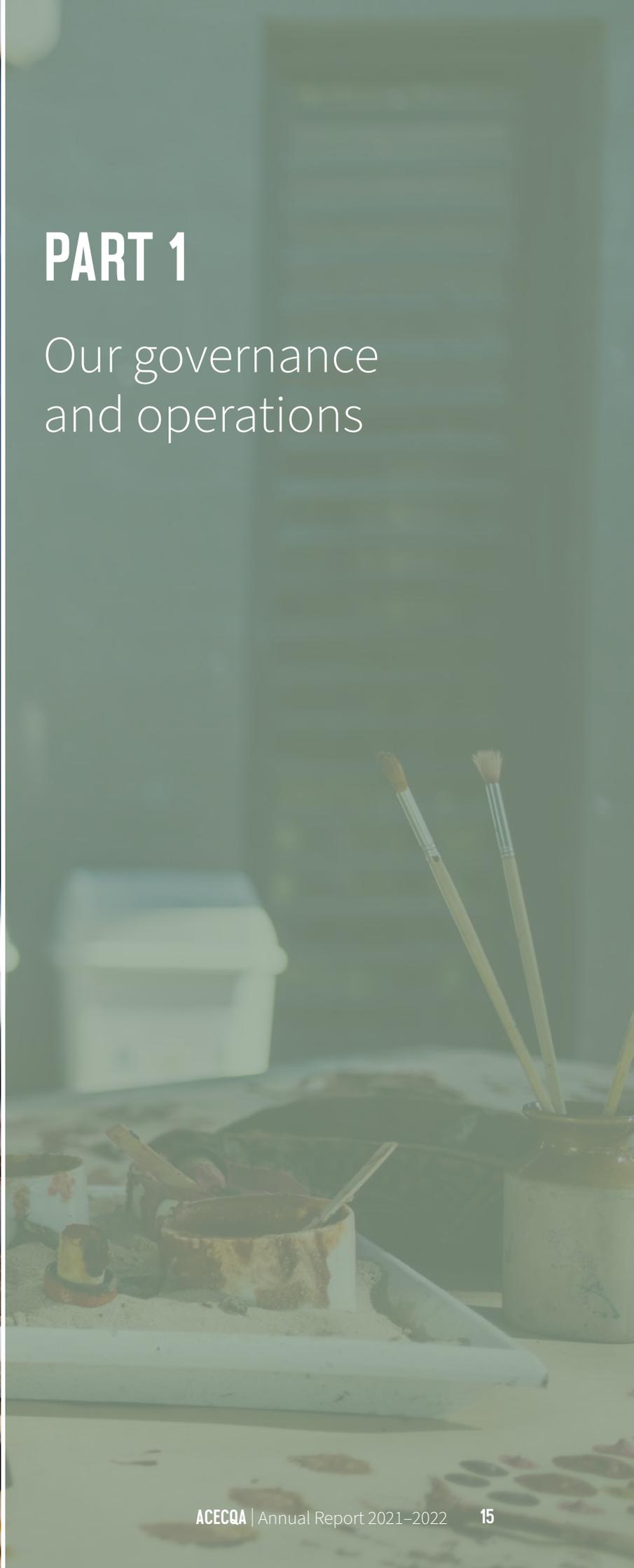
services, particularly in this time of unrelenting change. I am proud to say that we are all passionate about children's development and education, and our role in supporting them to have wonderful experiences in early education and outside school hours care.





# PART 1

## Our governance and operations



## 1.1 OUR ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

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

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

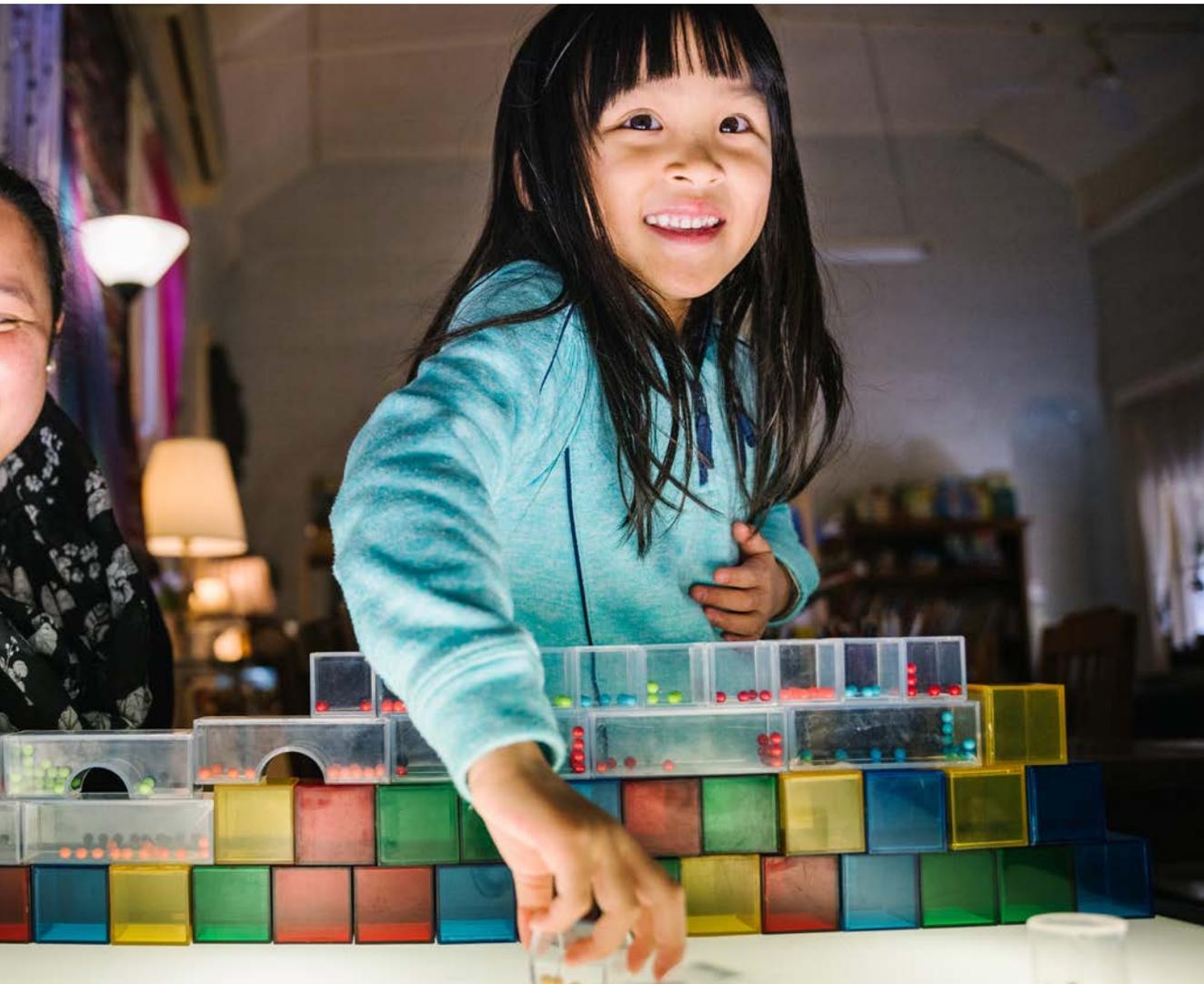
- implement changes that benefit children birth to 13 years of age and their families
- monitor and promote the consistent application of the [Education and Care Services National Law](#) across states and territories
- support the children's education and care sector to improve quality outcomes for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

Section 225 of the National Law, outlines our specific functions:

- 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
- make 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 the sector’s second tier review function.

## 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 strategic planning.

## REPORTING

We produce the following reports and plans:

### *Strategic Plan*

Our five-year strategic plan demonstrates our priority areas for overseeing 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. The plan also 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 our key deliverables and timelines for implementation.

Our 2021–23 progress report for our reporting plan demonstrates how we have met our obligations and delivered a substantial program of work assisting the Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) to progress a number of new and existing projects.

### *Annual report*

Under Section 279 of the National Law, we must submit an annual report to the Education Ministers Meeting. The 2021–22 report is our eleventh 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 2021–22.

## 1.2 OUR BOARD AND SUB COMMITTEES

### 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**, with Judy Hebblethwaite and Ann Farrell's appointments finishing in the reporting period and Annette Whitehead, Mark Campling and Kate Hamond joining in 2021–22.

The Board held four meetings in 2021–22. Board meeting attendance is outlined at **Appendix D**.

Key undertakings for the Board in 2021–22 include overseeing:

- our work to progress a national approach to the children's education and care workforce
- extension of modifications to our supervised professional experience requirements for graduating early childhood teaching students
- updates to our first aid, emergency asthma management and anaphylaxis management assessment guidelines
- our latest Support and Training for Staff of Regulatory Authorities Strategy; and our Policy for Development and Delivery of Programs, Services and Resources

#### The ACECQA Board.

Back row (L–R): Mark Campling, Akiko Jackson, Kate Hamond, Jenni Perkins, Joce Nuttall, Marc de Rosnay.

Front row (L–R): Michael White, Maree Bredhauer, Annette Whitehead (Chair), Amanda Price-McGregor, Selwyn Button.

Not photographed: Anne Glover (Deputy Chair), Sandra Lambert.



- our work to reduce red tape by ‘joining-up’ provider approval processes under the NQF and Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- our work to update the NQF Approved Learning Frameworks – *Belonging, Being & Becoming* and *My Time, Our Place*
- our work to amalgamate the Australian Government’s Child Care Finder website and our StartingBlocks website
- our co-leadership of the implementation of 2019 NQF Review recommendations
- the development of our NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap
- our financial performance
- our office accommodation planning
- 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 2021–22 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 risk management plan, 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 new finance management system.

### *Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee*

In 2021–22, the Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee provided advice on performance and remuneration matters. Membership of the Sub Committee and details of meetings held throughout 2021–22 are outlined at **Appendix E**.

### *Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee*

In 2021–22, the Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee provided oversight of the negotiations for our next Enterprise Agreement. Membership of the Sub Committee and details of meetings held throughout 2021–22 are outlined at **Appendix E**.

### *Qualifications Sub Committee*

The Qualifications Sub Committee did not have cause to meet in 2021–22. Membership of the Sub Committee is outlined at **Appendix E**.

## 1.3 OUR OPERATIONS

### OUR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION

We have 112 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 2022**

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
FTE	80.1	29.4	109.5
Headcount	82	30	112
% of workforce (headcount)	73%	27%	100%

Following an organisational realignment in July 2021, the organisation is structured as outlined in Figure 1 below.

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

The National Projects team delivers the following functions:

- in collaboration with government partners, developing and delivering national initiatives 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 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 supplying professional development resources and training to staff of approved providers
- 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



The ACECQA Executive team.

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

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

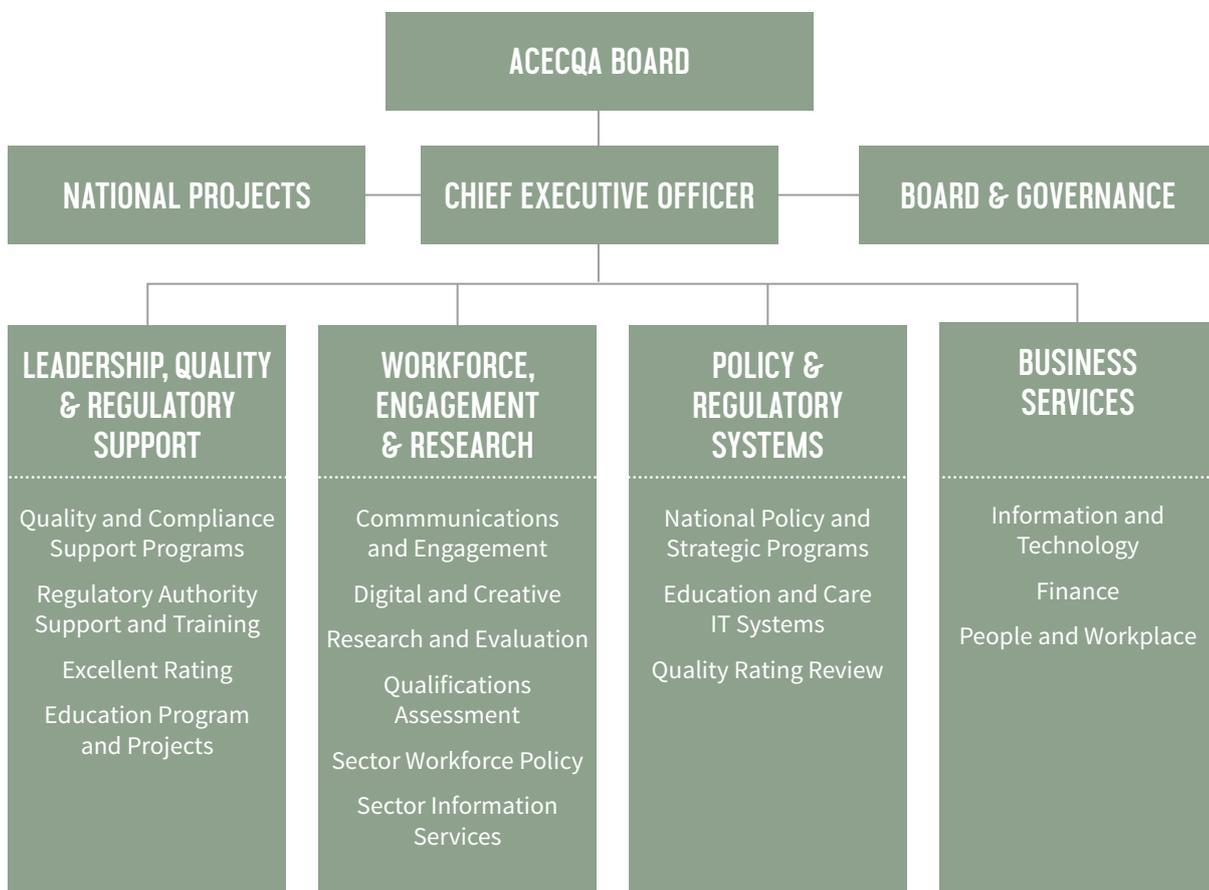


Figure 1: Organisational structure, 30 June 2022.



- providing information to educators and approved providers through a sector information and enquiries service
  - monitoring, assessing and reporting on the implementation of 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 and selection, HR policies and procedures, work health and safety (WHS), performance management, learning and development, workforce planning and payroll services) and workplace services (facilities, asset management, reception and building maintenance)
- Information and Technology – IT operations, information and records management, cyber security and IT business systems analysis and development.

## PEOPLE AND WORKPLACE

The Human Resources team supported the organisation’s performance and staff through a number of strategic and operational activities including:

- implementation of hybrid working arrangements
- commencement of a range of organisational culture initiatives
- negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement in the first half of 2022.

Planning also commenced on our office accommodation strategy in line with the expiry of our current lease in 2022–23.

## HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

We have a strong WHS culture supported by consultation, policies and procedures, workplace inspections, ergonomics, training and emergency procedures.

Management reports to the Board and its Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee on WHS incidents, hazards and issues.

In 2021–22, there was a focus on implementing workplace responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving government health advice to support staff health, safety and wellbeing. This was reflected in:

- the delivery of online Employee Assistance Programs in areas such as wellbeing and mindfulness to assist staff during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions
- monitoring of COVID-19 risks in the workplace and providing advice in line with government health advice to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including COVID Safe Office training before reopening the office
- implementation of a Workplace Vaccination Policy to address the risk of COVID-19 infection, particularly for staff visiting children’s education and care services.

Other key WHS initiatives included:

- delivering an Employee Assistance Program for confidential counselling services

- delivering an influenza vaccination program
- managing office-based hazards through regular workplace inspections, ergonomic assessments and consultation
- ensuring emergency preparedness through building warden activities, first aid officers and services, and maintaining associated reporting mechanisms
- managing home-based hazards through collaboration and communication tools, supporting home workstation set-up and ergonomics, and health promotion and engagement activities.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

From 1 July 2021, the finance team implemented new finance software (TechnologyOne) which provided increased system controls and improved workflows, as well as enhanced analytics and reporting.

In 2021–22, 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 2021–22 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 2021–22 financial year was a surplus of approximately \$6.1 million. This result was an increase in the surplus position compared to previous years due to a higher level of revenue (\$5.8 million relating to Programs and Services) being

recognised in 2021–22 with expenditure being incurred in 2022–23.

Total revenue in 2021–22 was \$29.2 million with the Australian Government providing approximately \$14.5 million for our core operating activities. We also received own-source revenue of approximately \$14.7 million, mainly from funding for delivering programs and services for our government partners (including \$1.6 million funding for the NQA ITS Strategy and Investment Roadmap to be expended in 2022–23), services delivered under the National Law on a fee for service basis, the sale of NQF educational resources and interest income.

Total expenditure for 2021–22 was \$23.1 million. The main expenditure items were:

- salaries and on-costs (approximately 69 per cent)
- ICT costs (approximately 12 per cent)
- occupancy costs (approximately 5 per cent).

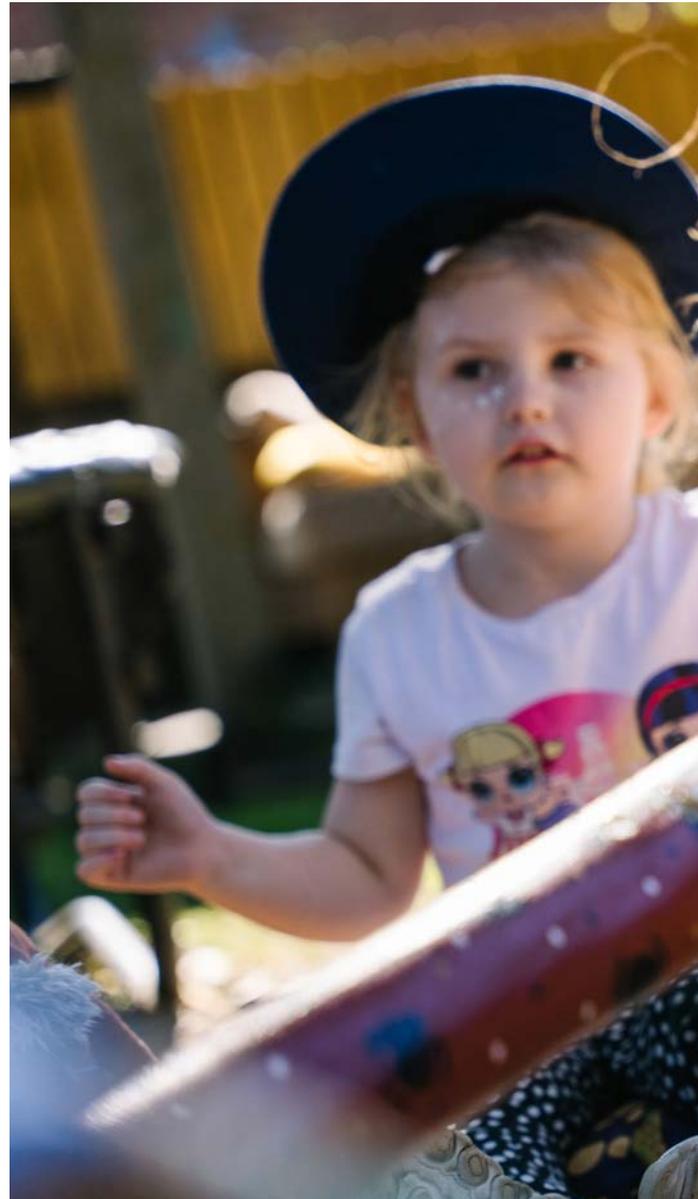
The accumulated surplus at 30 June 2022 was \$17.9 million with total assets of approximately \$23.2 million. The accumulated surplus includes funding timing differences and required working capital. As an independent statutory authority, adequate working capital is crucial to our financial viability to ensure we can arrange supplier contracts and meet our operating commitments as they fall due.

## INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Our Information and Technology team is responsible for delivering effective and secure services. Functions delivered by the team include IT operations, cyber security, information and records management and business systems. The IT Operations team also provides technical support for the NQA ITS for external stakeholders.

### *IT Operations*

IT Operations delivers operational support to internal and external stakeholders. Service delivery is underpinned by well-designed and administered network, server and cloud infrastructure. During 2021–22, the IT Operations team delivered a number of high-priority projects and initiatives including:



- delivering a device remediation program to ensure all devices are configured to best practice and security standards for both office-based working and remote working, including the implementation of enhanced monitoring tools for governance and management purposes
- enhancing Microsoft 365 technical infrastructure including multifactor authentication and advanced email filtering



- supporting the implementation of a desk booking system as part of our hybrid workplace strategy
- enhancing collaboration with external stakeholder groups through Microsoft 365 functionality including Microsoft Teams and SharePoint.

### *Cyber security*

Cyber security threats and risks are continually changing and pose ongoing challenges for all organisations. Cyber security is an ongoing focus for us with several new projects and initiatives completed or in progress to enhance our cyber security posture in accordance with information and cyber security standards and best practice. These include:

- the allocation of additional resourcing for cyber security
- an information discovery project to consolidate documentation for all ACECQA-owned information held both internally and by cloud providers, with this information driving risk assessment and remediation
- enhanced security testing across IT platforms with risk treatments implemented
- the implementation of new security tools to reduce cyber security risks.

### *Information and records management*

The Information and Records Management function underpins our capability to both maintain and improve operational efficiency and 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. In 2021–22, Information and Records Management was integral to a number of key projects and activities, including:

- recordkeeping design and training implementation of the M365 environment for all staff
- commencement of the integration between the corporate records

management system and M365 environment

- decommissioning of legacy business systems.

The IT team continues to work alongside our stakeholders and external partners to ensure the organisation’s internal and external systems are regularly reviewed, maintained and comply with best practice.

## **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN AND INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION PLAN**

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, our Reconciliation Advisory Committee has been progressing development of our next Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Our Indigenous Participation Plan, developed in accordance with the Australian Government’s Indigenous Procurement Policy, complements our reconciliation efforts. The plan requires regular reporting to the Australian Government on progress against key targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business participation. In 2021–22, there was a focus on cultural awareness training, with three cultural awareness sessions delivered to staff. Additionally, an Australia Day Aboriginal Awareness Session was held in January 2022.

## **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 2021 to 30 June 2022.

**Table 2: FOI application status**

APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED	NUMBER
On hand as at 1 July 2021	0
Received	6
Granted in full	0
Granted in part	1
Access refused	0
Dealt with administratively	0
Withdrawn by the applicant	5
Transferred to another agency	0
On hand as at 30 June 2022	0
Appeals to the National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information Commissioner	0
Appeals to the relevant Administrative Tribunal	0

## 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 2021–22, we did not receive any privacy complaints. In addition, no investigations were undertaken by the National Education and Care Services Privacy Commissioner.

## 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 2021–22, no informal or formal investigations were instigated.





## PART 2

Reporting on our functions and administration of the NQF

## 2.1 GUIDING ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

### 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.

As the COVID-19 pandemic entered its third consecutive year, we have worked with our government partners and regulatory authorities to support the sector in continuing education and care during this challenging period.

#### *Regulatory Practice Committee*

We established the Regulatory Practice Committee (RPC) in 2017 to provide a 'community of practice' to improve 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 2021–22, the RPC and its working groups supported priority areas of regulatory work including:

- providing guidance on our plan to transition the NQA ITS to a future state architecture (further detail in Part 2.4)
- setting short-term priorities for the ongoing development of the NQA ITS
- providing guidance on options to strengthen currency requirements for first

aid qualifications and other health and safety training for service staff

- developing and overseeing a national approved provider perception survey to assess the sector's perceived burden of complying with the NQF
- considering opportunities to address concerns relating to safe sleep practice
- considering assessment and rating process refinements
- providing guidance on increasing safeguards for children in services located in multi-storey buildings (further detail below)
- developing authorised officer guidance on regulatory practice issues
- providing guidance on national model policies and procedures for approved providers
- agreeing the subject of national audits and implementing findings.

### OPERATIONAL POLICY

#### *Operational and Emerging Issues Working Group*

Supporting national working groups such as the Operational and Emerging Issues Working Group (OEIWG) is one way in which we work with state and territory regulatory authorities to guide the implementation and administration of the NQF and to monitor and promote consistency.

A major focus of the OEIWG this year has been assessment and rating process refinements. The discussions aim to support efficient and effective risk-based regulation, increased agility

for regulatory authorities, and more meaningful and current information about service quality for families and the public.

### *Review Implementation Group*

In 2021–22, RPC established a time-limited working group, the Review Implementation Group (RIG) to support RPC in the efficient, effective and nationally consistent implementation of relevant recommendations from the 2019 NQF Review across jurisdictions.

### *Lead Investigators Network*

We convene the Lead Investigators Network (LIN) – a group of lead investigation and compliance monitoring staff from all states and territories and the Australian Government.

The LIN provides a community of practice for experienced investigators to develop cross-jurisdictional, strategic approaches to investigation and enforcement practice, and a forum for emerging issues and sharing of information on investigation and enforcement strategies, practices and procedures.

In 2021–22, the LIN considered matters related to prosecutions, areas of regulatory non-compliance and COVID-19 impacts.

### *ECEC Safety in Multi-storey Buildings*

We have continued to lead the ECEC Safety in Multi-storey Buildings Joint Working Group which was first convened in July 2020 and has been extended by the Regulatory Practice Committee until the end of 2022 to enable ongoing priorities to be achieved. The group is comprised of representatives from the Australian Government Department of





Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), 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 process and the implementation of outcomes of the [Decision Regulatory Impact Statement \(DRIS\)](#) relating to service approvals and emergency and evacuation procedures for services located in multi-storey buildings
- influencing the [2022 National Construction Code amendments](#) which



include early childhood appropriate handrails in emergency stairwells, early warning systems throughout the whole building, automatic response sprinklers in services, and compartmentation and separation to mitigate risk of fire and provide a safe haven whilst evacuating.

## KEY PROJECTS

During 2021–22, 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
- Approved Learning Frameworks Update
- Joined up Approvals Project
- Disability Standards for Education Project
- National Workforce Strategy (further detail in Part 2.8).

### *2019 NQF Review*

Regular review of the NQF is undertaken to ensure it is current, fit for purpose and implemented through best practice regulation.

The 2019 NQF Review included consultation with the sector, families and the broader community to help inform government decisions. As a result of the [findings of the 2019 NQF Review](#), Australian, state and territory Education Ministers agreed to changes to the NQF.

Key changes for approved providers and their services include:

- new safety requirements – requiring new policies, procedures and risk assessments to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children in education and care
- improved oversight and compliance tools for regulatory authorities – increasing transparency and accountability in the sector



- new workforce requirements – such as increasing mandatory minimum qualification requirements for family day care educators and alleviating staffing requirements during short-term absences
- improved regulatory guidance – improving educator knowledge of best practice through government developed resources, including the *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.

In 2022–23, working with all governments, we will be progressively developing and releasing guidance and undertaking other support activities to assist the education and care sector in the change management process.

#### *Approved Learning Frameworks Update*

In late 2020, Education Ministers commissioned an update of the two national Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) – *Belonging,*



*Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia.*

Both frameworks have proved integral to the success of the NQF over the past decade. The purpose of the update is to ensure they continue to reflect contemporary developments in practice and knowledge, and support all educators to promote the wellbeing, learning and development of each child.

We are leading the project in accordance with the Letter of Expectation, and have responsibility for overall project management on behalf of all governments.

To this end, we engaged a national consortium led by Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and Edith Cowan University to undertake the update. The project is being delivered over three stages, with the final two stages undertaken in the reporting period.

Stage 2 commenced with the release of a [discussion paper](#) and online surveys in August 2021. Findings from the [literature review](#) and Stage 2 consultation informed the proposed recommendation for updates to the current ALFs for piloting in Stage 3.

Stage 3 commenced in December 2021 and involved the consortium piloting the potential ALF updates in 16 services across Australia. Throughout the pilot, service leaders and educators provided feedback to the consortium on the clarity, useability and efficacy of the potential updates. They also shared insights on opportunities for further improvement and on implementation.

Findings and feedback from the pilot will inform recommendations for consideration by Education Ministers, which is expected to occur in late 2022.

### *Joined up Approvals Project*

The Joined up Approvals (JuA) project, when fully implemented by mid-2023, will combine National Law (NL) and Family Assistance Law

(FAL) approval processes so provider and service applications are assessed in a more streamlined way – through a single online portal – by regulatory authorities against the NL and by the Australian Government against the FAL. The joined-up approval application process will reduce regulatory burden and support efficient and consistent regulatory practice. The project is an important component in the advancement of a nationally coherent system of regulating children’s education and care quality.

The project is being delivered in three stages. Stage one is complete, which focused on refining national consistency of operational process related matters for both sets of regulators in assessing the fitness and propriety of new market entrants.

Stage two of the project is under way, which is focusing on the NQA ITS design and development for the joined-up approval application process. The final stage will see the implementation of the joined-up approval application process and will include stakeholder engagement and training.

The delivery of this project will also support the implementation of relevant outcomes from the 2019 NQF Review, with respect to improvements in assessing the suitability of individuals to work directly or indirectly with children.

### *Alignment assessment between the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the NQF*

In response to recommendation 13 in the [Australian Government’s 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#), we worked with the Australian Government to examine alignment between the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the NQF. Taking an outcomes-based approach, we examined whether children with disability are afforded protection against less favourable treatment under both the DDA and relevant components of the NQF.

We found alignment between the two regulatory schemes, which is achieved through different approaches. However, we found there is still a need for clarification to ensure respective requirements under both regulatory schemes are well understood and implemented in practice. This includes a need for practical guidance about how to implement DDA requirements in education and care settings and national information on how to be inclusive of each and every child.

Our report on the alignment assessment outlined available options to further protect and promote the interests of children with disability in education and care.

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

The Australian Government engaged us to design, develop and deliver an 18-month quality and safety training package for all CCCFR services. This professional development program focuses on improving quality and building

capability of service providers and leaders in the key areas of safety and supervision.

There are nearly 160 CCCFR services across all states and territories which predominantly operate in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Most services were formerly known as Budget Based Funded (BBF) services. The majority of services are regulated under the NQF or residual state and territory legislation, with around 55 required to comply with Federal Minister's Rules.

There are two phases in the program. Phase One involves six eLearning modules and a series of four two-hour webinars for all CCCFR services. Phase Two is an 18-week tailored Priority Support Program (PSP) for around 55 services under state and territory regulatory legislation.

Phase One eLearning modules were launched in November 2021 and are accessible to all CCCFR services in our Learning Management System (LMS). There are over 300 registered users, with nearly 900 modules completed.

The webinars build on the eLearning modules, and commenced delivery in February 2022. Due to COVID-19 impacts these have been staggered and are due to conclude early August 2022. To date, 121 CCCFR service representatives from over 80 services have either completed or commenced these.

Feedback received on Phase One shows 100 per cent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied, and 100 per cent agreed or strongly agreed the training package was delivered in

a culturally safe and relevant manner. Nearly 60 per cent advised they had already made changes at their service, with the remainder planning to do so.

Phase Two PSP services are grouped into three tranches and have a Priority Support Facilitator (PSF) tailoring support. This includes online sessions, a two-day workshop and a site visit, where possible, and a community of practice to sustain this work.

Workshops focus on embedding learning into services' safety and supervision policies, practices and procedures and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). The first workshop was held on Kaurna Country in Adelaide in June 2022 and received very positive participant feedback. Site visits are also well underway with nearly all tranche one services visited.

### *Enhanced regulatory monitoring tools*

In 2021–22, we worked with the Queensland regulatory authority, in consultation with all regulatory authorities, to enhance reporting capability within the NQA ITS to provide regulators with more ways to monitor regulatory compliance by approved providers of education and care services. This enhanced capability will enable regulatory authority staff across all states and territories to access useful information, and identify and respond to indicators of risk.

## 2.2 REPORTING ON NQF QUALITY RATINGS

### SECTOR OVERVIEW

There were 16,986 services [approved to operate](#) under the NQF at the end of the 2021–22 financial year – 16,488 centre-based care<sup>1</sup> services and 498 family day care<sup>2</sup> services. This represented an annual increase of three per cent for centre-based services (slightly higher than the annual growth in these services in 2020–21 and 2019–20). The number of approved family day care services increased by two per cent since the end of the 2020–21 financial year. Of the 7270 providers, 80 per cent (5798) 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 2022:

- 88 per cent (13,443) of services are rated Meeting NQS or above – 27 per cent (4165) of these are rated Exceeding NQS or above

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



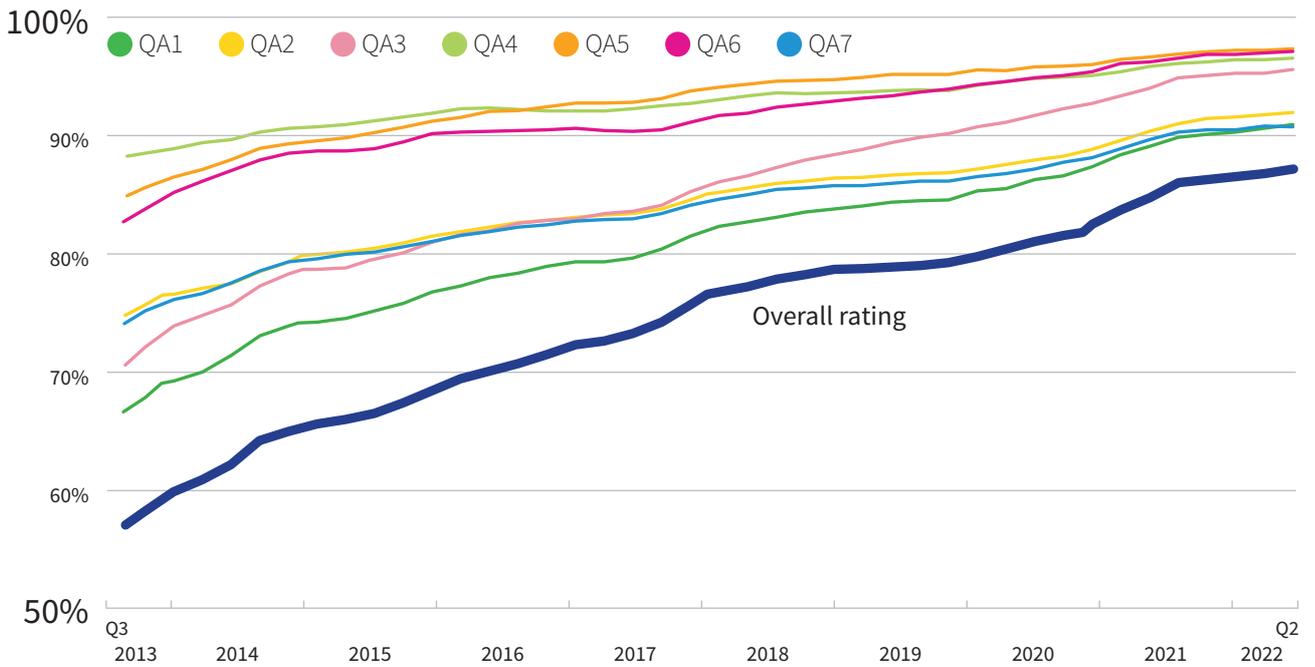
- 1 Centre-based care services include most long day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services. They do not include preschools in Tasmania or Western Australia that are outside the scope of the NQF, or other services that are not regulated under the *Education and Care Services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

- 38 services are rated Excellent
- six services are rated Significant Improvement Required
- 66 per cent of services had been quality rated against the 2018 NQS
- 14,267 quality rating reassessments had been completed. Of the services that were rated Working Towards NQS, 67 per cent improved their overall quality rating at reassessment.

Table 3: Overall quality ratings by jurisdiction

	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED	WORKING TOWARDS NQS	MEETING NQS	EXCEEDING NQS	EXCELLENT RATED	TOTAL
ACT	1	73 (22%)	108 (32%)	150 (45%)	2	334
NSW	4	703 (13%)	3,353 (63%)	1,274 (24%)	16	5,350
NT	0	41 (20%)	142 (68%)	26 (12%)	1	210
Queensland	0	295 (10%)	1,852 (63%)	789 (27%)	10	2,946
SA	0	163 (14%)	507 (42%)	533 (44%)	4	1,207
Tasmania	1	40 (19%)	119 (56%)	54 (25%)	0	214
Victoria	0	404 (10%)	2,469 (62%)	1,102 (28%)	5	3,980
WA	0	193 (17%)	728 (65%)	199 (18%)	0	1,120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,912 (12%)</b>	<b>9,278 (60%)</b>	<b>4,127 (27%)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15,361</b>

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



<sup>3</sup> 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

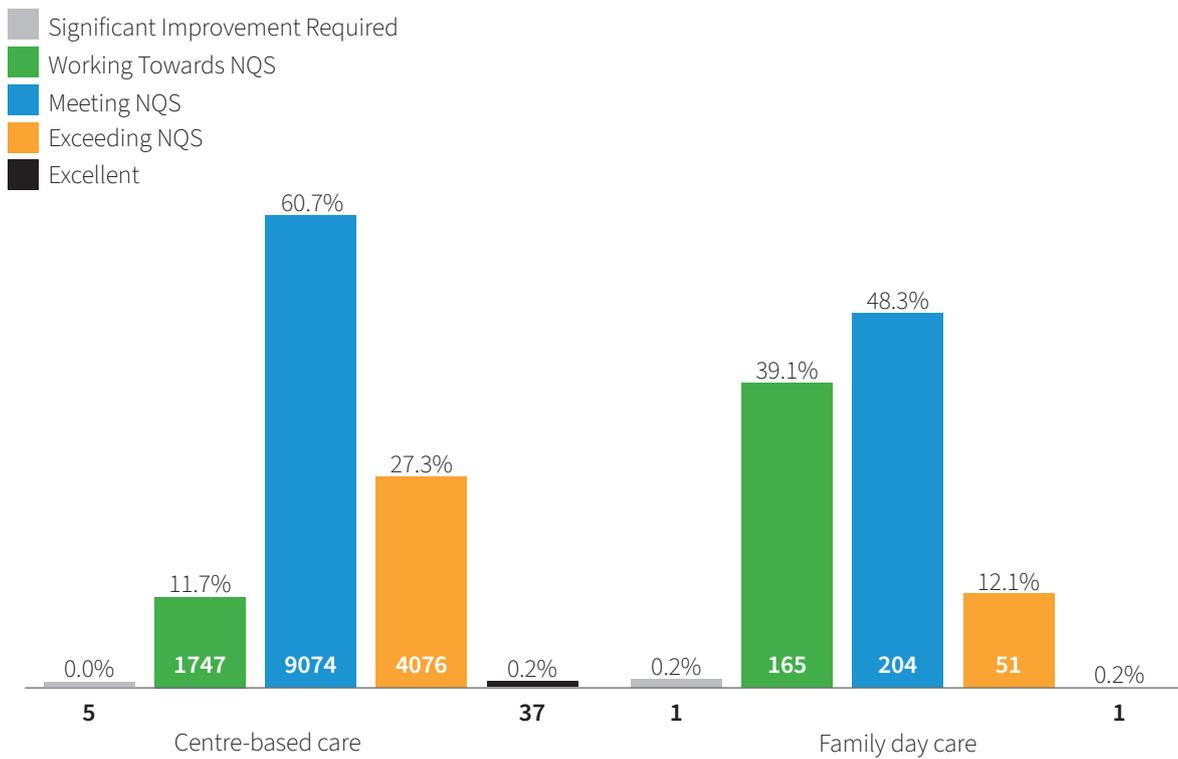
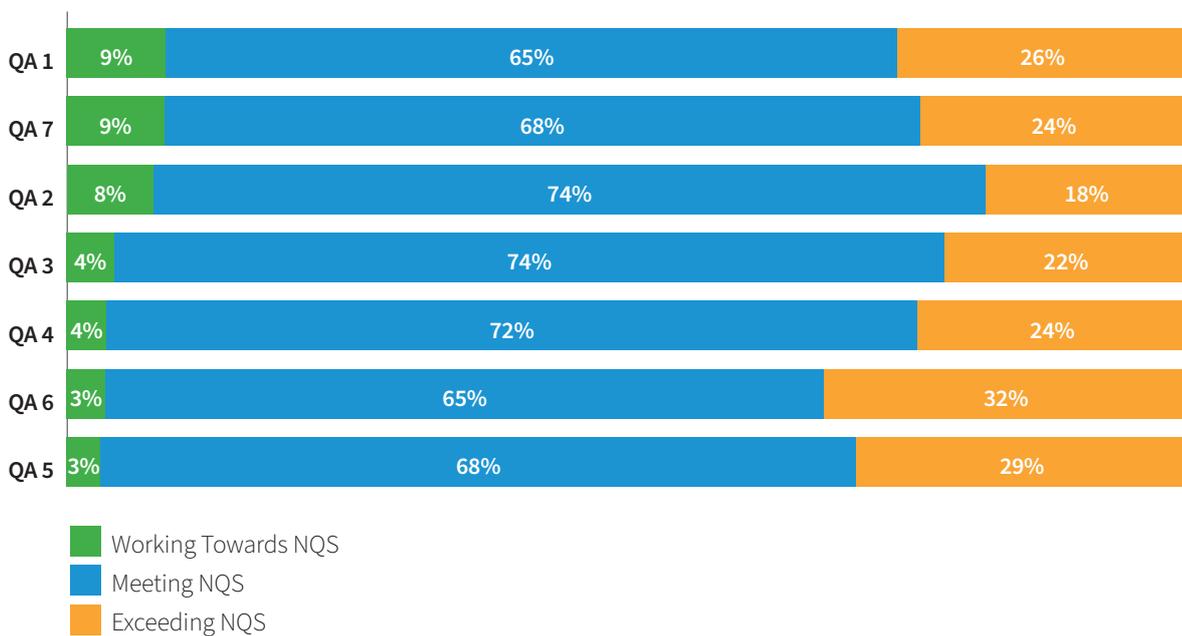


Figure 5: Quality area ratings



## 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](#). The framework, informed and agreed by all governments, has been developed as a guide for determining how and to what extent 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 fifth [annual performance report](#), published in January 2022, highlighted

continuous improvement across all seven quality areas of the NQS, as well as increased public awareness of the NQF and the quality rating system.

The report also identified sector-wide challenges, such as workforce sustainability and wellbeing. It includes a number of case studies that showcase some of the creative and innovative ways service providers have adapted to the challenges presented by COVID-19.

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 temporary service closures related to the impact of COVID-19 and other aspects of service regulation, such as staffing waivers.

### NQF NATIONAL AUDITS

In 2021–22, we completed one national audit examining regulatory authorities’ monitoring, compliance and enforcement activity between



1 July 2019 and 30 June 2021, including the characteristics of providers and services that are subject to monitoring, compliance and enforcement actions.

The audit highlighted the importance of robust and comparable data to better inform regulatory activity and enable in-depth analysis of performance and trends. It also identified opportunities for future enhancements to the NQA ITS.

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.

## 2.4 NATIONAL REGISTERS AND IT SYSTEM

### 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:

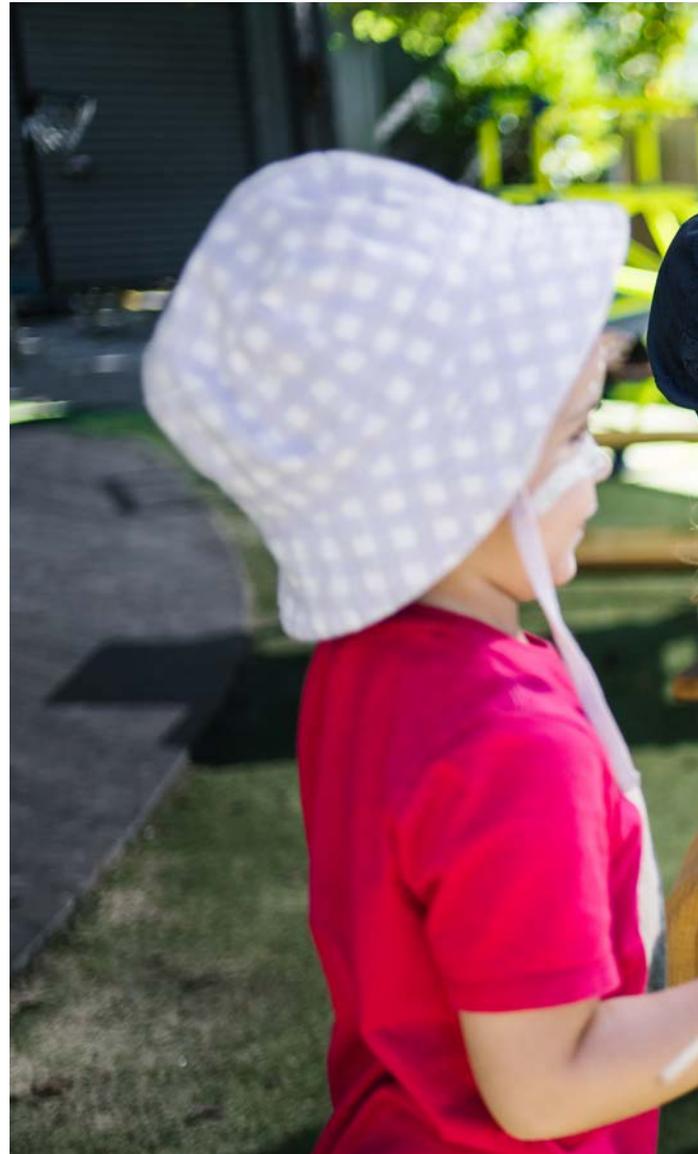
- Education and Care Services – this register lists all services approved to operate under the NQF, and includes each service’s nature of care type as well as previous and current quality ratings
- Approved Providers – this register details individuals or entities authorised to operate an approved education and care service.

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](#).

### NATIONAL QUALITY AGENDA IT SYSTEM

The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) is an online business tool offering approved providers of children’s education and care secure and direct communication with regulatory authorities. It contains a national database that supports efficient administration of the National Law. The [NQA ITS online public portal](#) allows education and care providers to access the NQA ITS and submit information and notifications required under the National Law to their respective regulatory authority.

The NQA ITS supports the goal of removing regulatory inconsistencies across jurisdictional borders and creates a more efficient, cohesive



and streamlined environment for business activity. The system provides valuable national and jurisdiction-specific data to us, the Australian Government and state and territory regulatory authorities.

We use 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 Regulatory Practice Committee (RPC) is the governing committee overseeing the strategic direction of the NQA ITS. Operating under the RPC is the National IT Systems Steering Group (NSG) which has representatives from all state and territory regulatory authorities, the Australian Government and us. The NSG is responsible for:

- making recommendations to the RPC regarding the system's strategic priorities

- considering operational decisions and significant matters regarding the NQA ITS
- 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, its future direction and priorities, and other technical and operational matters.

The NQA ITS priorities are formulated through discussions with the NSG, technological changes and sector trends, and high-level

direction from the RPC. [Our strategic plan](#) and [Letter of Expectation](#) also inform the annual NQA ITS forward work plan's development. An annual forward work plan outlines agreed system enhancements in a delivery schedule for the year. It is reviewed by NSG and then endorsed by RPC.

### *NQA ITS usage*

The NQA ITS' public portal allows users to:

- submit applications and notifications, including emergency notifications such as service closures
- access reports that are often requested by providers and services
- download a service's assessment and rating notice of quality ratings
- send documents such as the Quality Improvement Plan to regulatory authorities
- pay invoices for annual fees
- review and update provider and service details that are required by the National Law to be recorded for regulatory authority access and review
- manage provider and service users' access and functions on the portal.

Approved providers are required by the National Law to submit certain applications and notifications, and the NQA ITS public portal supports the online submission of such forms. In 2021–22, a total of 19,421 applications and 231,198 notifications were submitted.

### *NQA ITS releases*

The NQA ITS evolves through the implementation of enhancements and system changes agreed on by state and territory regulatory authorities, as well as through improvements suggested by sector users. There were four main releases in the reporting period, which included the following enhancements:

- a register for prohibited persons and suspended educators
- improvements to serious incidents involving multiple children
- further integrations with regulatory authorities' business applications
- other system improvements and fixes.

A major development was the incorporation of data from the Australian Government's Child Care Finder website into our [StartingBlocks website](#).

### *NQA ITS service desk and training support*

Our in-house NQA ITS service desk is the port of call for technical questions from the sector and regulatory authorities seeking assistance in using the system. In 2021–22, the service desk responded to 2425 enquiries from users.

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

### *NQA ITS strategy and investment roadmap – review of the NQA ITS architecture*

In 2021–22, we completed the development of an NQA ITS strategy and investment roadmap in consultation with all governments. The new strategy describes an NQA ITS that remains fit for purpose for government, regulatory authorities, and education and care sector users into the future. It identifies a range of components necessary to ensure the longevity, security and agility of the system:

- improved operational usability, and enhanced reporting and analytics
- new functionality to facilitate integration of external software and business systems with the NQA ITS, for the benefit of governments and approved providers
- enhanced capacity, where we build custom features for regulatory authorities in response to unique needs or diversity of operating environments.

The strategy identified various initiatives required to address current system limitations and deliver a holistic upgrade, and in turn allow us and the NQA ITS to provide class-leading services to sector and regulatory authority and government users. These initiatives range from reviewing the IT system’s architecture, governance and change management practices, through to strengthening the capture and delivery of data and reporting.

In response to the strategy and roadmap, a major initiative undertaken in the reporting period was the completion of work to describe the ‘target state’ architecture, the associated

transition pathway and costs. In the next reporting period, phased work will progress to reach the ‘target state’, with an initial focus on migrating the NQA ITS to a Software as a Service (cloud environment) solution. This work will ensure the NQA ITS is utilising the latest technology upgrades and advances as they become available.

### *Other NQA ITS enhancement projects*

During the reporting period, and with financial support from the Australian Government, we commenced planning and undertook work to implement a number of discrete projects with the aim of delivering new NQA ITS functionality and enhancements for the benefit of approved providers and regulatory authorities. These included initiatives relating to advanced business intelligence and reporting, as well as assessing business requirements to better enable IT system capability for ‘out of scope’ providers and their services. As at end June 2022, the projects are in various stages of progress and completion.

## 2.5 SECOND TIER REVIEWS AND EXCELLENT RATING

### SECOND TIER REVIEWS

Ratings reviews, also known as second tier reviews, allow approved providers to seek a further rating review where they disagree with the rating level awarded through assessment and rating and at first tier review. Ratings reviews are conducted by a [ratings review panel](#).

### *Applications received and finalised*

In 2021–22, we received eight second tier review applications and finalised eight applications, which is lower than the previous year. This is due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on assessment and rating, resulting in a reduction in the number of applications received.



Of the eight applications received in 2021–22:

- six were from centre-based long day care services and two were from outside school hours care services
- seven applications were from NSW, and one was from WA.

Of the eight applications finalised in 2021–22:

- three were from services with an Exceeding NQS rating after first tier review
- two were from services with a Meeting NQS rating after first tier review
- three were from services with a Working Towards NQS rating after first tier review.

The ratings review panels decided to confirm all ratings under review for six applications, resulting in no change to the services' overall ratings. For two applications, the panels decided to partially amend the services' ratings, although their overall ratings remained unchanged.

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

### *New resources*

In 2021–22, we developed new materials to assist approved providers prepare a second tier review application for their service. This new [article](#) aims to help approved providers present their information more clearly, or explain their practice in a new way, and notes that changes to practice which occur after the date of assessment and rating cannot be considered by

ratings review panels. Informed by observations from ratings review panel pool members, the article guides approved providers through the process of reflecting on and learning from previous ratings review decisions and selecting and organising evidence to accompany their second tier review application.

### *Ratings Review Panel*

Under the National Law, we must establish a pool of persons to act as members of ratings review panels to undertake ratings reviews (aka 'second tier' reviews) as part of this function.

Following a nomination process through the Regulatory Practice Committee and existing panel members, 14 additional individuals were appointed to the ratings review panel pool in January 2022. These new panel members attended a two-day online induction training in March 2022.

The new appointments joined 16 existing members of the ratings review panel pool. They further strengthen the considerable experience, expertise, and knowledge base of the ratings review panel pool across all service types. They also ensure the pool has a mix of individuals from the education and care sector, regulatory authorities, and from ACECQA. The complete list of panel pool members is 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. 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 2021–22, we received 21 applications for the Excellent rating and awarded the rating

to 14 services. Of the 21 applications, seven were from services already rated Excellent and reapplying for the second or third time. One of the 14 successful applicants was Choices Family Day Care, the first service to apply for the Excellent rating, in May 2013. It was wonderful to receive their application and to acknowledge their continuous improvement and exceptional quality practice. They are currently the only Excellent rated Family Day Care service in Australia.

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 2021–22, with 21 out of 23 applications applying for both themes, included:

- **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 criterion:

**Table 4: Applicant success against Criterion 1 themes**

CRITERION 1:	APPLICANTS MEETING THIS THEME
<b>Theme 1:</b> Collaborative partnerships with professional community or research organisation.	37%
<b>Theme 2:</b> Commitment to children that reflects, respects and celebrates culture and diversity, including place of origin.	36%
<b>Theme 3:</b> Inclusive partnerships with children and families.	65%
<b>Theme 4:</b> Positive workplace culture, organisational values, support of educators and sustained commitment to professional development.	71%
<b>Theme 5:</b> Practice and environments that enhance children's learning and growth.	73%

**Criterion 2:** 60 per cent of applicants met this criterion.

**Criterion 3:** 60 per cent of applicants met this criterion.

**Table 5: Source of applications received 2021–22**

TOTAL 2021–22 APPLICATIONS	NUMBER	% OF APPLICATIONS
NSW	11	52.3%
SA	2	9.5%
Vic	1	4.7%
Qld	5	23.8%
Tas	0	0%
ACT	2	9.5%
NT	0	0%
WA	0	0%

## EXCELLENT RATED SERVICE PROFILE

We awarded the Excellent rating for a third time to:

- Clarendon Children's Centre Co-op (Vic)
- Milford Lodge Child Care Centre (Qld).

The following services were awarded the Excellent rating for a second time:

- Forrest Out Of School Hours Care (ACT)
- Lobethal Community Kindergarten (SA)
- Bermagui Preschool (NSW).

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

- Adamstown Community Early Learning and Preschool (NSW)
- Ashgrove Memorial Kindergarten Inc. (Qld)
- Bellambi Point Community Preschool (NSW)



- Choices Family Day Care Inc. (Qld)
- Discovery Early Education and Care Centre (NSW)
- Eagleby Kids Early Learning Centre (Qld)
- Essex Heights Juniors (Vic)
- SDN Riverwood Education and Care Centre (NSW)
- Peak Sports and Learning TIGS (NSW).

As of 30 June 2022, 38 services have the Excellent rating, and all children's education

and care service types are represented. It is of particular note that a high proportion of services awarded the Excellent rating are from some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Australia.

As illustrated in Table 6, more than one quarter of Excellent-rated services are in the lowest socio-economic area, as rated by their Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index, and 42 per cent are in the three most disadvantaged areas. This achievement is testament to the



exceptional quality education and care being delivered to children by these services. We know that children who are vulnerable or disadvantaged benefit the most from high quality children’s education and care.<sup>4</sup>

4 Torii K, Fox S & Cloney D (2017). *Quality is key in Early Childhood Education in Australia*. Mitchell Institute Policy Paper No. 01/2017. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne.

Table 6: 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)	3	8%
9	4	11%
8	6	16%
7	3	8%
6	0	0%
5	1	3%
4	5	13%
3	4	11%
2	2	5%
1 (Most disadvantaged)	10	26%
Total	38	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 SocioEconomic Advantage and Disadvantage (ISRAD) classification. Some services are excluded from SEIFA classifications because of poor quality address matching.

As of 30 June 2022, we have received a total of 320 applications for the Excellent rating since the legislative provisions enabling this function were proclaimed in April 2013. Over this time, 137 services have been awarded the Excellent rating (this includes re-awarding the rating).

During recent contact with services eligible to re-apply for the Excellent rating, feedback

included wanting to be informed earlier about their expiry date and wanting more time to work on their re-application. In response, the re-application reminder is now scheduled at nine months, rather than the previous timeframe of six months. The nine-month timeframe brings services in line with the time their regulatory authority is contacted regarding re-application eligibility and reminded about the possibility of scheduling an assessment and rating visit, to ensure the service is maintaining its Exceeding rating across all seven quality areas.

## EXCEPTIONAL PRACTICE ENHANCES QUALITY PROGRAMS AND PRACTICE ACROSS AUSTRALIA

In 2021–22, 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:

- Bermagui Preschool’s Nominated Supervisor presented for Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) on ‘Working Effectively with Parent Management Committees’ to



promote high quality governance and compliance practices

- Lobethal Community Kindergarten presented to the Australian Primary Principals Association National Conference on Nature Connect: The Power of Nature to Build Collaboration, Connection and Community
- Milford Lodge Child Care Centre organised Dr Michael Nagle to speak on the neuroscience of boys at their self-organised ‘Village Ways’ conference for



the wider early childhood education and care sector

- Clarendon Children’s Centre Co-op piloted and launched the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation at their service
- Forrest Out Of School Hours Care supported Early Childhood Australia (ECA) with a video project that provided content for the ECA online module ‘Engineering creativity: celebrating loose parts play for all ages.’

In July 2021, we published the [Quest for Quality Extension pack – Exceptional practice](#).



The Exceptional practice pack was created as a resource to support first time and re-applying applicants to reflect on their practices and identify possible areas

of practice to build on and include within their application. The resource can be used by any service type and utilised as a tool to facilitate reflection and celebration of practices at a team level.

# RE-APPLICATION AND CONTINUED RECOGNITION: BEING RE-AWARDED EXCELLENT BY ACECQA

We connected with four services re-awarded the Excellent rating to seek their insight, experience and advice regarding their continued quality improvement and their re-application process.



## CLARENDON CHILDREN'S CENTRE CO-OP, VICTORIA

*Linda Davison, Nominated Supervisor*

For more than 10 years, Clarendon Children's Centre (CCC) has recognised the importance of educational leadership in creating a strong community of excellence in teaching and learning. Since 2010, CCC management, educators and families have worked together in a thoughtful, systematic, and sustained way to embed distributed leadership within their educator team.

Over this time, a variety of Leadership Portfolios have been established to meet a need, or increase pedagogical focus, as identified through our Quality Improvement Plan. Some portfolios, once established, are enduring and have become deeply embedded in our teaching and learning. For example, the portfolios of Indigenous Perspectives, Food Education and Wellbeing have all been consistently implemented at CCC for many years with documented benefits for children, families and the community.

In each portfolio area the intended outcomes are tailored to the specific interests, skills and enthusiasms of both the designated leader and of the children currently attending. For

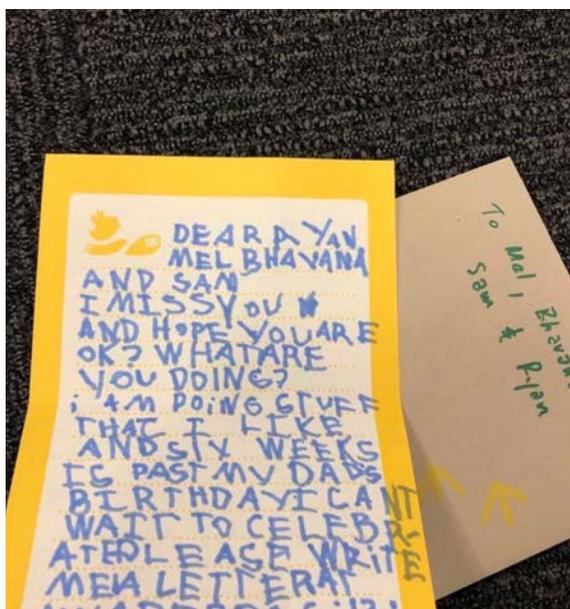


children, a general intention is to provide meaningful learning experiences that are sustained and extended over time to support the acquisition of life-long skills, knowledge and understanding.

For educators, taking on a leadership portfolio offers opportunities to learn more about topics they are interested in and passionate about, and provides possibilities for both personal and professional growth. Time and resources are

allocated to support leadership roles including, where appropriate, additional training and professional development. Portfolio leaders are empowered and given opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise with their co-educators in a respectful and reflective environment at monthly staff meetings and this assists in embedding the new pedagogy and practice throughout the Centre. In addition, leaders are encouraged and resourced to submit articles for publications and/or to give presentations at network meetings and conferences.

Leaders are thus enabled and empowered to initiate innovative practice in their particular focus area and, in collaboration with colleagues, ensure that all children benefit from this enhanced learning environment. Distributed leadership ensures that intentional teaching, reflective practice, collaborative partnerships and respectful relationships are embedded in everyday practice at CCC.



## FORREST OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

*Q & A with Ali Sewter, Executive Director*

**Q: What was your experience of the re-application process? What were the similarities and differences to submitting your previous application?**

A: We once again found it to be a rewarding and uplifting process, a time to come together to reflect on our growth and achievements thus far. Focussing on the positives was particularly important considering the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. For us, both applications presented like a “gratitude journal” which was a powerful medium to give us impetus to go on. The difference with the re-application was that the last three years of our practice occurred during a pandemic, something we had not planned or prepared for and probably never



*“We were just as proud and excited to receive this Excellent rating the second time around, giving us momentum to keep going forward and making a difference to so many people.”*

We established and continue to be an active leader in the Outside School Hours Care Community of Practice Network for services managed by Parents and Citizens groups in the ACT. Enhancements have included the development of a buddy system. Directors, assistant directors and educational leaders mentor long standing, new and emerging leaders in each of the participating services to promote a professional approach to education and care in the ACT. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, planned virtual meetings offered numerous opportunities for the network members to address and share information regarding government-directed restrictions, fees, health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

could prepare for. We feel like we are stronger for going through this process.

**Q: What is a specific way your service has responded to the unique needs and challenges of your children, families and local community over the last few years?**

A: Despite the impacts of this pandemic on us as individuals, families and as a service, it was almost an epiphany, as we were reminded that we are the sum of all our parts, that we are greater and stronger together than we are apart. We needed each other now, more than ever.

**Q: What advice would you give to a service wanting to re-apply for the Excellent rating?**

A: We would suggest creating a system where you can store and access evidence that educators can contribute to freely, to assist in developing your next application. We would recommend you do this straight after being awarded your first Excellent rating, as this helps to ensure meaningful examples are not lost or forgotten. We would also suggest finding ways to ensure that, whatever your approach,

you engage with your community from the beginning, so compiling your application remains fun and inclusive for all. Our families loved to help by sending us their thoughts and favourite moments.

**Q: What did you learn about your service from the re-application and re-awarding process?**

A: It highlighted just how far we had progressed in embedding several practices that we had planned to occur following the first application. For example, our continued commitment to Reconciliation and how we had embedded Indigenous perspectives across our program. We also realised how much we contribute to the Australian Playwork community and the wider sector, through our advocacy on a child's right to play. For example, our collaborations with an independent consultant and play advocate, and Camp Hill OSHC, to facilitate and present at the inaugural two-day Playwork Gathering in 2019, which saw 45 educators and Playworkers come together to attend the event in Queensland.

Re-applying for Excellence makes us stop, reflect, and immerse ourselves in achievements.



**BERMAGUI PRESCHOOL,  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

*Narelle Myers, Nominated Supervisor*

We are most proud of our Moodji Farm Project. Moodji Farm is located on Merrimans Aboriginal Land Council land adjoining Bermagui Preschool. This Preschool initiative is managed by Dan Bakker from Eat Dirt Permaculture and is central to our coastal town of Bermagui. From the Djiranganj language meaning 'friend', Moodji's aim is to provide the preschool and the broader community a fully operational urban and Indigenous farm through which people of all backgrounds can come together to share histories, care-for-country and learn from each other through the growing of local



*“By responding to our children, families and community, focusing on our strengths and collaborating and working together, excellence in early education is much easier and achievable.”*

food. Moodji’s chief objective is to exemplify a working model of sustainable food production and Indigenous heritage thinking that considers the future of those just across the fence ... our children.

Moodji draws on diversity, collaboration and integration in its design, operations and activities to practise and model social, ecological and economic resilience. What’s more, we know this strategy is working, because it already has.

Having endured drought, bushfires, water restrictions, unprecedented wind and rain events and compounding COVID-19 restrictions since the project’s inception in 2018. Moodji

is still here and thriving. We put this down to a complex variety of project design elements we built into the project from the start – using permaculture principles, the creation of micro-climates and purposefully integrated natural synergistic systems like seasonal cover-cropping. We also have honey bees and verges of flowering fodder species to support a wide range of pollinators. Together, these elements assist in the capture and storage of sunlight, carbon and water and mitigate the impacts of dramatic weather events.

Our social programming includes a weekly farm day that brings together people of all ages and persuasions to tend to the patch and work hand-in-hand with pre-schoolers. The active involvement of our local seniors and Narooma High School students has been fundamental in the success of these sessions. The Djiringanj program, which runs in conjunction with the preschool’s global programming, involves Indigenous weaving, storytelling, language and the extensive ‘planting into practice’ of bushfoods that bolster care-for-country perspectives and seek to make us think more broadly than our own immediate self-gain.

The provision of local organics waste (all salvaged from local retail food outlets) has led

to Moodji becoming independent in its fertiliser source. Harvests have in turn gone back to the Indigenous community, been sold at local markets, supported fire-affected families, shared with local businesses and of course with our preschool families.

Moodji has created its own circular-economy that has the town of Bermagui viewing the farm as a critical asset. Social organisations and service clubs routinely schedule activities at Moodji. Moodji has also partnered with four other sustainable garden programs building the network reach of each.

At full function, Moodji facilitates about 10 events per year ranging from project tours to specialist workshops to panel discussions and long-table dinners. Moodji will continue as a working model of climate adaption that could be considered by any community seeking to take climate-change, Indigenous heritage and social resilience more seriously.

At a recent community event Bermagui Preschool families and members of the broader community joined us for our Winter Solstice Ceremony. The evening began with hearty warm winter soups (prepared by our children and a local deli's cooking school in a soup making masterclass) and delicious rolls from a local bakery.

Our preschoolers then Acknowledged Country in their own special way, paying respects to the Djiringanj people of the Yuin Nation on whose land we gathered to celebrate. The children wandered up to our sand and fire circle using lanterns they had made in our preschool art studio. Dawali candles (made



from local clay and beeswax as well as wicks created in a cultural weaving workshop) and the intricate sand patterns created a beautiful space for us to enjoy fire-gazing while listening to the didgeridoo. It was such a beautiful evening of connection and community. The preschool children were filled with excitement and wonder as they shared stories about the campfire in the Moodji garden the night before.

*“I think I can see the Dark Emu and Umburra (Black Duck)”*

The children, families and community experienced belonging and joy at this gathering, and they learnt a lot too. What an incredible experience to sit together under the stars, under Dark Emu's ethereal gaze, sharing in the warmth of conversation and of our roaring winter solstice fire. It really was an exceptional evening of connection and community.



## MILFORD LODGE CHILD CARE CENTRE, QUEENSLAND

*Q & A with Molly Stewart, Nominated Supervisor*

**Q: What was your experience of the re-application process? What were the similarities and differences to submitting your previous application?**

A: Each of the three times that we have had the privilege of applying for the Excellent Rating has been very enjoyable. It is a lovely way in which we are able to reflect on what we have achieved as a team, and what practices we realise we have been able to embed over that time.

Admittedly, receiving the phone call in late 2021 from ACECQA to remind us that it was almost time to reapply, we were shocked

and thought we still had another year up our sleeve. Honestly, our next thoughts were wondering what we could possibly write about when so much had been taken away during the pandemic. However, once we began brain storming, we realised that we had still managed to achieve so much change in what felt like such a short time.

Having been through the process twice before, we felt much more confident in the task at hand. The teleconference was a lovely experience too, and another opportunity to share our practice and program.



**Q: What advice would you give to a service wanting to re-apply for the Excellent rating?**

A: Interestingly, the advice we would give is the advice we tell ourselves each time (and are yet to implement!). Our main advice would be to begin a journal the day after receiving the Excellent rating the first time. Apart from that, really, really believe in what it is that makes you amazing and be proud of what it is that you do. Our only other advice, and again, advice for ourselves, is to be clear in explaining what the outcomes for children are through the practices you implement.

**Q: What did you learn about your service from the re-application and re-awarding process?**

A: You make your own luck. Whilst these past three years have not been easy, we have learned that you make your own luck. By always having provided practices well above the National Quality Standard in every way, we have managed to safely navigate our way through these years and challenges.

## 2.6 EDUCATE AND INFORM

### ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES – STARTINGBLOCKS.GOV.AU

We are responsible for delivering a comprehensive and innovative communication and engagement strategy directly targeting parents and the community regarding the importance of quality early childhood education and care. The way we do this is centred on children and families, through StartingBlocks.gov.au, our family-focused website.

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

The StartingBlocks.gov.au website and its ongoing digital communications campaigns provide trusted government information on children's development and learning to support parents' decision making. The resources on StartingBlocks.gov.au offer the following:

- advice to families on activities to do at home to encourage children's learning and development
- advice on choosing the right service, preparing your child before starting at a service and helping them settle in
- tips on how to build and maintain a collaborative partnership with your child's educators once they start attending a service.

#### *Decommissioning of Child Care Finder*

During 2021–22, we have worked with the Australian Government to grow StartingBlocks.gov.au to become the one

national government website for families to find and compare quality education and care service quality ratings, vacancies, fees and inclusions.



#### *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 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

- educators and providers to help them use and promote StartingBlocks.gov.au Find Child Care tool and website resources to their families.

## NEW RESOURCES

### *New translated resources*

In 2021–22, to support families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, we translated several StartingBlocks.gov.au resources into six languages – Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese Simplified, Hindi, Punjabi and Korean.

### *COVID-19 webpage on StartingBlocks.gov.au*

In 2021–22, there were approximately 25,153 page views of the COVID-19 section of StartingBlocks.gov.au. There was a 199 per cent increase in traffic to the ‘Activities to do at home with your child’ page during the July – October 2021 lockdown period.

The StartingBlocks.gov.au Find Child Care tool continues to display information about services

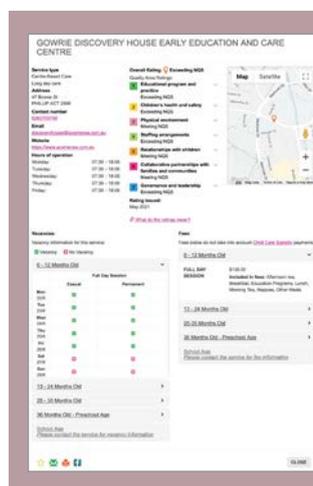
that are open during the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest COVID-19 updates from the Australian Government and all state and territory governments were published on the website and promoted on social media.

## STARTINGBLOCKS.GOV.AU WEBSITE UPDATES

### *Find Child Care*

The StartingBlocks.gov.au Find Child Care tool helps families find quality early childhood education and care services near them. We improved the tool to enhance user experience and made the following updates during 2021–22:

- service fees, vacancies and inclusions are now available
- a new fees estimator tool (March 2022 Higher CCS)
- a new compare tool, helping families compare services and create a shortlist.



## *We listened to families to give them more service information, and to help them share it*

- [New service website URL](#)
- [New NQS Quality Area titles and ratings](#)
- [New link to service quality rating meanings](#)
- [New click through for CCS information](#)
- [New vacancies by day](#)
- [New fees by age ranges](#)
- [New email or Facebook sharing options](#)

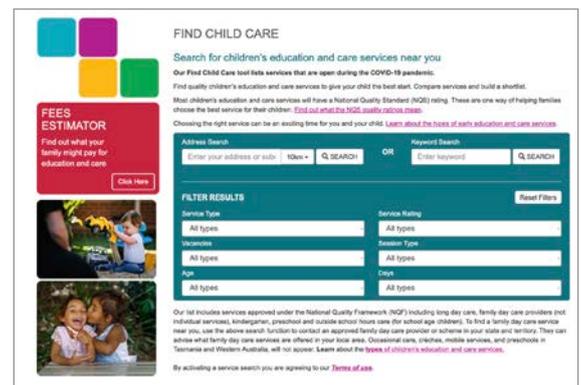
## Refreshed homepage

We refreshed the homepage with engaging visuals and easy tool entry points, adding a new option for users to enter their address or postcode to find services near them. This provides users with a shortcut to find services, and they can still visit the Find Child Care webpage and use filters to refine their search. We also added new entry boxes for the Fees Estimator tool and video display.



## User experience research

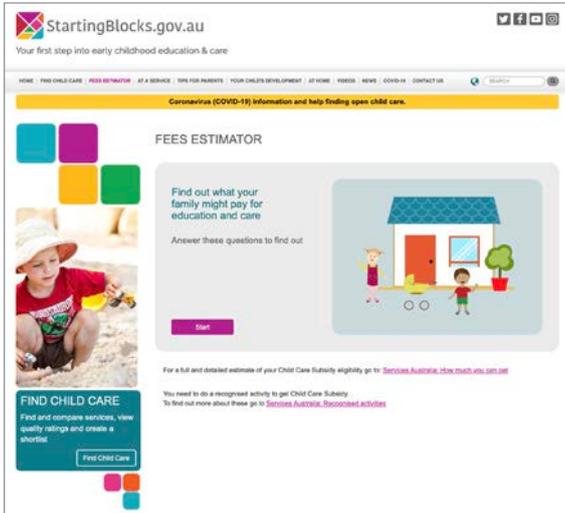
We listened to families to give them better search and sort options. By increasing the search radius, we have provided a more practical user experience for families in regional areas who are searching for children's education and care services. We have also added new tools to help families compare services side by side and sort services by distance, fees, vacancies, or alphabetically.



## Fees Estimator

The new Fees Estimator tool helps families estimate out of pocket costs easily. More than 73,000 people have used the Fees Estimator since its launch on 7 February 2022.

Since the 7 February enhancements, we have experienced a 26 per cent increase in monthly users and a 43 per cent increase in Find Child Care tool users.



### StartingBlocks.gov.au website growth

StartingBlocks.gov.au continued to grow steadily throughout various COVID-19 waves during the reporting period. The number of average monthly users increased by 26 per cent following the rollout of enhancements to the Find Child Care tool. The top five resources/webpages in 2021–22 were:

- 1) Find Child Care
- 2) Fees Estimator (NEW)
- 3) The importance of play in children’s learning and development
- 4) Your child’s development
- 5) Activities to do at home with your child.

### Advertising campaigns

StartingBlocks.gov.au ran nine advertising campaigns across channels including *Kinderling*, *MamaMia* and *The West Australian* to increase awareness of the website. We also promoted the launch of our enhanced Find Child Care tool on social media, breakfast TV, SMS and our cross promotional channels.

We are committed to increasing awareness of the NQF and NQS among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and advertised StartingBlocks.gov.au in two editions of the *Koori Mail* in November 2021 and May 2022, reaching a readership of approximately 100,000 nationwide.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### *Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021–24*

Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021–24 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.

While the delivery of all our National Law functions is enhanced through collaborative engagement, there are functions and responsibilities that explicitly require us to engage and work with stakeholders:

- in conjunction with regulatory authorities, we are required to educate and inform services and the community about the NQF
- we must work with the regulatory authorities and the relevant Commonwealth Department to support and promote the NQF.

The NQF is based on the principles that every stakeholder has a role in achieving better outcomes for children attending approved services and the commitment to continuous quality improvement is ongoing. On this basis:



- we view stakeholders as partners in the delivery of outcomes for the national early childhood education and care system
- we respect the importance of diversity and have an obligation to understand all stakeholders’ perspectives
- we tailor engagement methods to maximise stakeholders’ participation, including the use of innovative technology solutions
- we are transparent in our aims and functions, and share our information as openly as possible



- we protect stakeholders' confidential information and uphold the protocols for the information we receive and data we hold
- we behave in accordance with our values of commitment, collaboration, integrity and respect.

Given our national role and reach, the majority of our communications and engagement activities aim to inform, and we identify ways to best consult and involve stakeholders for key priorities and projects.

*National NQF communications and engagement strategy (ACECQA Review recommendation 6)*

In October 2019, KPMG's *Review of the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority* report recognised the importance of our work on NQF communications and engagement and included Recommendation 6 to guide its growth:

*'In consultation with regulatory authorities and other relevant stakeholders, ACECQA should lead the development of an overarching communication strategy for how all governments and ACECQA communicate and*

*engage with the early childhood education and care sector and the community about the National Quality Framework.'*

During 2021–22, we have worked in close collaboration with all jurisdictions to create and commence rollout of a national NQF communications and engagement strategy to ensure that families have a sound understanding of the role of the regulatory authority, the importance of quality education and care services, and the National Quality Framework in practice. It prioritises effective communications with a diverse population to ensure vulnerable groups are not limited by understanding.

The strategy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government, state and territory regulatory authorities and us in relation to engagement with families, communities, services and providers, including the development of sector resources.

We aim to work collaboratively with all state and territory governments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all NQF communications, the consistency of messaging, and information sharing. The goal is to improve families' experiences in navigating and understanding relevant support and information so that they can make informed decisions about their child's education and care.

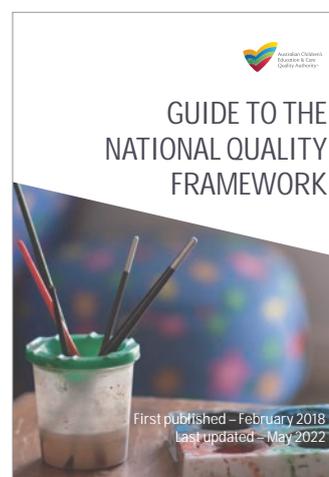
### *Guide to the NQF*

Under Section 225 of the National Law, we must provide guidance on the NQF. The [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#) 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 types of services in all states and territories, and is available as a PDF on [our website](#).

During this reporting year we made some minor updates to the *Guide to the NQF* in March 2022, with a summary of all updates published [in a table](#) on our website for reference.



There will be further and more significant updates to the *Guide to the NQF* in 2022–23 to reflect outcomes of the recently completed 2019 NQF Review.

We recognise the increasing use of device friendly resources for sector professionals and features to support easy searching and use of information resources. Providing our content in increasingly friendly formats supports users and more broadly the ongoing implementation and embedding of the NQF across Australian services.

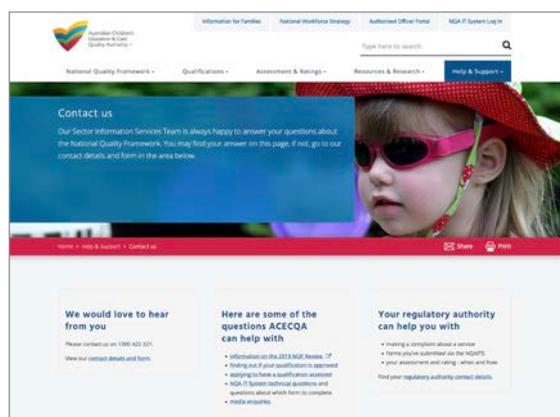
## CONFERENCES AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

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.

During this reporting year, some events have been rescheduled or delivered in varied formats due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we look forward to future face-to-face engagement opportunities, a key benefit of the changed arrangements during this reporting year has been increased online engagement to reach larger and wider audiences. More detail on our 2021–22 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 2021–22, we received a total of 27,046 enquiries, made up of 14,665 phone calls and 12,381 emails. The highest number of enquiries related to interpretation of legislation, including

the National Quality Standard. 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 2021–22 was 1.4 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 – [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)*

Our website is a trusted and popular source of information, particularly for our key stakeholders including educators, approved providers and peak organisations. Since its launch up to the end of June 2022, our website has hosted over 28.2 million sessions and more than 10.5 million new users.



Website usage grew steadily in 2021–22 as it hosted over 4,332,532 sessions, representing a 4.7 per cent increase on the previous year. We saw varied traffic during this reporting year, reducing while COVID-19 waves impacted and growing following our StartingBlocks.gov.au enhancements launch in February 2022. A significant flow of traffic to the website continues to come from our regular social media

posts, improving awareness of the NQF and associated resources to support continuous quality improvement in services.

As COVID-19 continued to impact Australia, we maintained our dedicated webpage to support families and services with reliable and relevant information, updates and resources.

### *NQF Review website*

In 2019 we built the [www.nqfreview.com.au](http://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 2021–22, we continued delivering ongoing communications and engagement services and the 2019 NQF Review reached an important milestone in May 2022, when the Australian Government, state and territory Education Ministers agreed to changes to the NQF. These changes are set out in a [Decision Regulation Impact Statement](#) (DRIS) which was published on the [NQF Review website](#) on 8 June 2022. A total of 6198 people visited the website from the day the DRIS was published until 30 June 2022, with 1118 downloads of the DRIS.



### *Social media*

We value our growing social media followers and aim to support them to access our information and resources on our websites.

**Our social media channels** – Facebook and Twitter – are continually driving increased engagement with our website information and resources. During this reporting year, our social media content has regularly reached more than 64,000 people a week (not unique users).



Our Facebook followers (59,789 as at 30 June 2022) have grown by almost 2000 on the previous year and our Twitter followers (5402 as at 30 June 2022) have grown by nearly 200 on the previous year.

### **StartingBlocks.gov.au social media channels**

– Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – are continually driving increased engagement and traffic to the StartingBlocks.gov.au website. During this reporting year, the Facebook posts

recorded an average monthly reach of over 33,000 people (these are not unique users).

The StartingBlocks.gov.au Facebook page has over 43,700 followers as at 30 June 2022, and is the biggest social media contributor to website traffic. Over 96 per cent of visitors to the website via social media came through Facebook. StartingBlocks.gov.au has approximately 4500 followers on Instagram and approximately 400 followers on Twitter.

## ACECQA NEWSLETTER

Our monthly newsletter provides regular updates on our activities and the NQF and showcases examples of high quality and continuous quality improvement in the children's education and care sector. As at 30 June 2022, more than 43,300 people are subscribed to [our newsletter](#).

ACECQA Newsletter  
Monthly news and  
information on the National  
Quality Framework and the  
education and care sector.



The most clicked-on newsletter items during 2021–22 include [Education and Care National Regulations amendments](#), [New resources to support in nature-play](#) and [Recognition as an equivalent early childhood teacher](#).



## ACECQA WE HEAR YOU BLOG

As the national authority, we benefit greatly from publishing and moderating a blog as a way for us to hear voices and opinions from people working in the sector and all who support quality children's education and care.



Our [We Hear You](#) blog features articles from our National Education Leader, guest contributors, and also shares a range of perspectives from across the sector. The blog has received more than 296,842 views in the past year.

## SECTOR RESOURCES

In the reporting period, we have delivered new and enhanced resources and guidance materials that support the sector in understanding and implementing the NQF. Improving policies, procedures, programs and professional practices are fundamental to children's safety, learning, health, wellbeing and development.



In 2021–22, we continued our ongoing support to regulatory authorities, aligning our resource development with important NQF areas and new regulatory requirements and updates. Reflecting key areas of need, we produced an extensive range of [resources](#), including:

- guidance for building practitioners and planning professionals to improve their NQF understanding for the evacuation of centre-based services in multi-storey buildings
- information sheets about legislative requirements and practical considerations for in-nature programs
- practical ideas on using the quality assessment and rating process to promote quality improvement
- information about supporting performance and professional development
- Quest for Quality knowledge game extension packs about exceptional practice and the components of quality.

We also developed an interactive online professional development course on [Developing a Quality Improvement Plan](#). The course modules and [accompanying workbook](#)



aim to build professional confidence, capacity and knowledge in developing, reviewing and maintaining self-assessment and quality improvement planning processes.

Other important resources published during this reporting period include:

### *Guidance for effective policies and procedures*

To support approved providers and service management to prepare or review policies and



procedures, in collaboration with state and territory regulatory authorities, we published 16 national policy and procedure guidelines in August 2021. This is in addition to the 12 guidelines that were published in the previous reporting period.

The [guidelines](#) are available on a dedicated page on our website. They include references to legislation that providers must consider, as well as suggesting useful resources and checklists

to aid development and review of policies and procedures that are comprehensive, current and suited to each service.

### *Risk Assessment and Management Tool*

In response to the emerging trend of services seeking support with Quality Area 2 (Children's Health and Safety), we developed the [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#). The tool aims to help approved providers, service leaders, educators, teachers, coordinators and



staff to better understand the importance of assessing and managing risk as an embedded part of quality practice and improvement.

Designed for all service types, the tool supports services to:

- ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and staff
- identify potential risks and hazards before an incident or accident occurs
- build capacity in conducting both formal and informal risk assessments and management plans
- critically reflect on ways to develop, review and update policies and procedures
- encourage, share and collaborate with children, families and the wider community on risk management



- effectively identify and implement strategies to support self-managed risk through play and leisure, improving learning and developmental outcomes for children
- improve compliance with the National Law and National Regulations
- continually improve service practices aligned with Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard (NQS).

To further help services identify and assess risk, we also developed a series of sample templates and infographics that can be used alongside the Risk Assessment and Management Tool and adapted to meet the needs of a service's unique context. To ensure easy access to the suite of resources, they are available in a dedicated tab on our [Quality Area 2](#) page.

### *Exceeding the NQS*

Fifteen case studies were published on the [Exceeding the NQS webpage](#) in 2021–22, adding to 15 case studies published previously. The case studies offer practical and illustrative examples of what high quality practice might look like for each standard and across different service types, including prior to school age and school aged centre-based services, as well as family day care services. A further 15 case studies are currently being developed and will be added to the website in 2023.

The case studies have been developed to strengthen understanding and confidence in recognising and demonstrating Exceeding level practice and inspire discussion and reflection on ways to improve practice. They have been used and well received in training provided for new authorised officers and new members of the ratings review panel pool.

### *ACECQA Resource Finder*

To further support approved providers, service leaders, teachers and educators with accessing the extensive range of resources and guidance on our website, we launched a new search tool – the [ACECQA Resource Finder](#). Along with

a search field for key terms and filtering via category and resource type, the tool also allows users to export their search via a downloadable spreadsheet. The Resource Finder currently features over 250 information sheets, guides, templates, reports and videos, with the addition of other resources scheduled for the second half of 2022.

### **NSW/ACT/QLD INCLUSION SUPPORT PROGRAM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ISPPD)**

In 2021, we were engaged by the NSW/ACT and Queensland Inclusion Agencies to develop and facilitate a training program to support their inclusion professionals.

The ISPPD aimed to further build the knowledge, confidence, and skills of inclusion professionals by guiding them to understand how the NQF can complement their work to promote and build connections with children's education and care services to support participation and inclusion of all children.

The program included a two-hour webinar for 180 inclusion professionals across the three jurisdictions. The webinar provided important information about the NQF, including the national legislation, the quality assessment and rating process and quality improvement planning. A key focus for the webinar was demonstrating how to align inclusion and the NQF during conversations with educators and teachers, to raise the profile of inclusion in their service practice.

We also delivered nine communities of practice (CoP) sessions which provided opportunities for

inclusion professionals across jurisdictions to share their successes and areas of development when supporting services on their inclusion journey. We shared conversation starters and strategies to help inclusion professionals engage services in conversation about inclusion, by linking their practice to the requirements of the NQF.

The feedback received by participants and the inclusion agencies indicated that the webinars and CoP were worthwhile and beneficial to their role. The program promoted ongoing collaboration, discussion and learning amongst inclusion professionals.

Following the program, our National Educational Leader, Rhonda Livingstone, was invited to participate in the Let's talk About inclusion podcast with Inclusion Support QLD.

### **QUALITY SUPPORT PROGRAM**

In 2021–22, we delivered the fourth year of the highly successful Quality Support Program (QSP), funded by the NSW Department of Education. Established in 2018, the QSP has supported the ongoing quality improvement of eligible children's education and care services in NSW rated as Working Towards NQS. Designed to deliver free, tailored professional learning and support, the program aimed to enhance participating services' capacity and confidence in delivering quality children's education and care.

#### *Tailored professional learning and support*

The tailored professional learning and support provided by the QSP have included:



- workshops
- face-to-face service visits
- weekly coaching support video and phone calls and emails
- access to specially designed eLearning modules
- bespoke online resources.

Over four years, the QSP has supported over 620 services across every region of NSW, with facilitators travelling as far north as Tweed Heads and Goolooga, as far south as Bega, Deniliquin and Euston – and as far west as Broken Hill and Menindee.

### *Evaluation findings*

The QSP has been highly successful in supporting the quality uplift of participating children’s education and care services, with around 41,000 children having benefitted from quality improvement outcomes supported by the QSP.

The benefits of the QSP are clear in the continuous and rigorous evaluation of the program. Some of the key highlights from the Stage 3 Evaluation include:

- 97 per cent of centre-based services supported by the QSP improved in the number of NQS elements ‘met’ by an average of 11 elements

- 73 per cent of participants have achieved a rating of Meeting NQS or above, following completion of the program
- centre-based services were three times more likely to achieve Meeting NQS or above if they participated in the QSP.

### Participant feedback

The program was well received by participants, comments included:

*“Our facilitator was very approachable and knowledgeable. They met us where we were at, listened to what we wanted to achieve and supported us with workable strategies. They gave us feedback on areas we have been working on with them and supplied us with links to documentation to help us increase our knowledge. They challenged our thinking and helped us look at things with a different perspective. We will miss our weekly chats!! Thanks for all your help.”*

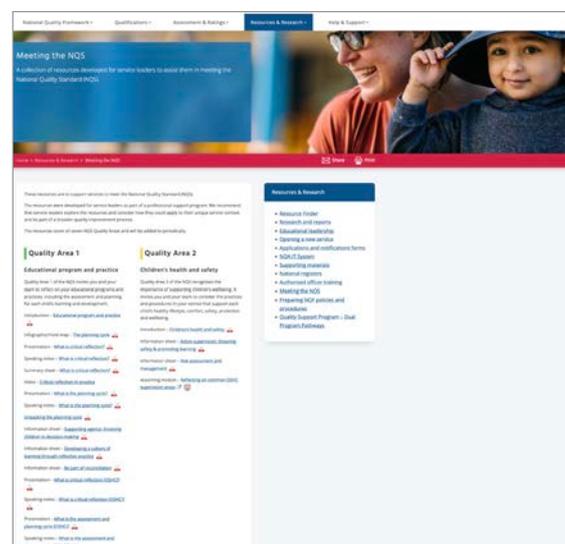
*“A huge ‘thank you!!’ to our facilitator for being incredibly approachable and helpful. Their ability in guiding conversation amongst our staff, helping us critically reflect, and going above and beyond to help our Educational Leader was appreciated, more than we can express.”*

*“We could not speak more highly of the support we received from our quality support facilitator. We now have a great deal of confidence in our practice. They provided us with a great deal of clarity about the assessment and rating process and the NQF. Our strengths were highlighted, and we were mentored and guided through our weaknesses, finally arriving at strategies and solutions of our own. They would always answer*

*a question with another question (which was hard work sometimes!) but we are now reaping the benefits.”*

### Nationally available resources

As part of the NSW Department of Education investment in this Program, we have developed an extensive range of resources to support children’s education and care services rated Working Towards NQS. Services around Australia have free access to these high calibre resources via the [Meeting NQS webpage](#) on our website. To date, this webpage has been viewed over 104,000 times, by services across Australia.



### Case study

Commencing QSP participation in mid-2020, this early learning service began their quality improvement journey with a rating of Working Towards NQS, with nine elements rated as 'not met'.

The service shared that 'our aim from the start was to, of course, change our rating to Meeting NQS, however we never gave up hope for [an] Exceeding rating.' After acceptance into the program, the leadership team at the service were prompted to complete an initial self-evaluation of their service and reflect on their service practice against each Quality Area of the NQS. The service found this initial reflection very beneficial as it 'allowed us to recognise where we were currently at as a service and where we wanted to be, moving forward'.

Utilising the initial self-evaluation as a starting point, the service leaders worked together with the guidance of their Quality Support Facilitator to reflect on the 'what, why and how of everything we do'. The service acknowledged that 'this quickly became the driving force behind critical reflection, because as a service we wanted to ensure we understand our what, why and how within our everyday practices'.

One key focus of support throughout the QSP was reflecting on the service philosophy and its relationship to service practices. The leadership team explained that they started to 'break our philosophy apart, line by line' to move towards a philosophy that reflected the voices of educators, families, and children. This was achieved by using a *philosophy in action* form, 'providing all service stakeholders the

opportunity to offer their unique views and feedback about what was happening within the service, that met our views and expectations of our beliefs'. Reflecting on the feedback received, the leadership team then worked to create a new service philosophy that was streamlined, accurately reflected the views and beliefs of the service and a philosophy that supported decision-making and guided quality practices.

Nominated Supervisor: Ellen

### *Leveraging the success – Introducing the Dual Program Pathways*

Building on the success of the QSP, we will again partner with the NSW Department of Education to deliver a new support program – the QSP, Dual Program Pathways. The new program will have two distinct pathways and will commence in July 2022 for a period of 12 months.

The NSW Department of Education funded initiative has been established to continue supporting the ongoing quality improvement of eligible NSW children's education and care services rated as Working Towards NQS as well as services with identified compliance support needs. It aims to enhance participating services' capacity and capability in identifying quality improvements and delivering quality children's education and care. It will also support service quality improvement and compliance with the NQF, including quality and regulatory standards, as well as good practice in leadership, management, and governance.

Our website has additional information available about the [QSP Dual Program Pathways](#).

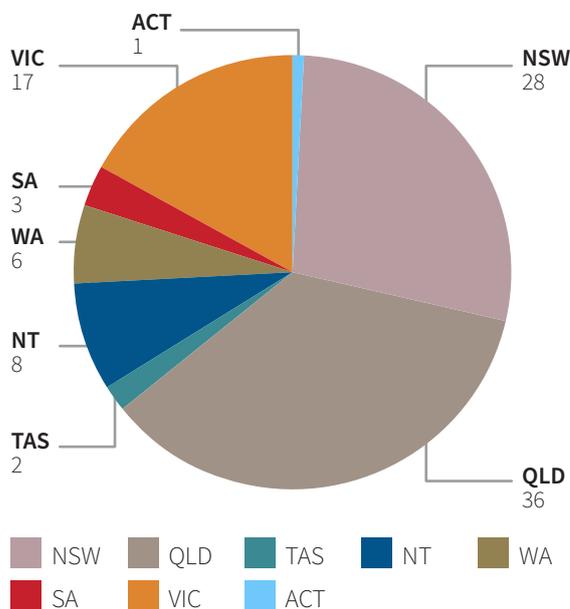
## 2.7 SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### AUTHORISED OFFICER TRAINING

In 2021–22, we continued to fulfil our responsibilities under the National Law to provide national authorised officer training, support, and reliability testing to regulatory authorities across all jurisdictions. Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the face-to-face component of the national authorised officer training package continued to be delivered over four days, using an online format.

This year, we delivered the authorised officer training package eight times to 101 participants from all jurisdictions..

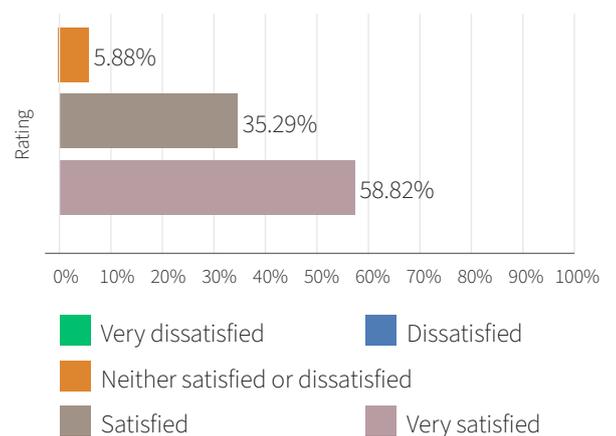
Figure 6: Authorised officer training attendees by state and territory



Satisfaction levels remain high, with 94 per cent of authorised officer survey participants satisfied or very satisfied with the national authorised officer training.



Figure 7: Authorised officer training satisfaction





### *Authorised officer testing and support*

In addition to the 246 reliability tests deployed as part of national authorised officer training, we also assigned 430 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 2021–22 we updated, and master coded another drift test to further strengthen national consistency. There were four reliability tests, and six drift tests in rotation this year.

We reviewed existing content and published additional eLearning courses covering topics such as evidence gathering and exercising powers.

The introduction in 2022 of monthly drift test reporting to each jurisdiction has ensured the drift test schedules for all authorised officers is closely monitored and maintained by each jurisdiction.

We held 100 support calls to new authorised officers throughout the reliability testing phase of their training. In 2022, we moved from phone



calls to online video calls to increase our connection to the authorised officers. This has proven to be very effective and beneficial to both parties in providing authentic engagement with the authorised officer training. We have also built on the suite of resources and training available to support authorised officers and regulatory staff, and have delivered bespoke training on the following topics:

- Administrative Law
- NQF Fundamentals
- Quality Area 1.

## LEAD ASSESSOR NETWORK

In 2021–22, we continued our chairing responsibilities for the Lead Assessor Network (LAN) meetings. The LAN comprises representatives from all regulatory authorities, and provides a forum to consider national issues and opportunities for further consistency.

Lead assessors met quarterly to discuss operational and contextual issues (including the impact of COVID-19), 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 strengthen our collaborative partnerships with regulatory authorities. They also 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.

## SUPPORTING REGULATORY QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY PROJECT

The Supporting Regulatory Quality and Consistency Project (SRQC) began in 2020 and is an initiative of the Queensland Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to provide training and assessment to support regulatory staff in the effective delivery of the Queensland regulatory authority's regulatory functions.

Following the significant success of the program in 2020–21, the program was extended in 2021–22. The program involved the development and delivery of tailored professional development, both online and face-to-face, for regulatory staff throughout Queensland.

We delivered training for regulatory staff on Administrative Law, Quality Area 1 (Educational Program and Practice) and NQA ITS fundamentals. We also collaborated with Queensland regulatory authority staff to develop and deliver the second phase of Regulatory Core Skills training at seven locations throughout Queensland.

This face-to-face training was attended by 146 staff members who hold various roles within the regulatory authority. A survey was conducted after each session and the responses indicated that participants found the training highly valuable with:

- 94 per cent of survey respondents agreeing the course content will retain relevance over time
- 96 per cent of survey respondents agreeing the content was relevant to their role
- 98 per cent of survey respondents agreeing the trainers were knowledgeable.

As a part of the 2021–22 program, we developed a new eLearning module on regulatory functions in family day care and updated the existing SRQC eLearning modules available to Queensland regulatory officers. We also developed new authorisation tests based on the 2021–22 Queensland regulatory priorities.

Following the success of this program, the New South Wales Department of Education has engaged us to develop and deliver a similar program for their regulatory authority team.

## 2.8 EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

### 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 2021–22, we received 719 applications from individuals seeking to have their qualifications assessed, up from 597 applications last year. The volume of applications in both years is lower than previous years, reflecting the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions and controls on immigration and Australia's borders.

More than half (59 per cent) of the applications in 2021–22 were from individuals seeking equivalence to early childhood teaching qualifications. The remainder were for diploma level qualifications (29 per cent), certificate III level qualifications (six per cent) and qualifications for working with school age children (six per cent).

The most common countries for individual applicants to hold qualifications from continued to be Australia (17 per cent), the UK (15 per cent) and New Zealand (13 per cent).

Almost one quarter (21 per cent) of the applications were from individuals looking



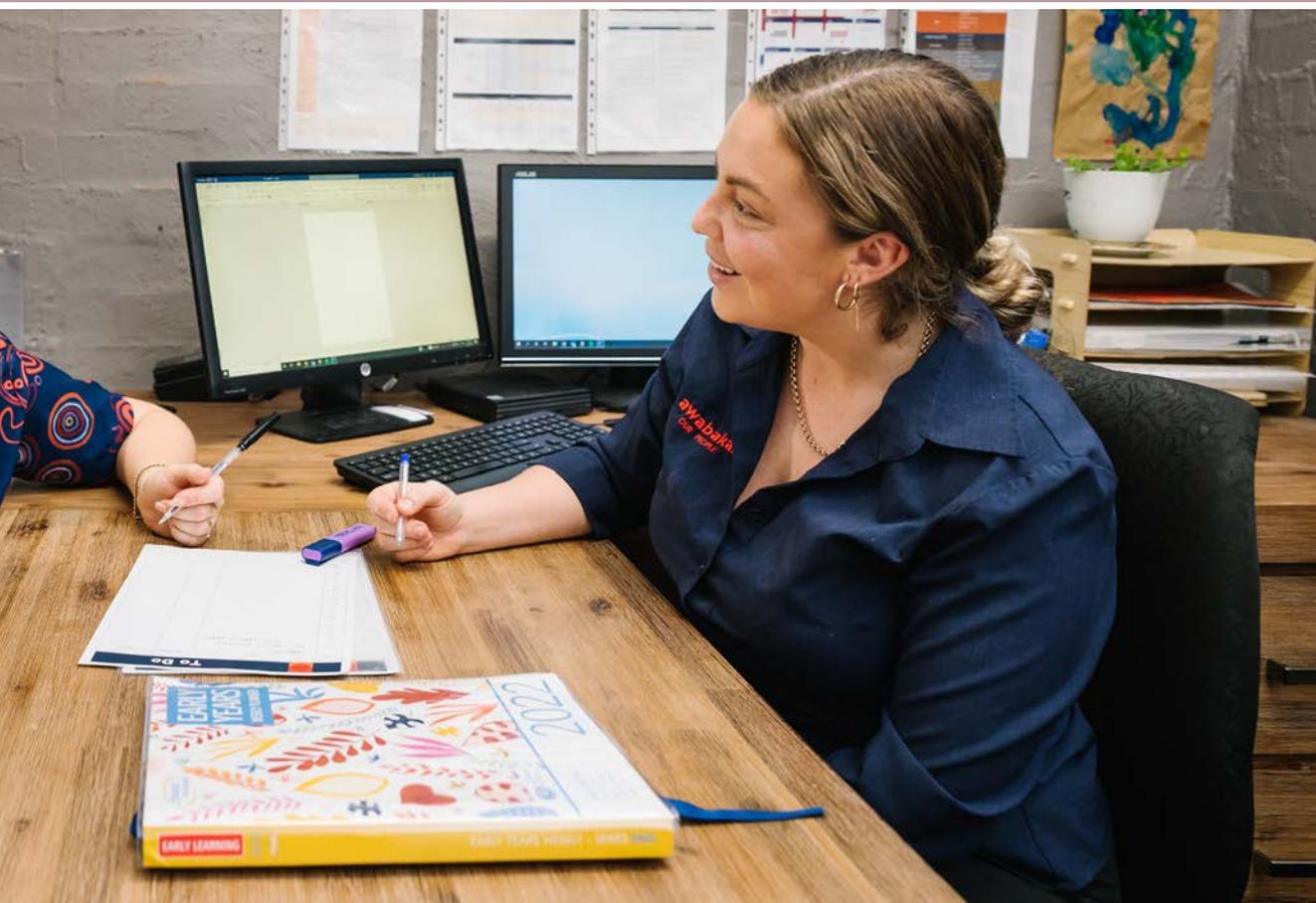
to work in NSW, followed by Queensland (18 per cent), Victoria (17 per cent) and Western Australia (15 per cent).

In 2021–22, we approved 126 early childhood teachers, 119 diploma level educators, 58 certificate III level educators and 21 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 2021–22, we received 27 applications from



organisations wanting their qualifications or training assessed for equivalence, up from 21 applications last year.

Most applications were for early childhood teaching qualifications with two applications also received for diploma level qualifications.

Of the 27 applications received, 21 had been finalised by 30 June 2022. All of the finalised applications were approved.

## SKILLED MIGRATION APPLICATIONS

In 2021–22, we received 171 applications from individuals wanting their skills, qualifications and employment experience assessed for skilled migration purposes, very similar to the figure of 170 applications last year.

More than three-quarters (78 per cent) of the applications were for the ‘Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only)’ occupation.

Of the 171 applications received, 132 had been finalised by 30 June 2022. Eighty-eight were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of ‘Child Care Worker (Group Leaders only)’, 20 were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of ‘Child Care Centre Manager’ and seven were approved as suitable for the nominated occupation of ‘Child Care Worker’. The overall approval rate was 90 per cent, slightly higher than last year’s rate of 89 per cent.

In 2021–22, we also received 987 provisional skills assessment applications from individuals

wanting their qualifications assessed for the purposes of the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485), up from 917 applications last year.

Of the 987 applications received, all had been finalised by 30 June 2022 and all were approved.

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

In 2021–22, we have also supported the Australian Government with three incentives intended to maximise the contribution of Australia’s onshore migrant workforce where there is a shortage of skilled labour. The incentives are:

- **Faster Migrant Skills Assessment**
  - this incentive offered fast-tracked skills assessments for onshore migrants who have already submitted and paid for an application in a priority occupation and are awaiting an outcome
- **Skills Assessment Opportunities for Migrants** – this incentive offers onshore migrants, who reside in Australia on a permanent family, partner, humanitarian or refugee visa, 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 to ensure a sustainable, high quality children’s education and care workforce 2022–2031](#)’ and requested work commence on implementation.

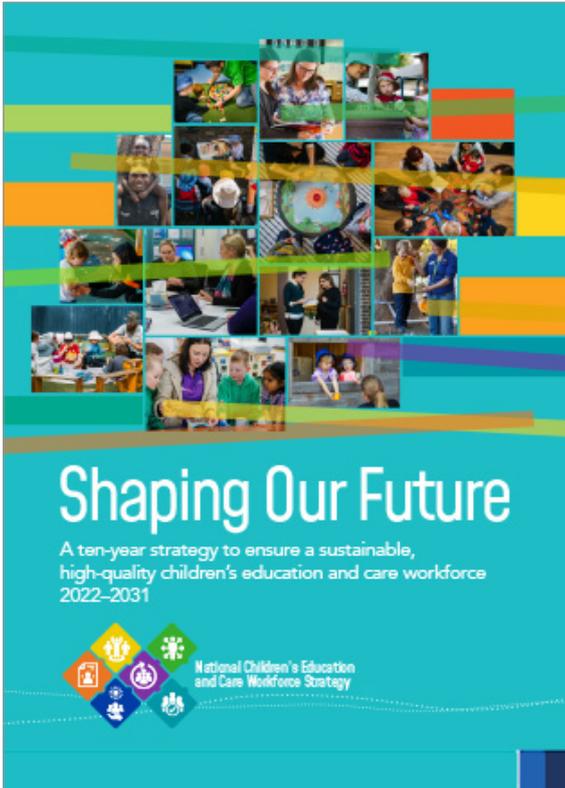
In October 2021, we were appointed to coordinate the development of an implementation and evaluation plan to accompany the strategy. Both the plan and the strategy itself represent a joint partnership between all governments and the children’s education and care sector, in recognition that all stakeholders have a role to play in advancing the goal of a highly skilled and professionally valued workforce.

Between December 2021 and April 2022, we facilitated a collaborative process with governments and national sector stakeholders to determine the steps that need to be taken to progress the 21 actions identified in the national workforce strategy, along with how progress will be monitored and evaluated over the next decade.

The implementation and evaluation plan is expected to be considered by Education Ministers in the second half of the year.

### *Shaping Our Future*

‘[Shaping Our Future](#)’ acknowledges and builds on the significant investment by all governments to date in workforce related initiatives, as well as a range of recent and ongoing initiatives launched by the sector.



It provides a roadmap for ongoing collaboration and partnership between all parties, including governments, service providers, education and training providers, peak associations, regulatory bodies, and educators and teachers, and their representative bodies.

The strategy is structured around six interrelated focus areas and includes 21 actions to be progressed over the lifespan of the strategy, ensuring there is meaningful progress over the next decade.

The strategy recognises that the most effective and sustainable change will come about through collective will and action, and an ongoing commitment to progress.



## WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT

The workforce challenges experienced by the children's education and care sector are complex and longstanding.

We continue to provide insights to governments and other organisations to support the children's education and care workforce across diverse issues such as higher education, vocational skills and training, skilled migration, educator wellbeing, teacher registration and professional standards.

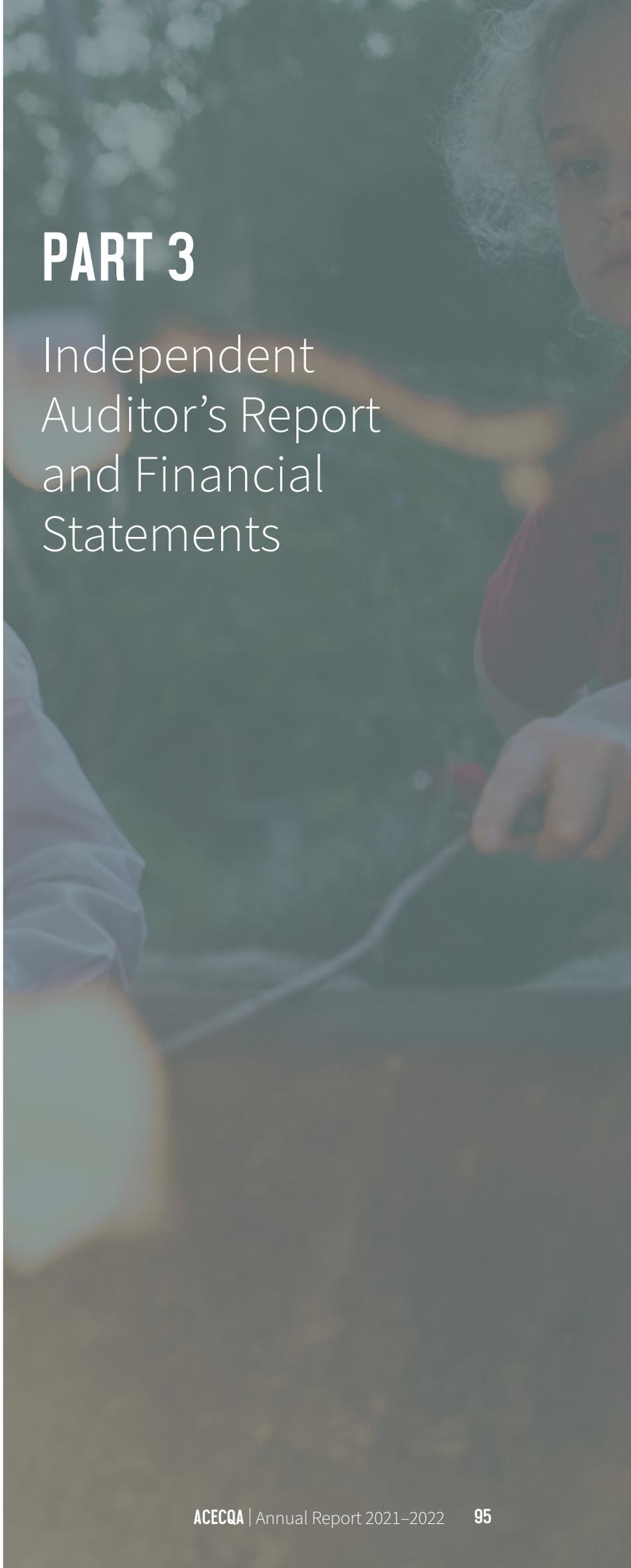
Our [Workforce Snapshot](#) provides a summary of available data about the workforce, including analysis of supply and demand of qualified educators and teachers.





## PART 3

### Independent Auditor's Report and Financial Statements



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

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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 2022 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority as at 30 June 2022 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 2022 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 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 of the Entity is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Board is also responsible for such internal control as the Board determines 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 is 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 intends to liquidate the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority or to cease operations, or has 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.

GPO Box 707, Canberra AC 2601  
38 Sydney Avenue, Forrest ACT 2603  
Phone (02) 6203 7300

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

10 October 2022

**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 2022 and the results of its financial performance and cash flows for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

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

10 October 2022



**Gabrielle Sinclair**

Chief Executive Officer

10 October 2022



**Angela Buchanan**

Chief Operating Officer

10 October 2022

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**

	Notes	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>			
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee benefits	1.1A	<b>15,144</b>	14,507
Suppliers	1.1B	<b>6,705</b>	4,891
Finance costs	1.1C	<b>21</b>	35
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2A	<b>1,236</b>	1,215
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>23,106</b>	20,648
<b>Own-source revenue</b>			
Revenue from contracts with customers	1.2A	<b>14,659</b>	6,795
Interest	1.2B	<b>55</b>	93
Other revenue		<b>28</b>	28
<b>Total own-source revenue</b>		<b>14,742</b>	6,916
<b>Net cost of services</b>		<b>8,364</b>	13,732
Funding and other revenue from Governments	1.2C	<b>14,485</b>	14,574
<b>Surplus</b>		<b>6,121</b>	842
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>		<b>6,121</b>	842

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

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	Notes	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Financial Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	<b>10,702</b>	7,541
Trade and other receivables	2.1B	<b>1,754</b>	887
Other investments	2.1C	<b>9,289</b>	6,289
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>21,745</b>	14,717
<b>Non-Financial Assets</b>			
Buildings – Right of Use <sup>1</sup>	2.2A	<b>729</b>	1,701
Leasehold improvements	2.2A	<b>95</b>	214
Plant and equipment	2.2A	<b>248</b>	279
Other current asset – Inventory		<b>3</b>	4
Prepayments		<b>356</b>	461
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>1,431</b>	2,659
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>23,176</b>	17,376
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Payables</b>			
Suppliers – Trade creditors and accruals		<b>841</b>	588
Other payables	2.3	<b>1,040</b>	711
<b>Total payables</b>		<b>1,881</b>	1,299
<b>Interest bearing liabilities</b>			
Leases <sup>1</sup>	2.4	<b>800</b>	1,728
<b>Total interest bearing liabilities</b>		<b>800</b>	1,728
<b>Provisions</b>			
Employment provisions	3.1	<b>2,557</b>	2,534
Other provisions	2.5	<b>79</b>	77
<b>Total provisions</b>		<b>2,636</b>	2,611
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>5,317</b>	5,638
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>17,859</b>	11,738
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained surplus		<b>17,859</b>	11,738
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>17,859</b>	11,738

1. For leasing office space.

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

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	<b>Total Equity</b>	
	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>\$'000</b>	\$'000
<b>Retained surplus</b>		
<b>Opening balance as at 1 July</b>	<b>11,738</b>	10,896
<b>Comprehensive income</b>		
Surplus	<b>6,121</b>	842
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>6,121</b>	842
<b>Closing balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>17,859</b>	11,738

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

## CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Notes	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash received</b>			
Receipts from Government		14,485	18,074
Sales of goods and rendering of services		14,290	6,766
Interest		63	86
Net GST received		102	–
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>28,940</b>	24,926
<b>Cash used</b>			
Employees		(15,031)	(13,717)
Suppliers		(6,597)	(5,269)
Interest payments on lease liabilities		(18)	(32)
Net GST paid		–	(82)
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>(21,646)</b>	(19,100)
<b>Net cash from operating activities</b>		<b>7,294</b>	5,826
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash used</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(114)	(128)
Investments		(3,000)	(2,000)
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>(3,114)</b>	(2,128)
<b>Net cash (used by) investing activities</b>		<b>(3,114)</b>	(2,128)
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash used</b>			
Principal payments of lease liabilities		(1,019)	(953)
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>(1,019)</b>	(953)
<b>Net cash (used by) financing activities</b>		<b>(1,019)</b>	(953)
<b>Net increase in cash held</b>		<b>3,161</b>	2,745
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		7,541	4,796
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	2.1A	<b>10,702</b>	7,541

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 6, 175 Liverpool St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

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

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

All new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect on ACECQA's financial statements.

AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities AASB 1060 applies to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2021 and replaces the reduced disclosure requirements (RDR) framework. The application of AASB 1060 involves some reduction in disclosure compared to the RDR with no impact on the reported financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the entity.

## **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 2022, 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 2021–22 financial statements.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This section analyses the financial performance of ACECQA for the year ended 30 June 2022.

### 1.1: Expenses

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>1.1A: Employee Benefits</b>		
Wages and salaries	13,652	12,862
Superannuation	1,375	1,234
Leave and other entitlements	117	411
<b>Total employee benefits</b>	<b>15,144</b>	<b>14,507</b>

#### Accounting Policy

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

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>1.1B: Suppliers</b>		
<b>Goods and services</b>		
Consultants	1,509	939
Contractors	409	66
Travel	94	45
Information and communication technology	2,892	2,113
Publishing	101	195
Other	913	714
<b>Total goods and services</b>	<b>5,918</b>	<b>4,072</b>

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

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>Other suppliers</b>		
Workers compensation expenses	108	169
Payroll tax expenses	666	637
Short-term Lease	13	13
<b>Total other suppliers</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>819</b>
<b>Total suppliers</b>	<b>6,705</b>	<b>4,891</b>

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

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000

### **1.1C: Finance Costs**

Interest on lease liabilities	19	33
Unwinding of discount – make good provision	2	2
<b>Total finance costs</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>

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

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000

### Own-source revenue

#### **1.2A: Revenue from Contracts with Customers**

Sales of goods	68	115
Rendering of services	14,591	6,680
<b>Total revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>14,659</b>	<b>6,795</b>

### Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers

#### Major products / services:

Sales of publications	68	115
Assessment services	649	458
Service delivery	13,851	6,084
Training services	91	138
	<b>14,659</b>	<b>6,795</b>

#### Type of customer:

Government entities	13,920	6,099
Non-government entities	739	696
	<b>14,659</b>	<b>6,795</b>

#### Timing of transfer of goods and services:

Over time	798	74
Point in time	13,861	6,721
	<b>14,659</b>	<b>6,795</b>

### 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:

<b>Major products / services:</b>	<b>Principal activities</b>	<b>Timing of satisfaction of performance obligations</b>	<b>Payment term</b>
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.

### **1.2B: Interest**

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Deposits	55	93
<b>Total interest</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>93</b>

#### **Accounting Policy**

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method.

### **1.2C: Funding from Governments**

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Funding from Commonwealth Government	14,485	14,574
<b>Total funding from Governments</b>	<b>14,485</b>	<b>14,574</b>

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:

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Within 1 year	574	403
<b>Total unsatisfied obligations</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>403</b>

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

## 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 Relationships section.

### 2.1: Financial Assets

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>2.1A: Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>		
Cash on hand or on deposit	10,702	7,541
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>10,702</b>	<b>7,541</b>

#### 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 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>2.1B: Trade and Other Receivables</b>		
Goods and services	1,707	446
Contract assets from contracts with customers	13	287
Net GST receivables	-	123
Interest	23	31
Other receivables	11	-
<b>Total trade and other receivables (gross)</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>887</b>
<b>Less impairment loss allowance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total trade and other receivables (net)</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>887</b>

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 (2020: 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.

2022  
\$'000

2021  
\$'000

### 2.1C: Other Investments

Term deposits	9,000	6,000
Security deposit for bank guarantee	289	289
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>9,289</b>	<b>6,289</b>

#### Accounting Policy

Investments are term deposits held at fixed interest 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 2022

	Buildings – Right of Use \$'000	Leasehold Improvements \$'000	Plant & equipment \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>As at 1 July 2021</b>				
Gross book value	3,646	873	688	5,207
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(1,945)	(659)	(409)	(3,013)
<b>Net book value 1 July 2021</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>2,194</b>
Additions – by purchase	–	–	114	114
Depreciation expense	–	(119)	(145)	(264)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	(972)	–	–	(972)
Disposals	–	–	–	–
<b>Net book value 30 June 2022</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>1,072</b>

#### Net book value as of 30 June 2022 represented by:

Gross book value	3,646	873	678	5,197
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(2,917)	(778)	(430)	(4,125)
<b>Net book value 30 June 2022</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>1,072</b>

<b>Carrying amount of right-of-use assets</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>729</b>
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### **Accounting Policy**

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 particularly relevant to the accommodation sublease taken up by ACECQA where there exists an obligation to pay a fixed amount in lieu of 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 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.

#### 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:

<b>Asset Class</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
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 2022. 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 (2021: \$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 2022 and 30 June 2021.

## **2.2B: Fair Value Measurements**

	<b>Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period</b>	
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
<b>Non-financial assets</b>		
Leasehold improvements	<b>95</b>	214
Plant and equipment	<b>248</b>	279
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>	<b>343</b>	493
<b>Total fair value measurements of assets in the statement of financial position</b>	<b>343</b>	493

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

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>2.3: Other Payables</b>		
Salaries and wages	304	244
Superannuation	32	24
Contract liabilities from contracts with customers	574	403
Net GST payable	63	–
Accruals and other payables	67	40
<b>Total other payables</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>711</b>

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

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>2.4: Lease</b>		
Lease Liabilities	800	1,728
<b>Total leases</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1,728</b>

### Maturity analysis – contractual undiscounted cash flows

Within 1 year	804	1,752
<b>Total Leases</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>1,752</b>

### Leasing commitment – office accommodation

ACECQA has one lease for its office space. The lease commenced on 1 January 2016 for a period of 7 years and 3 months. At the end of lease, ACECQA is required to pay \$80k in lieu of a makegood clause.

The total cash outflow for the lease for the year ended 30 June 2022 was \$1,141k inclusive of GST (2021: \$1,084k)

### 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

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b><u>2.5: Provision for Make Good</u></b>		
As at 1 July	77	75
Additional provisions made	-	-
Unwinding of discount	2	2
<b>As at 30 June</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>

ACECQA is required to pay a fixed amount (\$80k) in lieu of a make good clause at the conclusion of the lease. ACECQA has made the provision to reflect the present value of this obligation.

## PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

### 3.1: Employment Provisions

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>3.1: Employment Provisions</b>		
Leave	<b>2,397</b>	2,380
On-costs	<b>160</b>	154
<b>Total employment provisions</b>	<b>2,557</b>	2,534

#### 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 2022 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

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>3.2A: Senior Executive Remuneration</b>		
Short-term employee benefits	<b>1,468,238</b>	1,432,926
Post-employment benefits	<b>175,006</b>	166,970
Other long-term benefits	<b>71,157</b>	38,411
<b>Total employment benefits</b>	<b>1,714,401</b>	1,638,307

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 2022 (2021: 6).

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.

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>3.2B: Board Member Remuneration</b>		
Total Board remuneration	<b>204,320</b>	206,684

Board remuneration is the payments received or due and receivable by ACECQA Board members in 2021–22.

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

There were changes to the composition of the ACECQA Board in 2021–22. The highest number of Board members in 2021–22 was 13 (2020–21: 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.

## MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

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

### 4.1: Contingent Assets and Liabilities

A bank guarantee was provided by ACECQA to the sublessor in relation to its leased premises. The value of the bank guarantee is \$289,124 (2021: \$289,124) and will be released upon termination of the sublease agreement.

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 2022 (2021: nil).

### 4.2: Financial Instruments

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b>4.2A: Categories of Financial Instruments</b>		
<b>Financial assets at amortised cost</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	10,702	7,541
Trade and other receivables	1,741	477
Term Deposits	9,000	6,000
Security deposit for bank guarantee	289	289
<b>Total financial assets at amortised cost</b>	<b>21,732</b>	14,307
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>21,732</b>	14,307

### Financial Liabilities

#### Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost:

Trade creditors	841	588
Other payables	67	40
<b>Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost:</b>	<b>908</b>	628
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>908</b>	628

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:

- a) financial assets measured at amortised cost
- b) financial assets at fair value through profit or loss
- c) 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:

- 1) the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- 2) 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'.

#### 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).

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000

#### **4.2B: Net Gains on Financial Assets**

##### **Financial assets at amortised cost**

Interest revenue	55	93
<b>Net gains on financial assets at amortised cost</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>93</b>

## OTHER INFORMATION

### 5.1: Current/non-current distinction for Assets and Liabilities

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
<b><u>Assets expected to be recovered in:</u></b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	10,702	7,541
Trade and other receivables	1,754	887
Other investments	9,289	6,000
Other current asset – inventory	3	4
Prepayments	344	434
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>22,092</b>	<b>14,866</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Other investments	–	289
Prepayments	12	27
Buildings – Right of Use	729	1,701
Leasehold improvements	95	214
Plant and equipment	248	279
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>2,510</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>23,176</b>	<b>17,376</b>
<b><u>Liabilities expected to be settled in:</u></b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Suppliers – trade creditors and accruals	841	588
Other payables	1,040	711
Employment provisions	1,268	1,166
Lease	800	928
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>3,949</b>	<b>3,393</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Employment provisions	1,289	1,368
Lease	–	800
Other provisions	79	77
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>2,245</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>5,317</b>	<b>5,638</b>

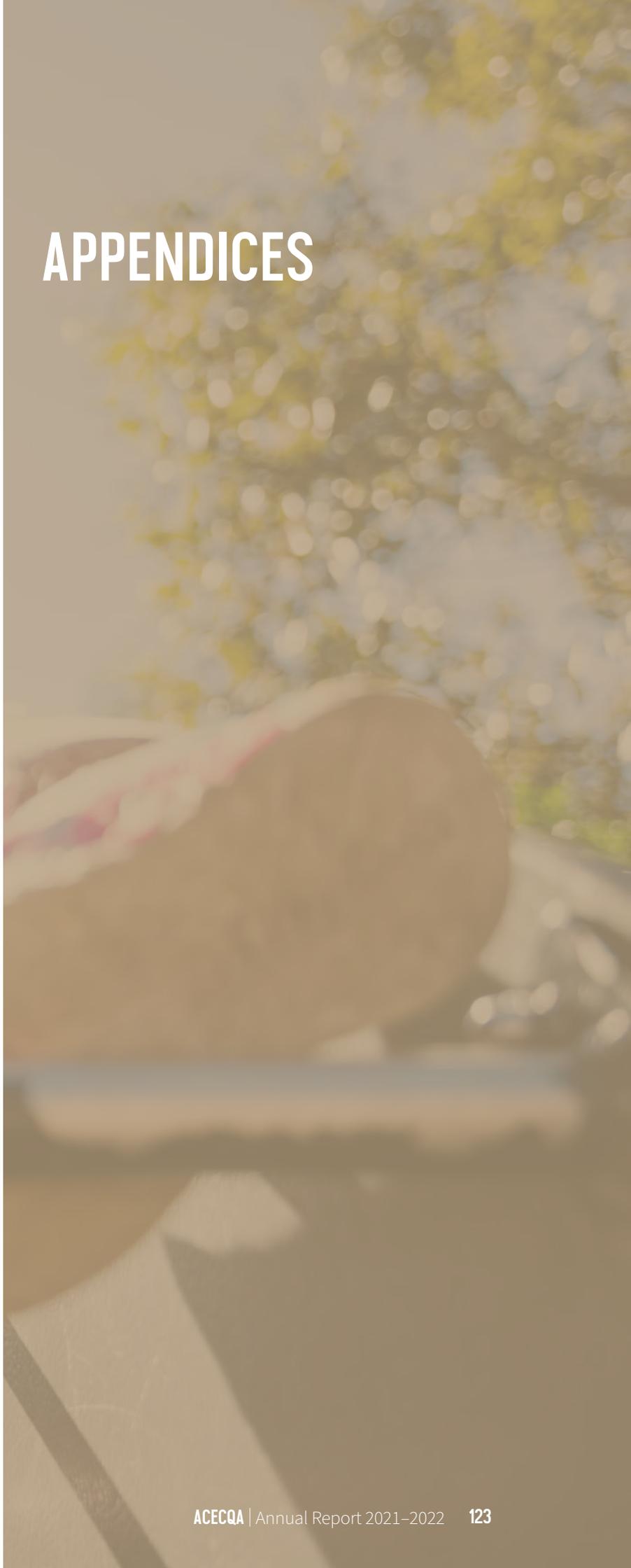
## END OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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# APPENDICES





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](mailto: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](mailto: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

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- 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.

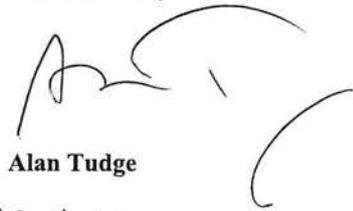
The Hon Alan Tudge MP

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

**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](mailto:alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au)

## APPENDIX B

### CHAIR'S RESPONSE TO LETTER OF EXPECTATION 2021–2023



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority

ABN 59 372 786 746

Level 6, 175 Liverpool Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box A292  
Sydney NSW 1235

p | 02 8240 4200 f | 02 8240 4206  
www.acecqa.gov.au

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<sup>5</sup>

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.

<sup>5</sup> Ms A Whitehead's term started on 1 January 2022.

## 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.

## MR SELWYN BUTTON



Selwyn Button is a Gungarri 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.

## MR MARK CAMPLING<sup>6</sup>



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.

<sup>6</sup> Mr M Campling's term started 1 January 2022.

## 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 HAMOND<sup>7</sup>



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.

<sup>7</sup> Ms K Hamond's term started 1 January 2022.

## 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 in Australia; 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 Laws 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. She also chairs the F&F Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, is a member of the Infrastructure NSW Audit & Risk Committee, the Transport for 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, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Australian Treasury, the Portfolio Advisory Council of Services Australia and the Strategy Advisory Committee of the Department of Home Affairs, 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. 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.

## PROFESSOR JOCE NUTTALL



Joce Nuttall is a Professor at Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, where she leads the Teacher Education, Quality, and Professional Practice Research Concentration in the

Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education. Joce has more than 35 years’ experience as a leader and educator in primary and early childhood settings (principally early childhood education and care) and as a teacher educator and researcher.

Joce’s research focuses on the initial and continuing education of educators and educational leaders, and the development of strategies for system-level workforce capacity-building in early childhood education and care. Joce also has significant expertise in the construction and implementation of early childhood curriculum policy and the design of teacher education programs.

In 2015, Joce was Chair of the Advisory Group on Early Learning, which reviewed the implementation of New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum framework, Te Whāriki, on behalf of the New Zealand Government. Joce is a fellow of the Australian Teacher Education Association and is a previous Governor-General’s appointee to the Board of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

## 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 National Quality Framework 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.

## 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.

### *Former ACECQA Board members whose term expired on 31 December 2021*

- Ms Judy Hebblethwaite (Chair)
- Professor Emeritus Ann Farrell (Deputy Chair)

## APPENDIX D

### BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

#### *Meetings of the ACECQA Board 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022*

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 3/2021	9–10 September 2021	Maree Bredhauer	Videoconference
Meeting 4/2021	9–10 December 2021	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 1/2022	18 March 2022	Joce Nuttall	Videoconference
Meeting 2/2022	16–17 June 2022	Anne Glover Sandra Lambert	Sydney

## APPENDIX E

### BOARD SUB COMMITTEES AND ATTENDANCE

#### *Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee*

##### MEMBERSHIP

Selwyn Button – Chair  
 Maree Bredhauer  
 Marc de Rosnay  
 Akiko Jackson  
 Jenni Perkins  
 David Black – External member

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 3/2021	19 August 2021	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 4/2021	1 October 2021	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 5/2021	18 November 2021	Marc de Rosnay	Videoconference
Meeting 1/2022	25 February 2022	Nil	Videoconference
Meeting 2/2022	27 May 2022	Maree Bredhauer David Black	Videoconference

#### *Performance and Remuneration Sub Committee*

##### MEMBERSHIP

Annette Whitehead – Chair (from 18 March 2022)  
 Judy Hebblethwaite – Chair (until 31 December 2021)  
 Mark Campling (from 18 March 2022)  
 Ann Farrell (until 31 December 2021)  
 Michael White

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 2/2021	25 November 2021	Nil	Videoconference

### *Qualifications Sub Committee<sup>8</sup>*

#### MEMBERSHIP

Joce Nuttall – Chair  
Ann Farrell (until 31 December 2021)  
Anne Glover  
Kate Hamond (from 18 March 2022)  
Sandra Lambert

### *Enterprise Agreement Sub Committee*

#### MEMBERSHIP

Annette Whitehead – Chair (from 18 March 2022)  
Selwyn Button (from 18 March 2022)  
Sandra Lambert (from 18 March 2022)

MEETING	DATE	APOLOGIES	LOCATION
Meeting 1/2022	9 June 2022	Nil	Videoconference

8 Qualifications Sub Committee did not have cause to meet in 2021–22.

## APPENDIX F

### ACECQA'S MAJOR SPEAKING AND SECTOR ENGAGEMENTS

ACECQA ENGAGEMENT NAME	LOCATION	DATE
Directors' & Coordinators' Professional Learning Day	Virtual	26 July 2021
Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Tasmania/B4 Early Years Coalition Forum	Bellerive, Tas	28 August 2021
ECA National Conference	Virtual	8 September 2021
Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) member meeting	Virtual	19 October 2021
The philosophy and educational leadership, Queensland Department of Education	Virtual	25 October 2021
Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) National Advisory Council Meeting	Virtual	2 November 2021
Educational Leadership Professional Program – Morning tea celebration, Queensland Department of Education	Virtual	16 November 2021
Narragunnawali Awards 2021	Virtual	17 November 2021
Targeting Quality Strategy (TQS) Quality Facilitator Forum by Queensland Department of Education	Virtual	24 November 2021
Narragunnawali Review and Future Directions – Stakeholder Interview	Virtual	29 November 2021
Queensland Educational Leader Professional Training Program. Introduction Day: The Educational Leader Role	Virtual	8 and 9 March 2022
Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) Conference	Surfers Paradise, Qld	18 March 2022
Early Care and Education SIG @ISBNPA & WHO Joint Webinar	Virtual	24 March 2022
Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment ECEC Reference Group Meeting	Virtual	24 March 2022
Inclusion Support Qld: Let's talk inclusion podcast	Virtual	7 April 2022
ACECQA Board Briefing to KU Children's Services	Virtual	26 April 2022
North Qld Region Education and Care – Department of Education – Exceeding the National Quality Standard: Quality Area 1	Virtual	11 May 2022
Roadshow Session. Get Involved: Quality Support Program	Virtual	16 May 2022
Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) Qld National Conference – Approved Providers Panel	Gold Coast, Qld	3 June 2022

ACECQA ENGAGEMENT NAME	LOCATION	DATE
North Qld Region Education and Care – Department of Education – Exceeding the National Quality Standard: Quality Area 1	Virtual	14 June 2022
Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) Coffee Conversations on Quality Area 7 – Governance & Leadership	Virtual	29 June 2022

## APPENDIX G

### GLOSSARY

ACECQA	The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
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
BBF	Budget Based Funded services
CCCFR	Community Child Care Fund Restricted services
CoP	<i>communities of practice</i>
CRIS	Consultation Regulation Impact Statement
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
DESE	Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
DRIS	Decision Regulation Impact Statement
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECPG	Early Childhood Policy Group
ECS	Education and Care Services
EMM	Education Ministers Meeting
FAL	Family Assistance Law
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full-time equivalent
JuA	Joined up Approvals project
LAN	Lead Assessor Network
LIN	Lead Investigators Network
LMS	Learning Management System
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

OEIWG	Operational and Emerging Issues Working Group
OSHC	Outside School Hours Care
PSF	Priority Support Facilitator
PSP	Priority Support Program
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QSP	Quality Support Program
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RIG	Review Implementation Group
RPC	Regulatory Practice Committee
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SRQC	Supporting Regulatory Quality and Consistency
WHS	Work Health and Safety

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