



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority



# NQF Snapshot Q2 2025

August 2025

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



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# Overview

NQF Snapshot Q2 2025 is ACECQA's 50<sup>th</sup> national report on children's education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

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

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

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

The data presented in this Snapshot was taken from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) at 00.30 on 1 July 2025.

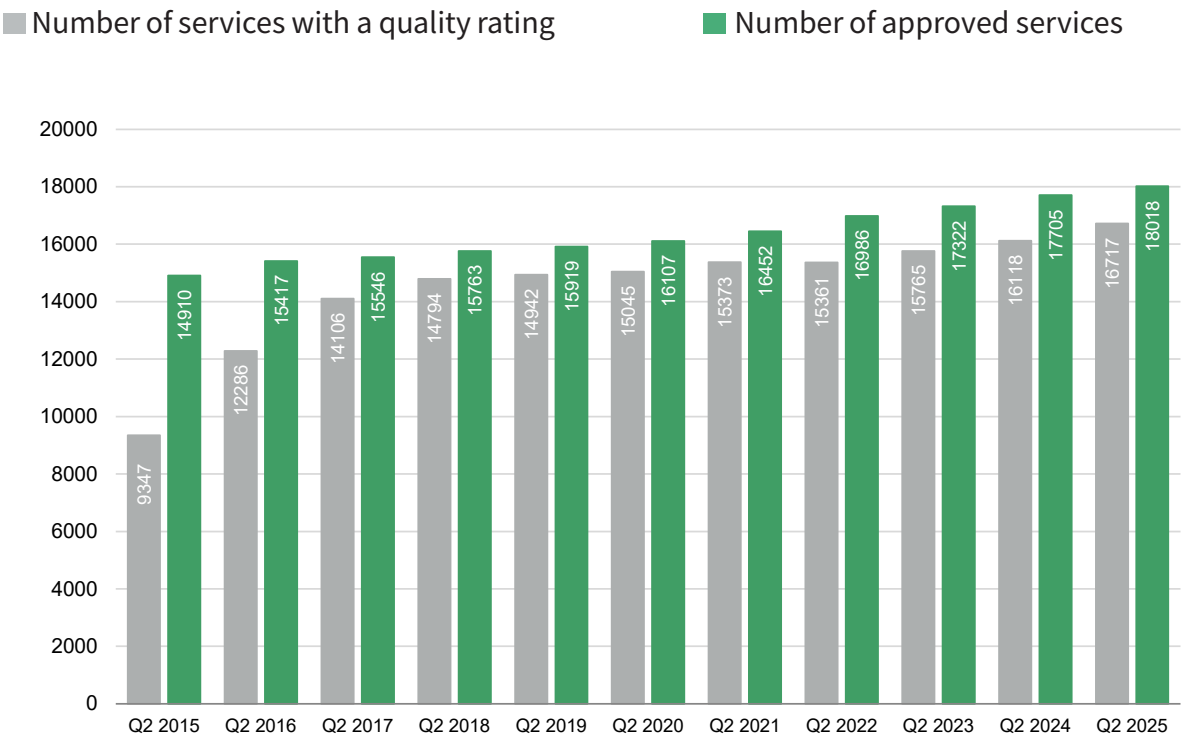
Due to rounding, individual percentages in the tables and figures may not add up to 100%.



# Snapshot highlights

18,018	children's education and care services approved to operate under the NQF
16,717 (93%)	services with a quality rating
15,215 (91%)	services with a quality rating are Meeting NQS or above
7,215	providers approved to operate
5,672 (79%)	providers approved to operate only one service
26	services rated Excellent by ACECQA <sup>1</sup>
24,720	quality rating reassessments completed
69%	of services rated Working Towards NQS improved their overall quality rating at reassessment

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

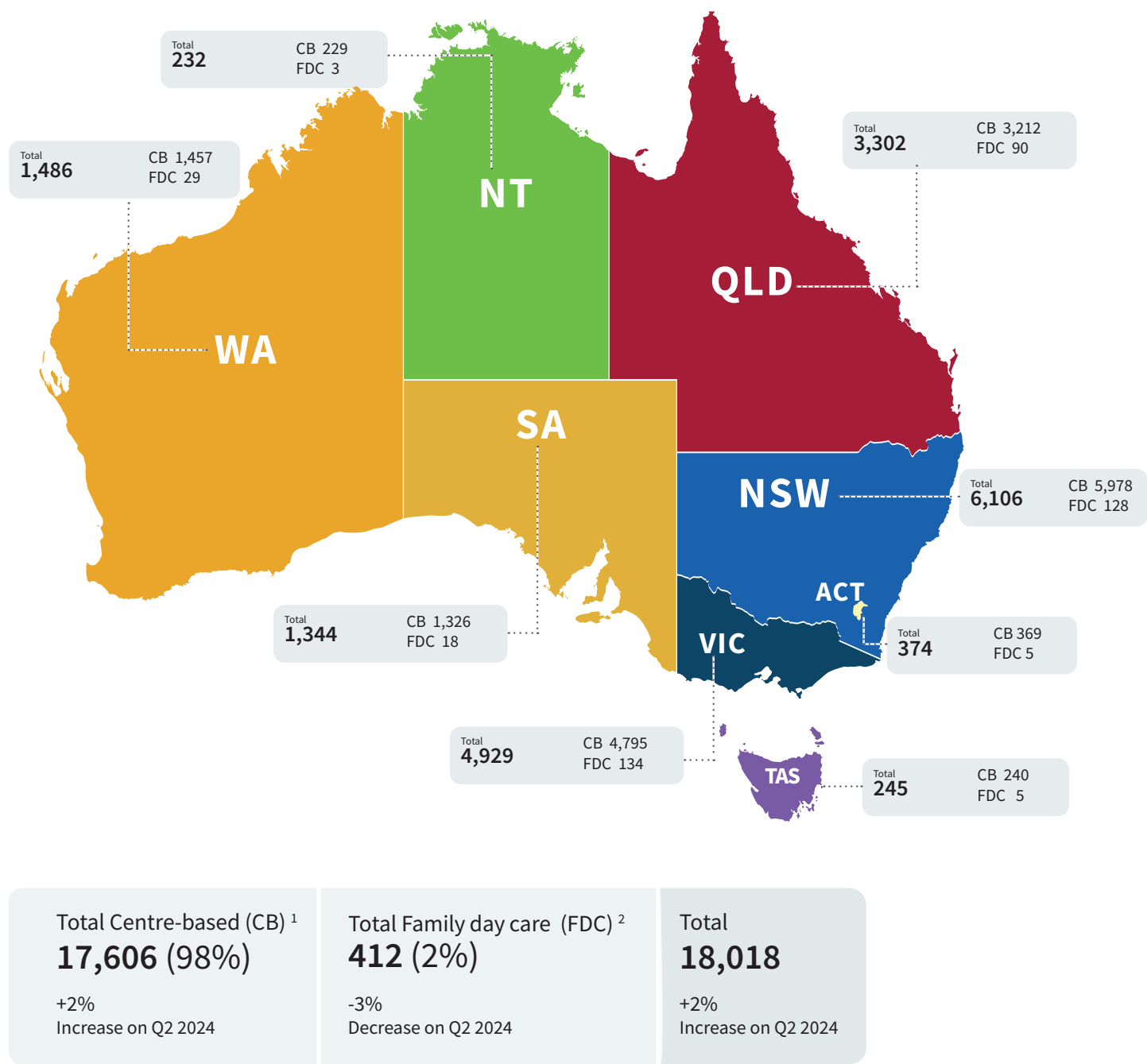


<sup>1</sup> The Excellent rating is awarded for a period of five years or until the service is reassessed with a new rating less than Exceeding in all seven quality areas, in which case the Excellent rating would be revoked. Unless a reapplication for the Excellent rating is received and assessed before the rating expires, a service's rating will revert back to Exceeding NQS after this five year period. The Snapshot includes the current number of Excellent rated services.



# Profile of the sector

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



<sup>1</sup> A centre-based service is an education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool and outside school hours care services that are delivered at a centre. It does not include Tasmanian preschools/kindergartens and most preschools/kindergartens in Western Australia that are outside the scope of the NQF, as well as other services that aren't regulated under the National Law.

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



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

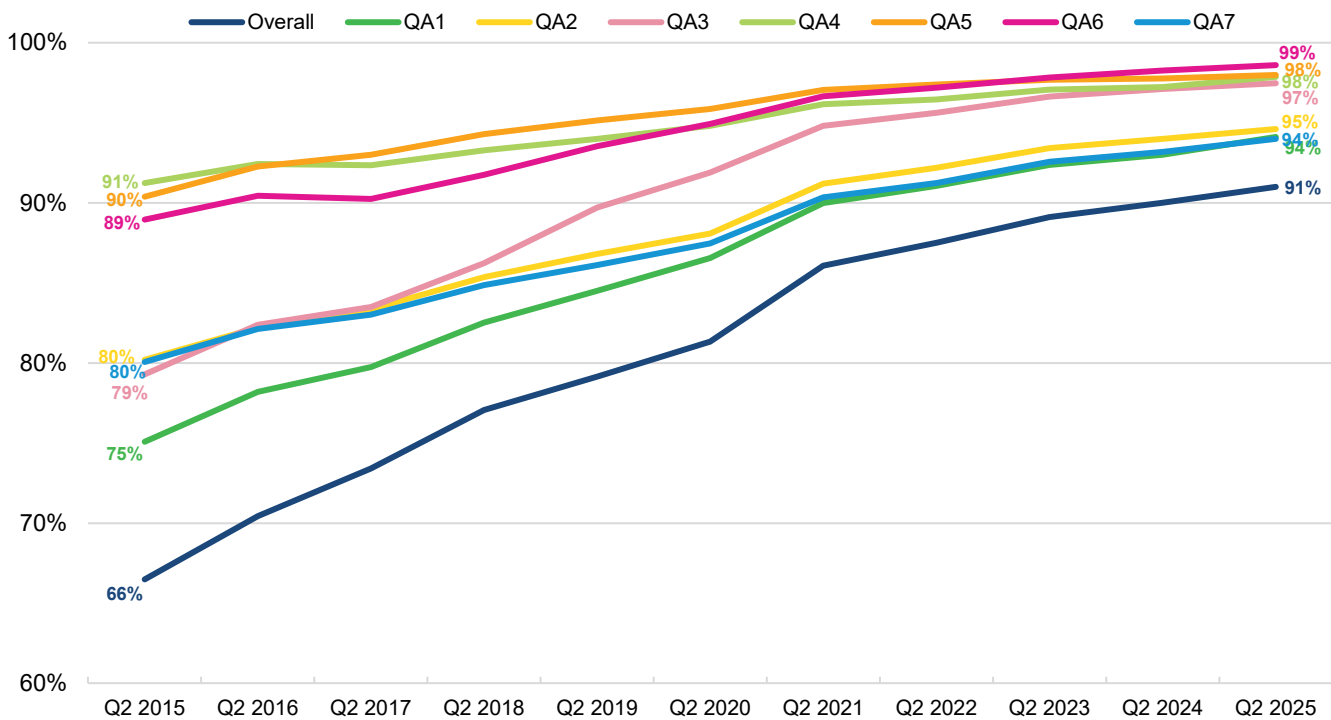


Figure 4: Proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS or above by overall rating and quality area

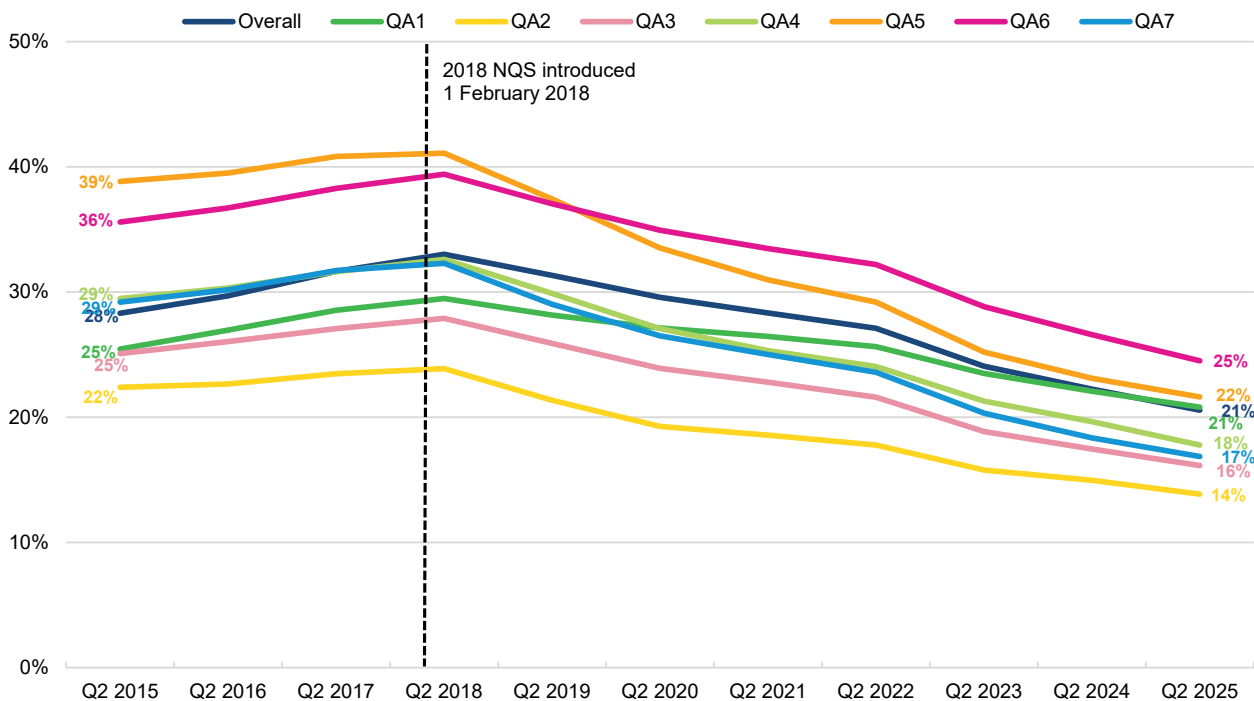




Figure 5: Proportion of services by service type and jurisdiction <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

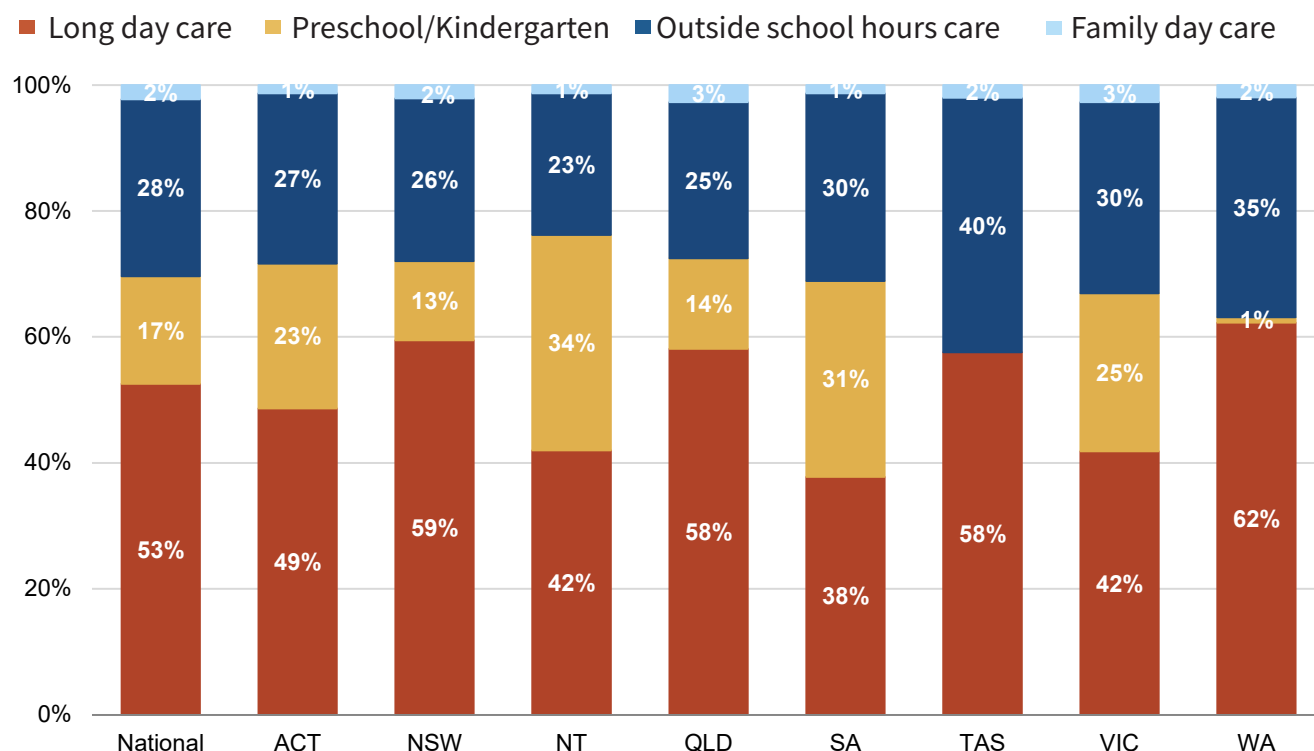


Table 1: Number of services by service type and jurisdiction

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/ Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	5	182	86	101	0	374
NSW	128	3,631	769	1,578	0	6,106
NT	3	97	79	52	1	232
QLD	90	1,919	475	818	0	3,302
SA	18	508	418	400	0	1,344
TAS	5	141	0	99	0	245
VIC	134	2,063	1,237	1,495	0	4,929
WA	29	924	13	518	2	1,486
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>9,465</b>	<b>3,077</b>	<b>5,061</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18,018</b>

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

2 In the case of centre-based services, providers are required to notify changes to the ages of children being educated or cared for by the service and the nature of care being offered by the service, so service type information in the NQA ITS should be current.

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

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

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



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

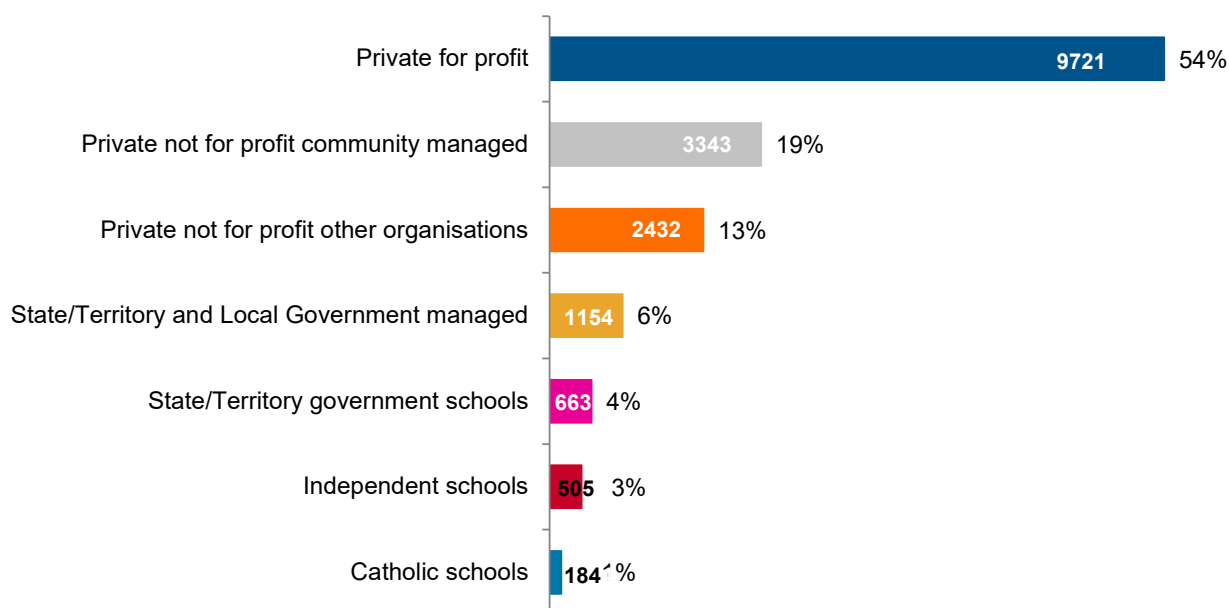


Figure 7 shows that 79% of approved providers operate a single service while 1% of approved providers operate 25 or more services.

**Figure 7: Proportion of approved providers by size**

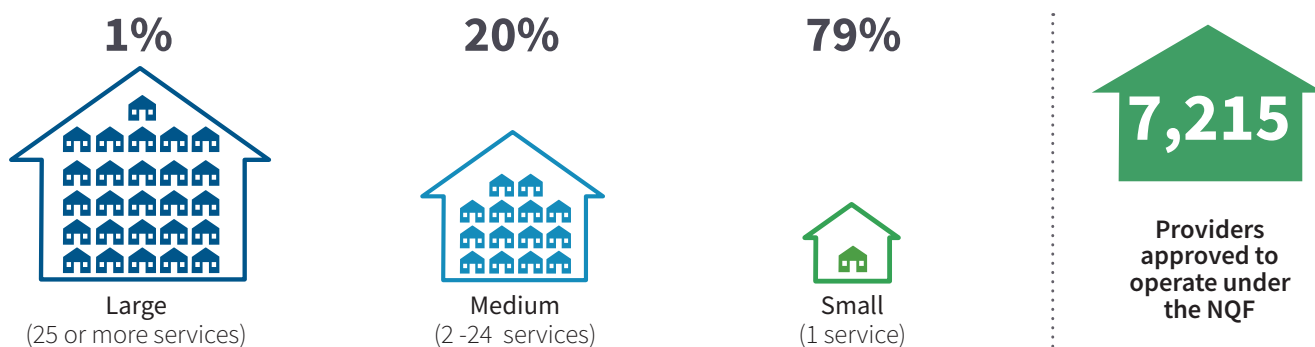
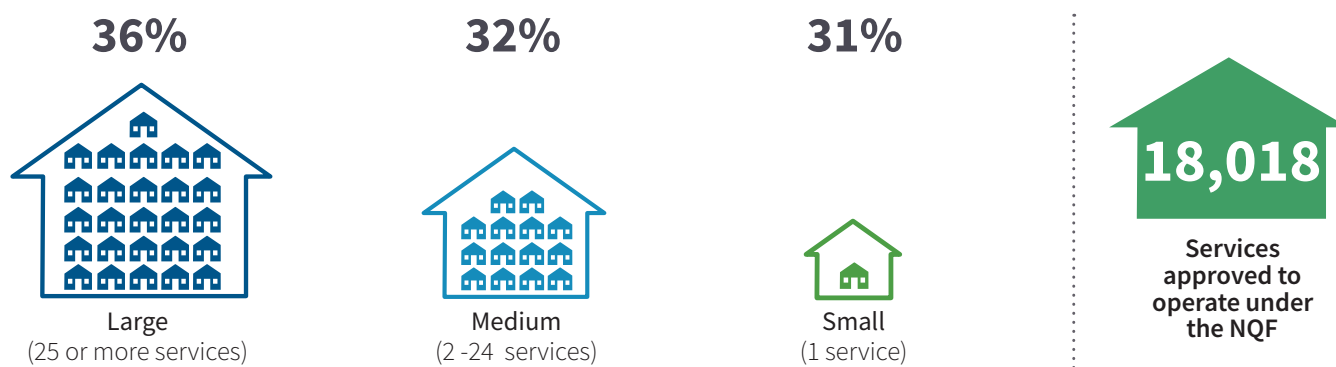


Figure 8 shows that 31% of approved services are operated by small approved providers while 36% of approved services are operated by large approved providers.

**Figure 8: Proportion of approved services by provider size**



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

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

<sup>3</sup> 16 services categorised as 'Not stated/Other' excluded for graphical purposes.

# Progress of assessment and rating

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

**Table 2: Quality ratings by jurisdiction**

	Number of services	Proportion of all services	Number of services with a quality rating	Proportion of services with a quality rating
ACT	374	2%	350	94%
NSW	6,106	34%	5,748	94%
NT	232	1%	214	92%
QLD	3,302	18%	3,128	95%
SA	1,344	7%	1,264	94%
TAS	245	1%	221	90%
VIC	4,929	27%	4,457	90%
WA	1,486	8%	1,335	90%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,018</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,717</b>	<b>93%</b>

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

	Family day care	Long day care	Preschool/ Kindergarten	Outside school hours care	Other	Total
ACT	5	167	86	92	0	350
NSW	112	3,442	757	1,437	0	5,748
NT	3	91	71	48	1	214
QLD	72	1,824	455	777	0	3,128
SA	13	466	408	377	0	1,264
TAS	5	136	0	80	0	221
VIC	109	1,858	1,167	1,323	0	4,457
WA	29	819	13	472	2	1,335
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>8,803</b>	<b>2,957</b>	<b>4,606</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16,717</b>

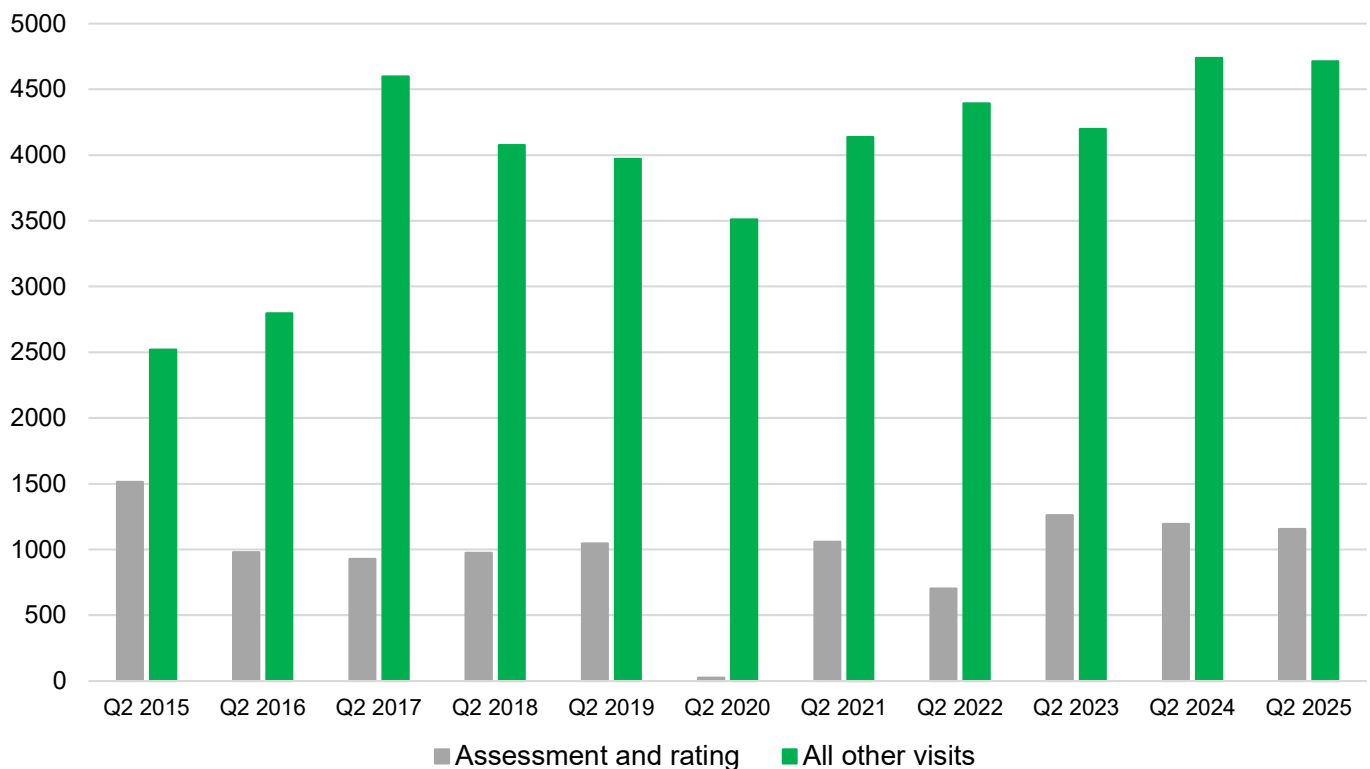
# Service visits

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

State and territory regulatory authorities typically undertake almost four times as many other types of visit than assessment and rating visits each quarter, emphasising that the majority of regulatory work occurs outside of quality assessment and rating.

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

Detailed figures available in ACECQA's interactive [NQF Online Snapshot](#).





# Draft and final reports, and reviews

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

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

More than 95% of all overall quality ratings remain unchanged between the draft and final assessment and rating reports.

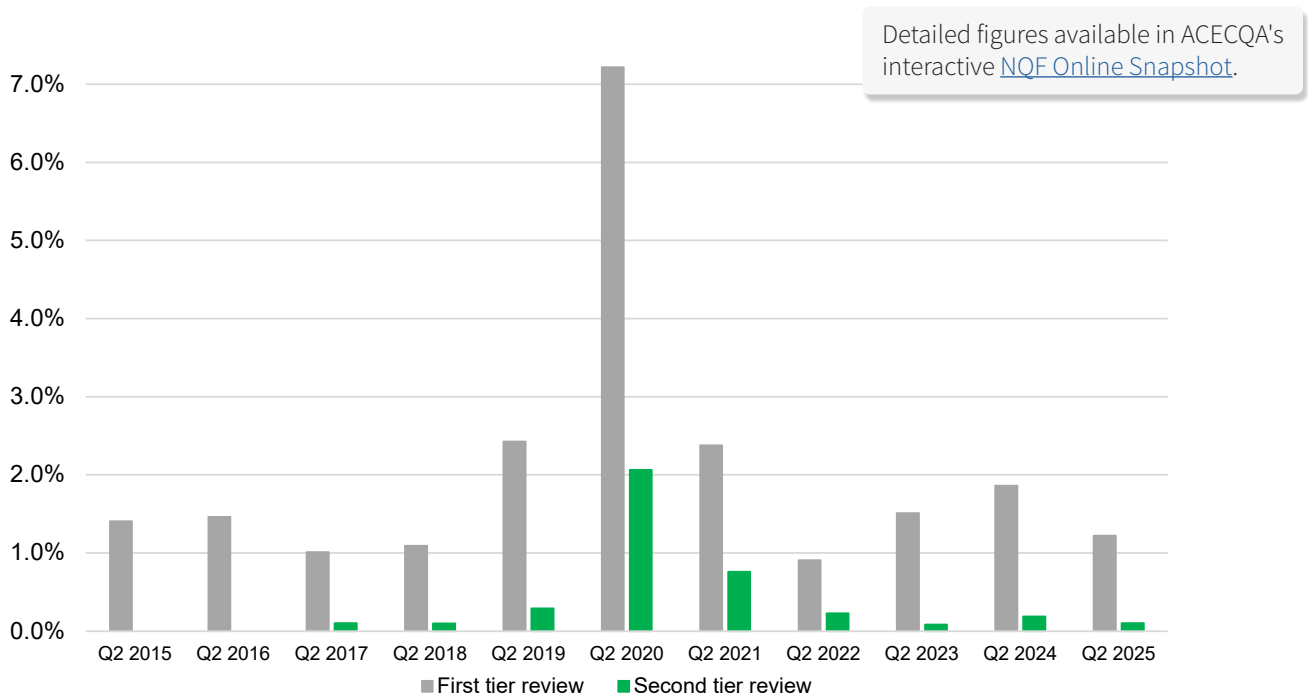
**Table 4: Proportion of overall quality ratings that change between the draft and final assessment and rating report**

Rating level	Change in rating	%
Higher	770	4.6%
Unchanged	15,916	95.4%
Lower	5	0.0%
Total	16,691	100%

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

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

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



# Quality improvement

Table 5 presents a service's previous overall rating alongside its reassessed overall rating. For example, 4,807 services previously rated Working Towards NQS improved their rating to Meeting NQS after reassessment. While 2,500 services previously rated Working Towards NQS received the same rating again after reassessment.

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

		Rating after reassessment				Total
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	22	90	18	0	130
	Working Towards NQS	73	2,500	4,807	825	8,205
	Meeting NQS	15	1,446	7,661	1,386	10,508
	Exceeding NQS	2	489	2,562	2,824	5,877
	Total	112	4,525	15,048	5,035	24,720

		Rating after reassessment				Improvement rate
		Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	
Rating before reassessment	Significant Improvement Required	17%	69%	14%	0%	83%
	Working Towards NQS	1%	30%	59%	10%	69%
	Meeting NQS	0%	14%	73%	13%	13%
	Exceeding NQS	0%	8%	44%	48%	-

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

# Overall quality ratings

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





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

Table 6: Overall quality ratings by jurisdiction

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total
ACT	0	44 13%	153 44%	151 43%	2	350
NSW	5	421 7%	4,167 72%	1,145 20%	10	5,748
NT	2	46 21%	148 69%	18 8%	0	214
QLD	1	340 11%	2,280 73%	501 16%	6	3,128
SA	0	230 18%	677 54%	357 28%	0	1,264
TAS	0	39 18%	135 61%	47 21%	0	221
VIC	3	174 4%	3,136 70%	1,136 25%	8	4,457
WA	0	197 15%	1,079 81%	59 4%	0	1,335
TOTAL	11	1,491 9%	11,775 70%	3,414 20%	26	16,717



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

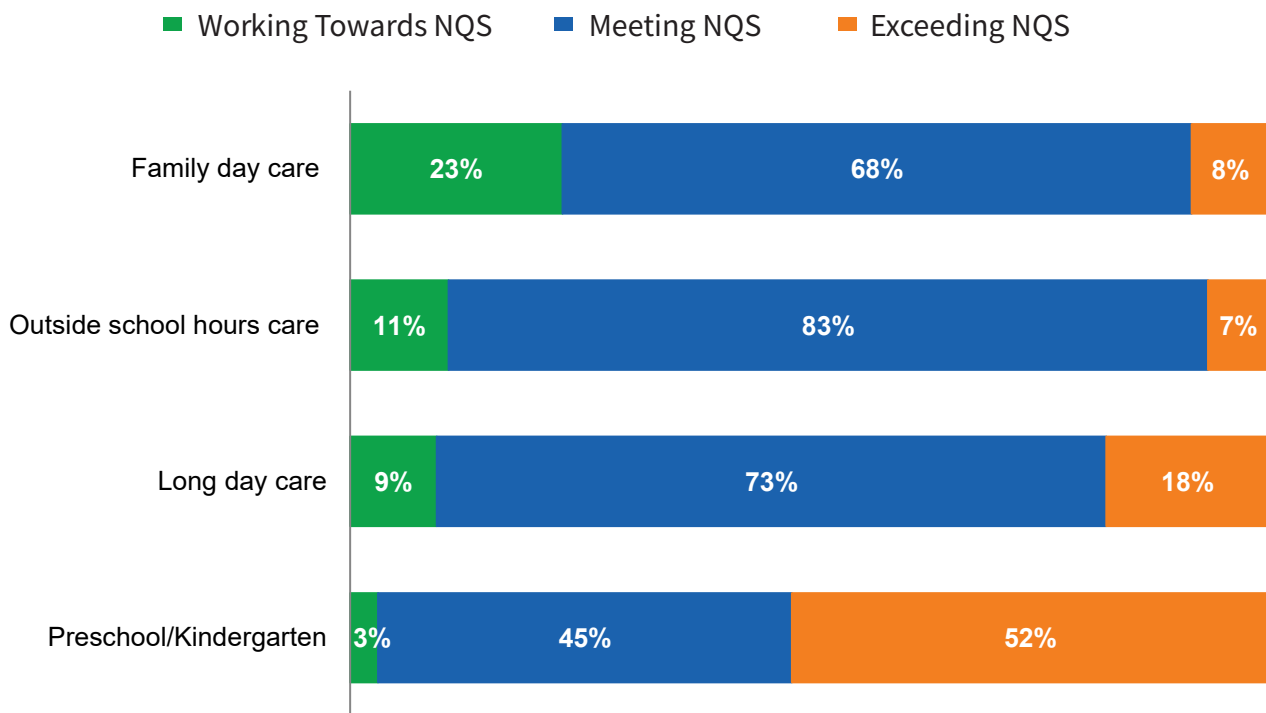
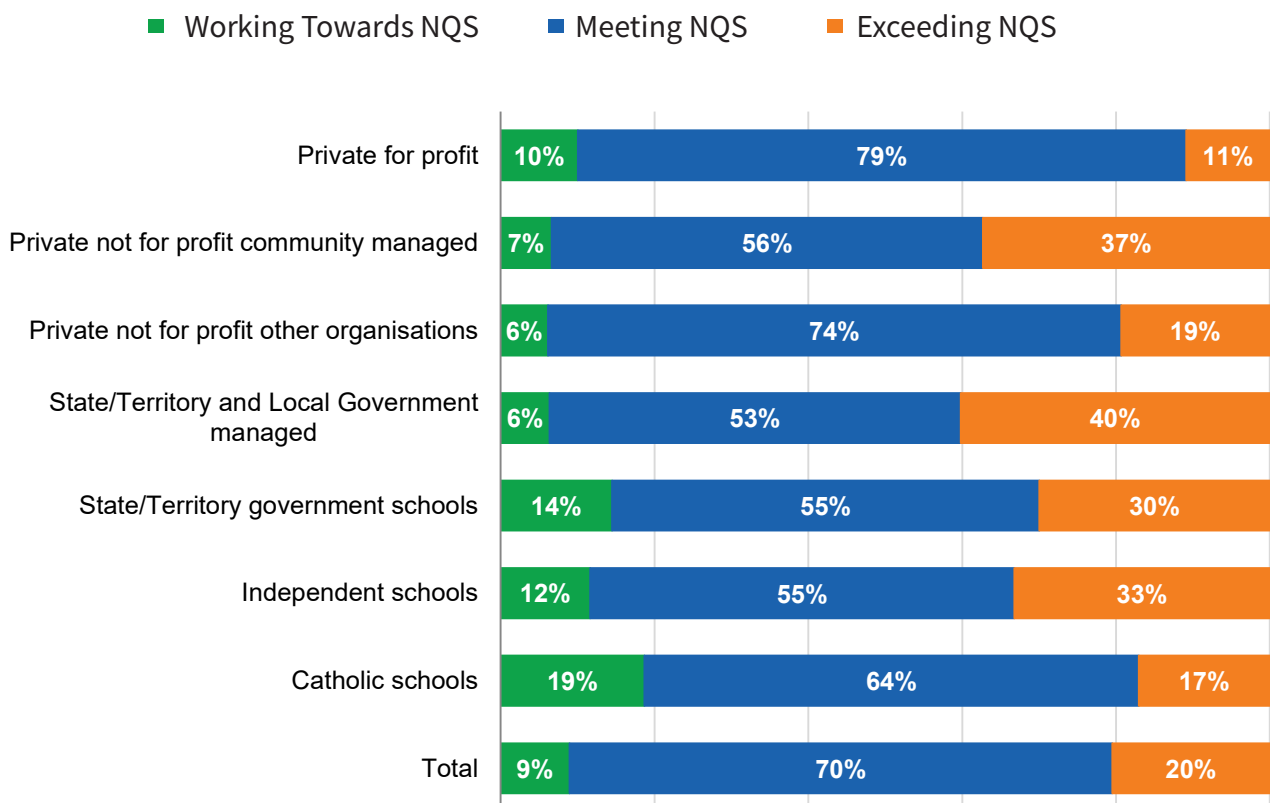


Figure 12 shows the variation in spread of quality ratings between provider management types.

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

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



<sup>1</sup> 15 providers categorised as 'Not stated/Other' excluded for graphical purposes.

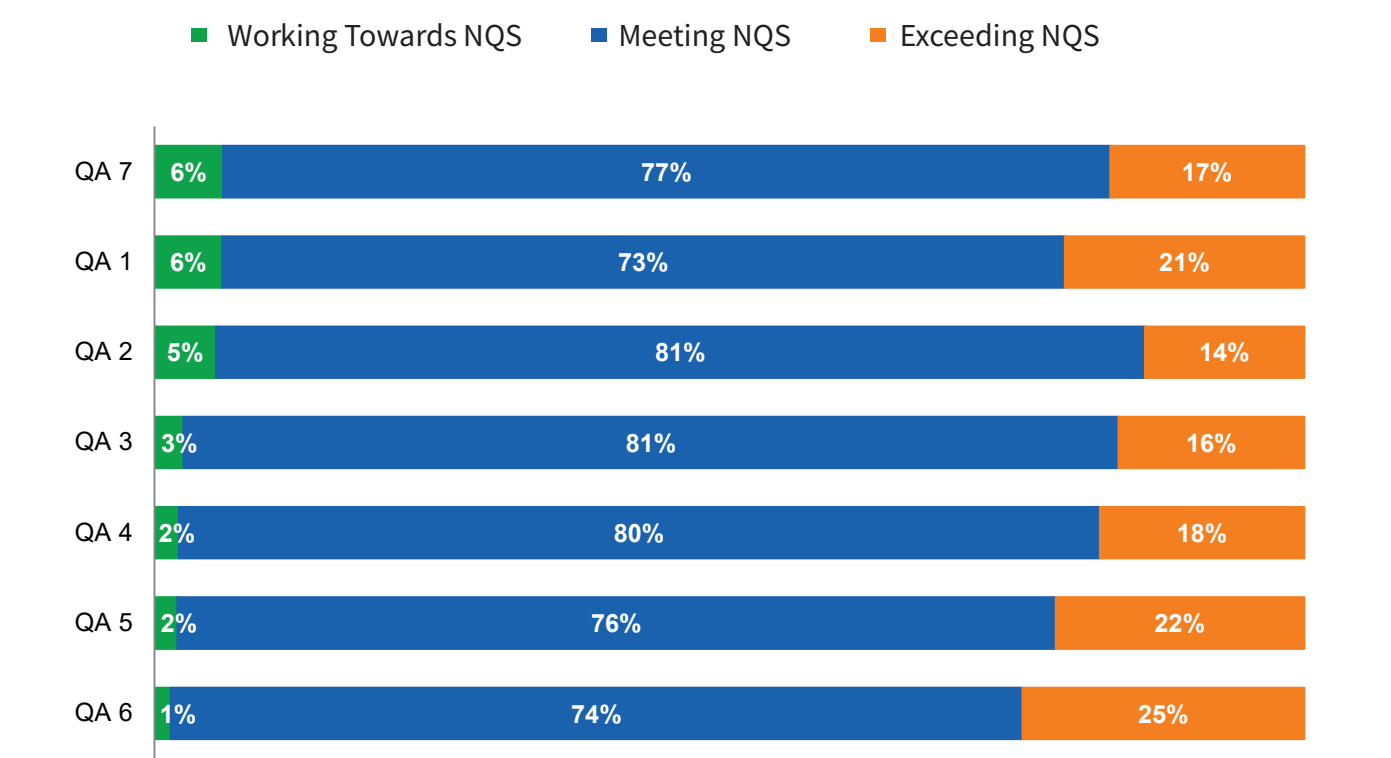
# Quality area ratings

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

Table 7: Quality area ratings

	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS
Quality Area 7 - Governance and leadership	7	994	12,895	2,821
Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice	3	981	12,254	3,479
Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety	8	891	13,501	2,317
Quality Area 3 - Physical environment	3	420	13,593	2,701
Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements	3	351	13,390	2,973
Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children	2	332	12,768	3,615
Quality Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	0	233	12,388	4,096

Figure 13: Quality area ratings

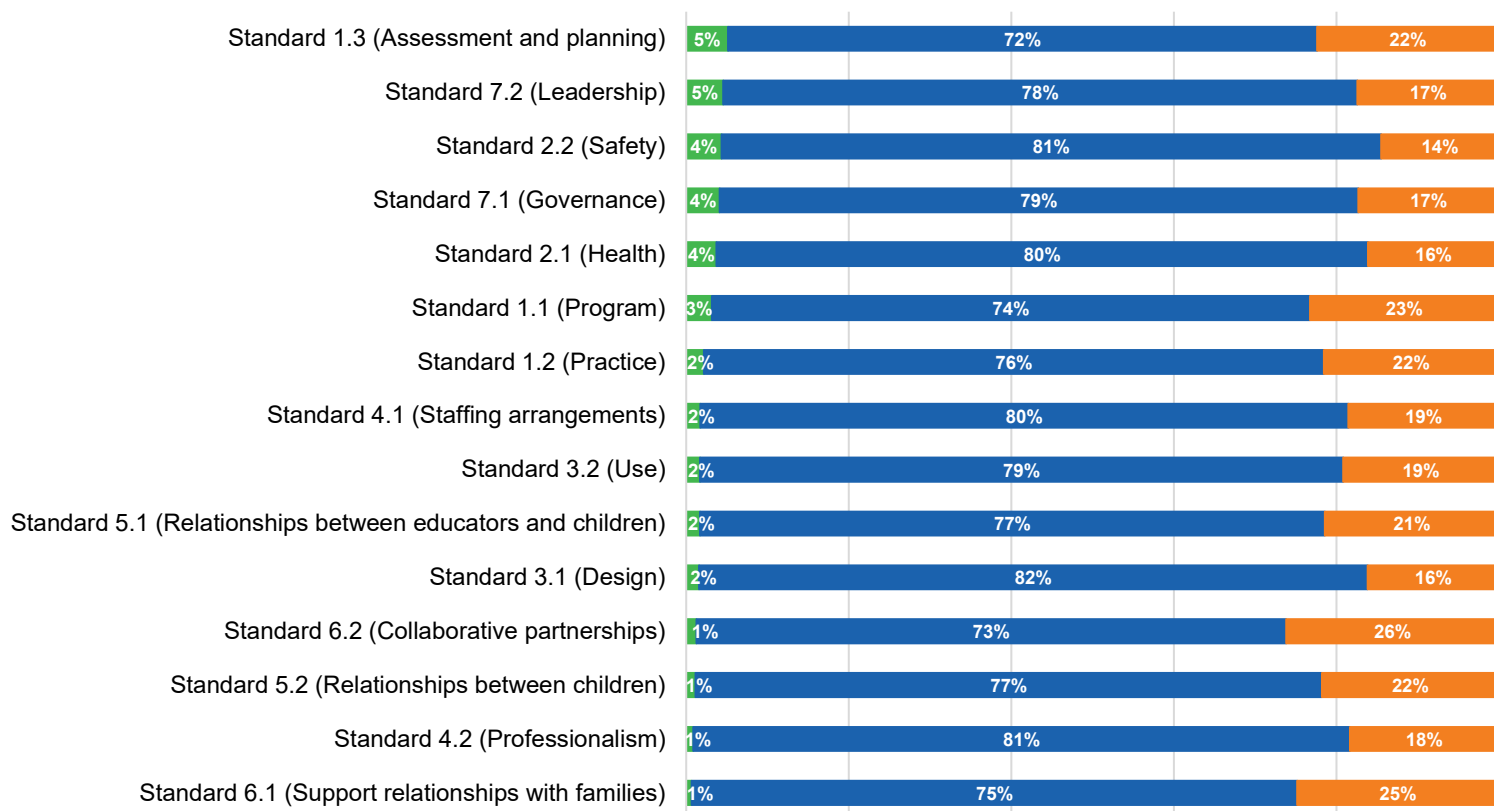


# Standard level ratings

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

Figure 14: Standard level ratings

■ Working Towards NQS ■ Meeting NQS ■ Exceeding NQS





# Element level results

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

**Table 8: Element level results**

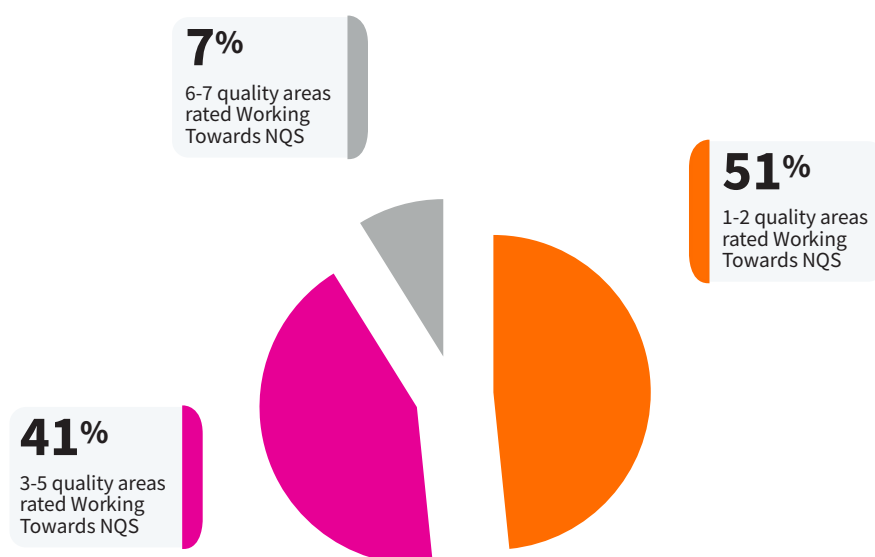
Quality element	% Not Met
1.3.2 (Critical reflection)	4.4%
1.3.1 (Assessment and planning cycle)	4.2%
7.1.2 (Management systems)	3.7%
2.2.1 (Supervision)	3.4%
2.1.2 (Health practices and procedures)	3.2%
7.2.2 (Educational leadership)	3.1%
7.2.3 (Development of professionals)	2.6%
1.1.3 (Program learning opportunities)	2.2%
2.2.2 (Incident and emergency management)	2.0%
7.2.1 (Continuous improvement)	1.7%
4.1.1 (Organisation of educators)	1.6%
1.1.1 (Approved learning framework)	1.6%
3.1.2 (Upkeep)	1.4%
5.1.2 (Dignity and rights of the child)	1.3%
1.2.3 (Child directed learning)	1.3%
1.1.2 (Child-centred)	1.3%
1.2.2 (Responsive teaching and scaffolding)	1.2%
1.3.3 (Information for families)	1.2%
3.2.3 (Environmentally responsible)	1.1%
5.2.2 (Self-regulation)	1.1%

Quality element	% Not Met
1.2.1 (Intentional teaching)	1.1%
7.1.3 (Roles and responsibilities)	1.1%
7.1.1 (Service philosophy and purpose)	1.1%
5.1.1 (Positive educator to child interactions)	1.0%
2.1.1 (Wellbeing and comfort)	1.0%
6.2.3 (Community engagement)	0.9%
2.1.3 (Healthy lifestyle)	0.8%
3.2.2 (Resources support play-based learning)	0.8%
2.2.3 (Child protection)	0.7%
4.2.2 (Professional standards)	0.7%
3.2.1 (Inclusive environment)	0.7%
6.2.2 (Access and participation)	0.7%
3.1.1 (Fit for purpose)	0.5%
4.2.1 (Professional collaboration)	0.5%
6.1.3 (Families are supported)	0.4%
6.1.2 (Parent views are respected)	0.4%
6.2.1 (Transitions)	0.3%
6.1.1 (Engagement with the service)	0.3%
4.1.2 (Continuity of staff)	0.3%
5.2.1 (Collaborative learning)	0.3%

## Services rated Working Towards NQS

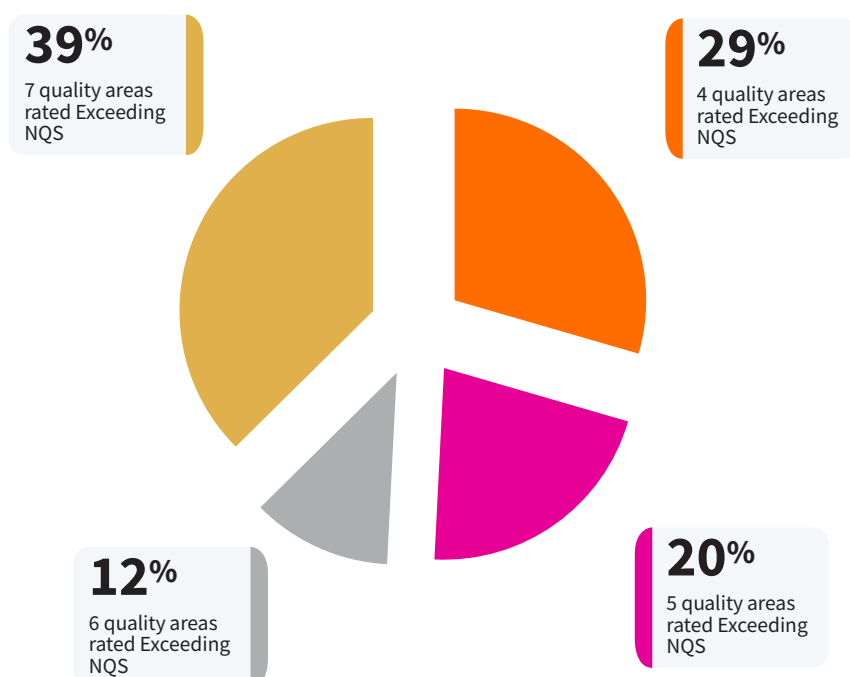
A service receives an overall rating of Working Towards NQS if any of the seven quality areas are rated Working Towards NQS. A quality area is rated Working Towards NQS if any of the standards within that quality area are rated Working Towards NQS.

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



## Services rated Exceeding NQS

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



# Australian Capital Territory summary

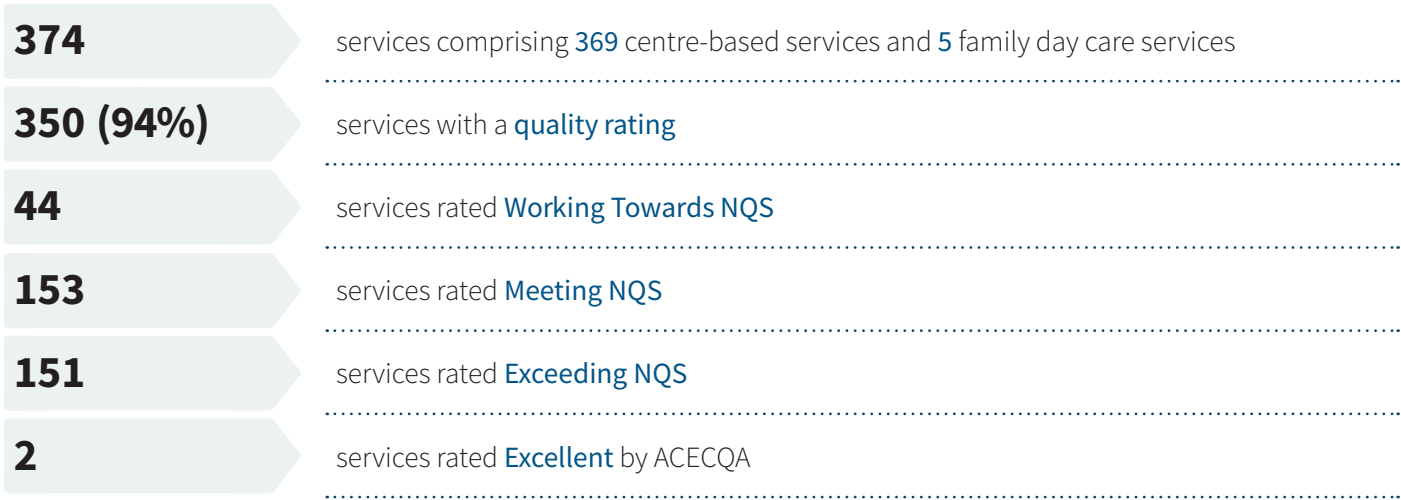
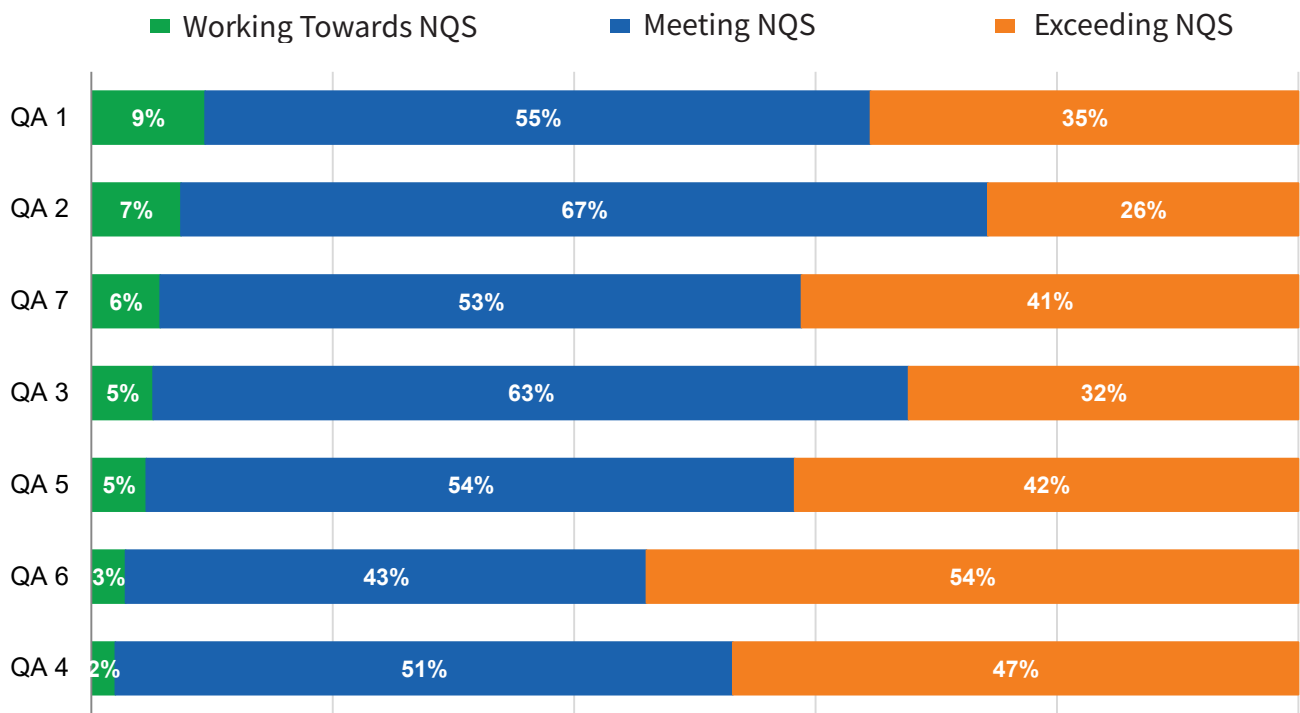


Figure 17 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Figure 17: Quality area ratings



### Contact details

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



# New South Wales summary

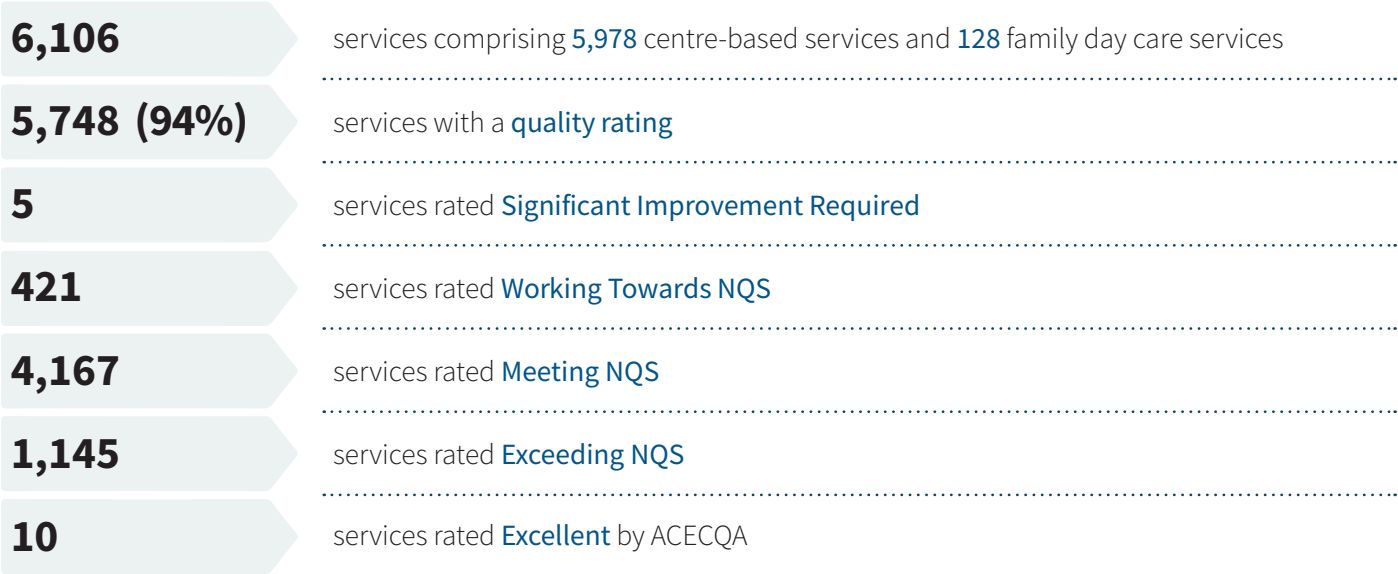
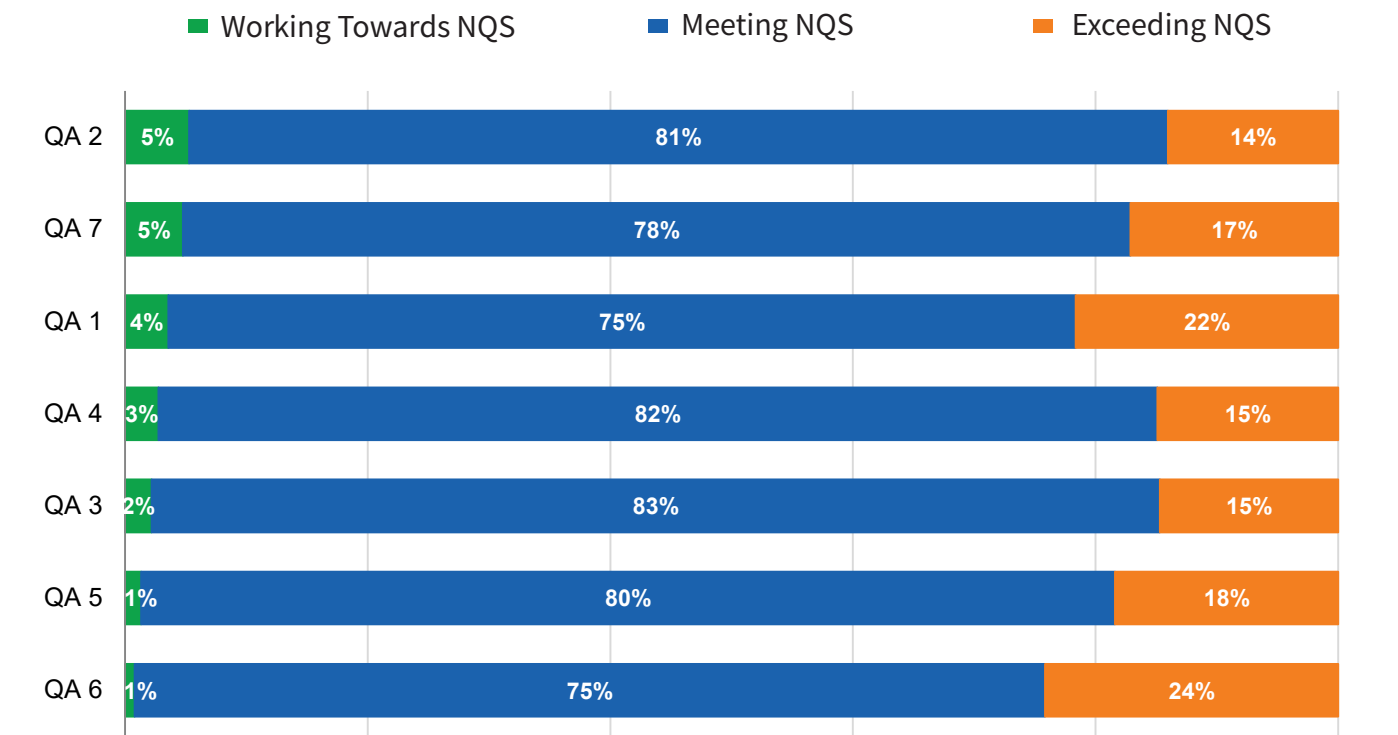


Figure 18 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Figure 18: Quality area ratings



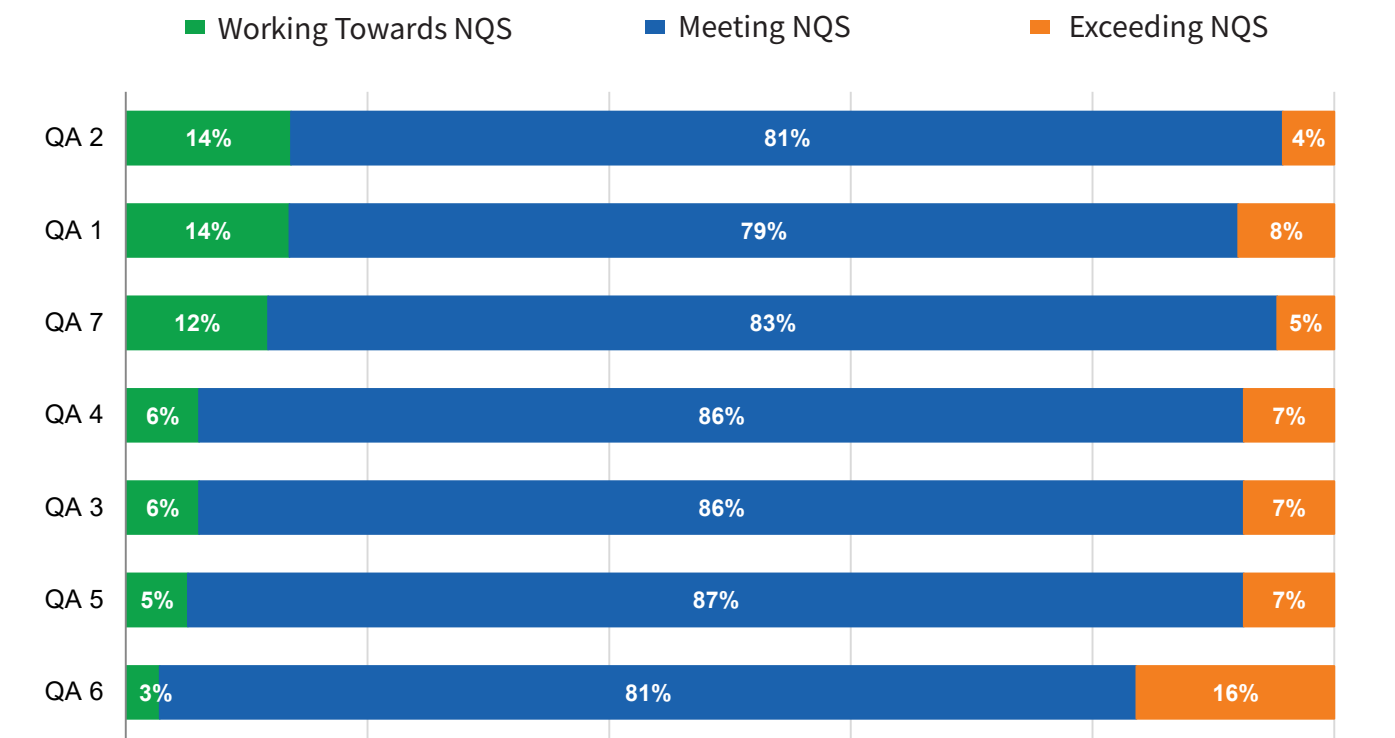
**Contact details**  
Department of Education  
Early Childhood Education Directorate  
[www.education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education)

# Northern Territory summary



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

Figure 19: Quality area ratings



### Contact details

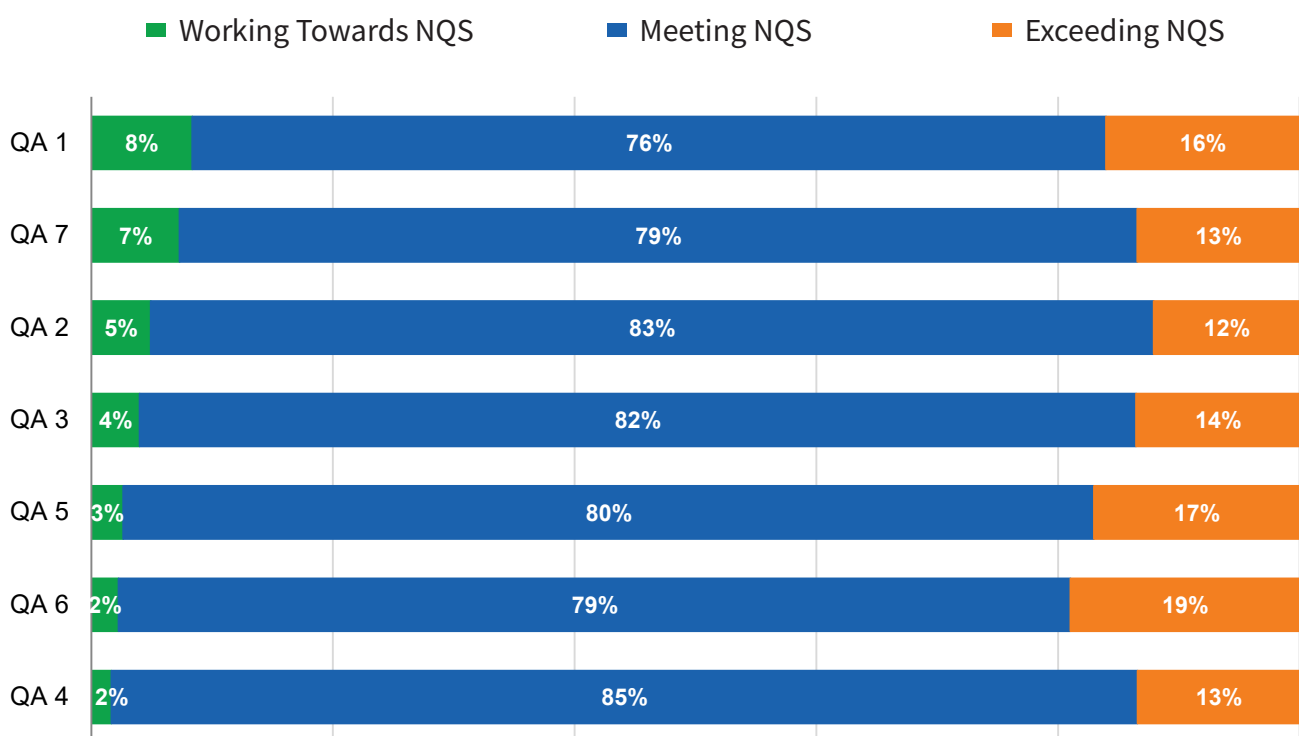
Department of Education  
Quality Education and Care NT  
<https://education.nt.gov.au/committees-regulators-and-advisory-groups/quality-education-and-care-nt>

# Queensland summary

<b>3,302</b>	services comprising <b>3,212</b> centre-based services and <b>90</b> family day care services
<b>3,128 (95%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>1</b>	service rated <b>Significant Improvement Required</b>
<b>340</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>2,280</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>501</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>
<b>6</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA

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

**Figure 20: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

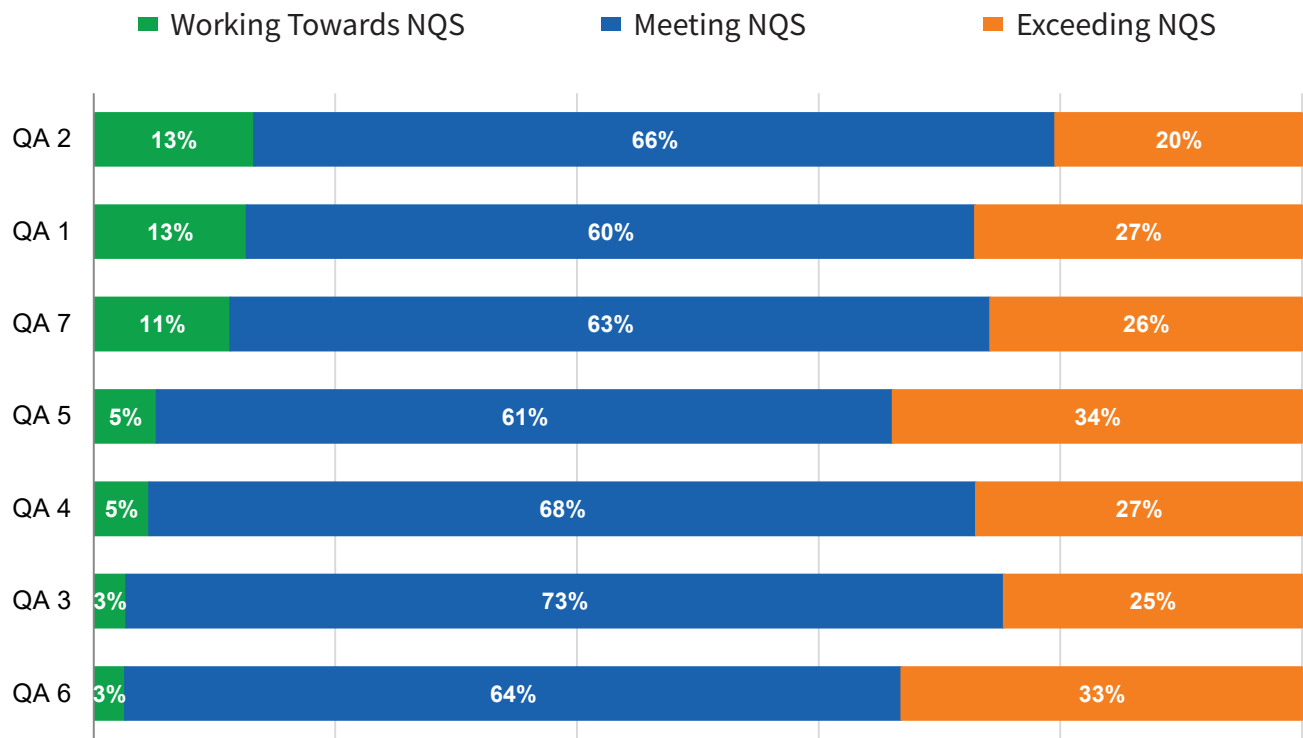
Department of Education  
Early Childhood Regulatory Authority  
[www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au](http://www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au)

# South Australia summary



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

Figure 21: Quality area ratings



Contact details

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

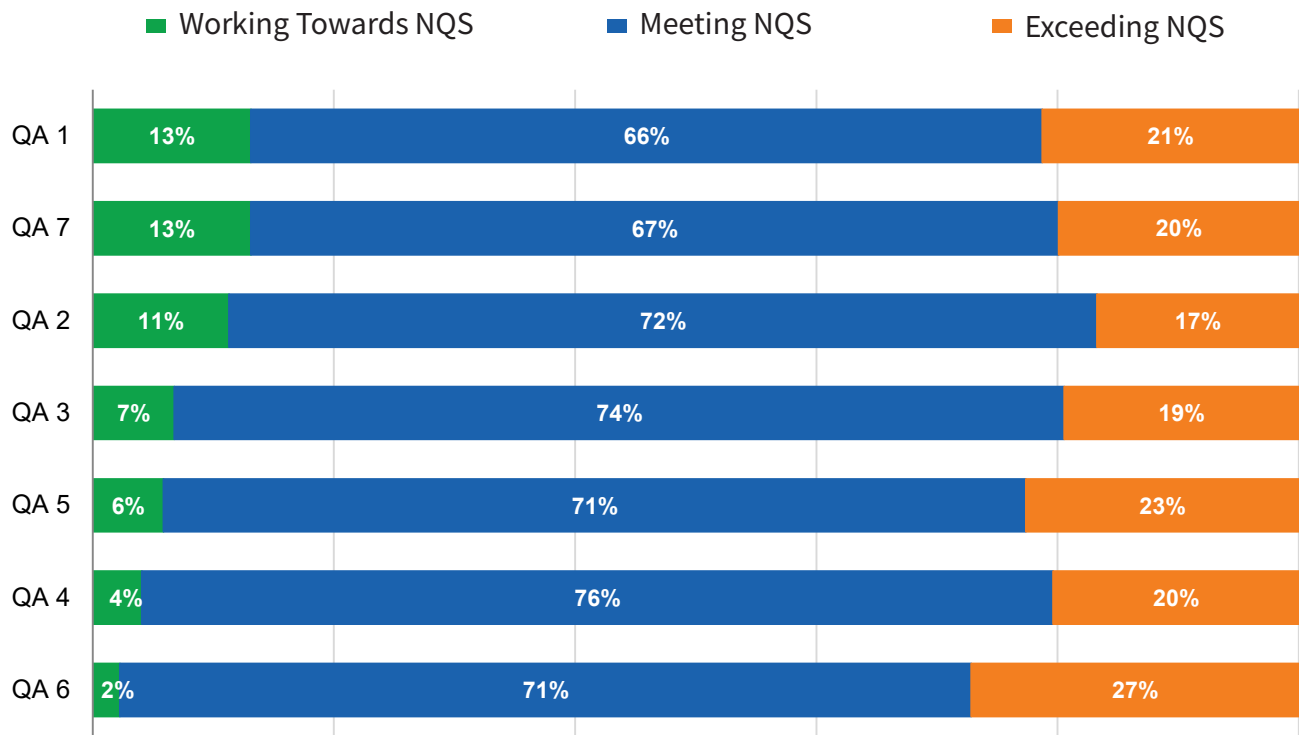


# Tasmania summary



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

Figure 22: Quality area ratings



### Contact details

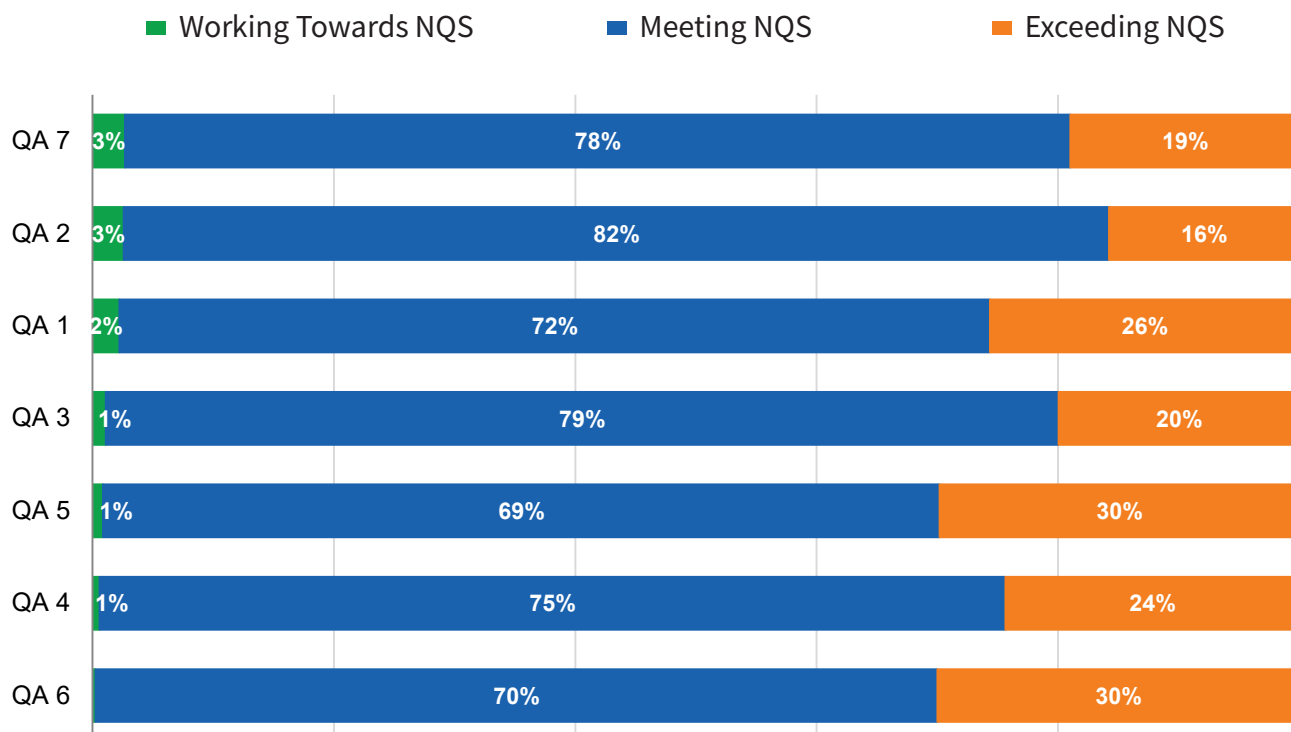
Department for Education, Children and Young People  
Education and Care Unit  
[www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au](http://www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au)

# Victoria summary

<b>4,929</b>	services comprising <b>4,795</b> centre-based services and <b>134</b> family day care services
<b>4,457 (90%)</b>	services with a <b>quality rating</b>
<b>3</b>	services rated <b>Significant Improvement Required</b>
<b>174</b>	services rated <b>Working Towards NQS</b>
<b>3,136</b>	services rated <b>Meeting NQS</b>
<b>1,136</b>	services rated <b>Exceeding NQS</b>
<b>8</b>	services rated <b>Excellent</b> by ACECQA

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

**Figure 23: Quality area ratings**



## Contact details

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

# Western Australia summary

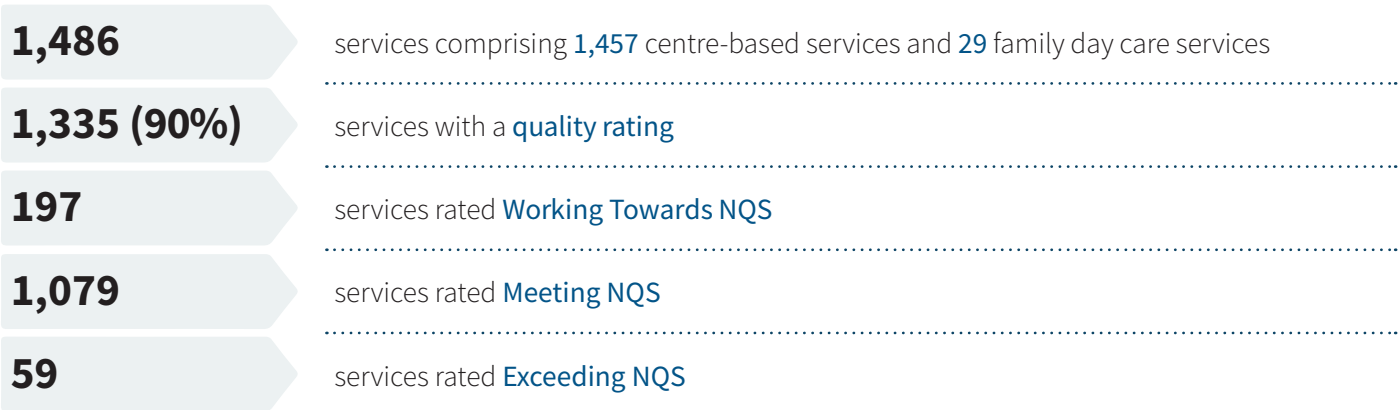
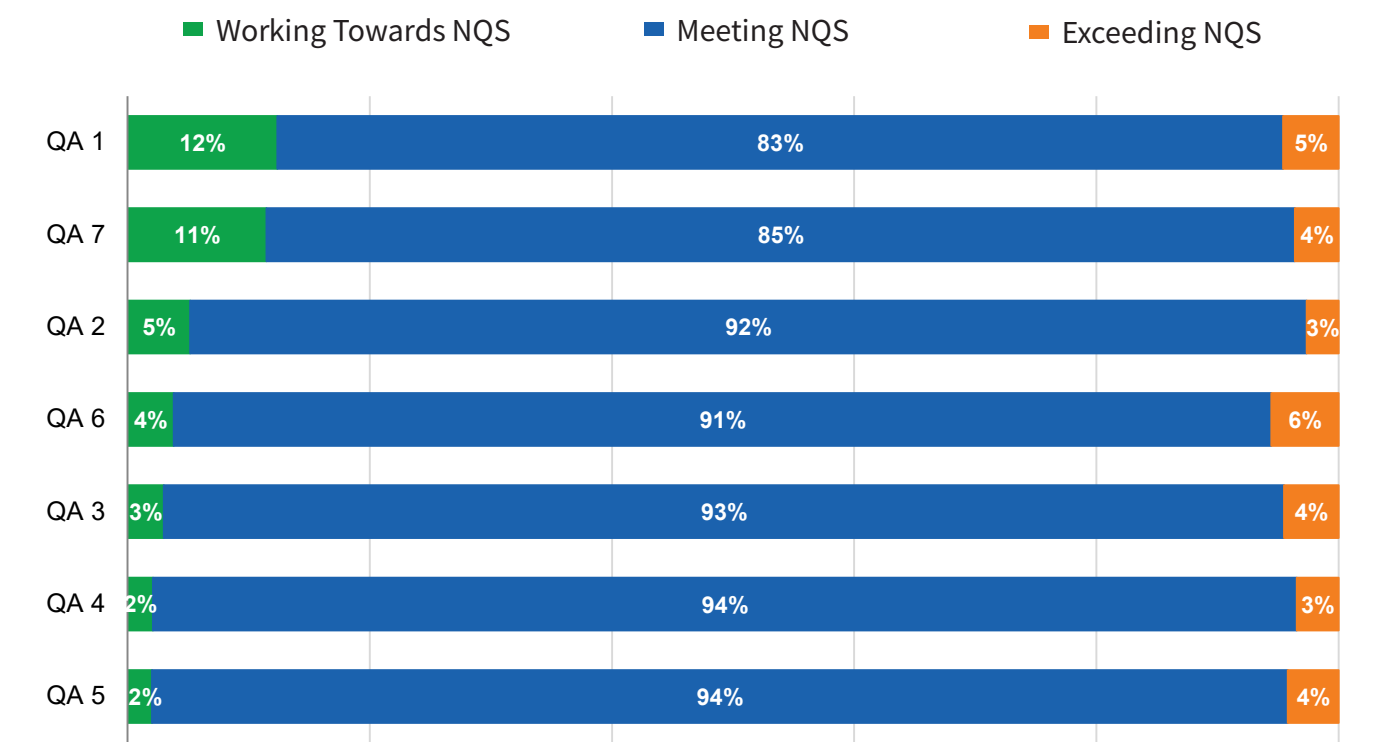


Figure 24 ranks the seven quality areas of the NQS in descending order based on the proportion of services rated Working Towards NQS in each quality area.

Figure 24: Quality area ratings



### Contact details

Department of Communities  
Education and Care Regulatory Unit  
[www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/education-and-care-regulatory-unit](http://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/education-and-care-regulatory-unit)



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