



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority™

ACECQA Snapshot

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

1 MAY 2013

Introduction

This *ACECQA Snapshot* is the first in what will be a regular quarterly update from ACECQA on the children's education and care sector in Australia.

This first 'snapshot' is released to coincide with the publication of registers of providers, services and holders of supervisor certificates. The register of services marks the start of reporting on the quality of the more than 12,800 children's education and care services that are regulated under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The new National Quality Standard (NQS) has raised the bar on quality and continuous improvement in children's education and care services. As at the end of March 2013, some 1,620 or 13 per cent of education and care services had been quality rated, and of these services over 55 per cent are Meeting or Exceeding the National Quality Standard.

The services that have been quality rated to date are not a random sample or a representative cross-section of all services. A technical note at the end of this snapshot therefore cautions readers against making general conclusions or quality rating comparisons between different service types or jurisdictions at this early stage.

Information is also provided in the snapshot about results for each of the quality areas that make up the NQS. As the number of services that have been quality rated expands, future snapshots will include more detailed information about the quality rating results, and the geographic and socio-economic distribution of services.

More information about how the NQS applies to education and care services is on the ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au.

Questions about or feedback on this report can be directed to enquiries@acecqa.gov.au or by phoning 1300 4 ACECQA (1300 422 327).

Snapshot

The data presented in this snapshot is taken from the National Quality Agenda Information Technology System (NQA ITS) at 31 March 2013.

There were 6,653 approved providers under the *Education and Care Services National Law* (National Law) as at 31 March 2013 (Figure 1). The vast majority of providers manage only one education and care service.

Figure 1: The number of approved providers by size as at 31 March 2013

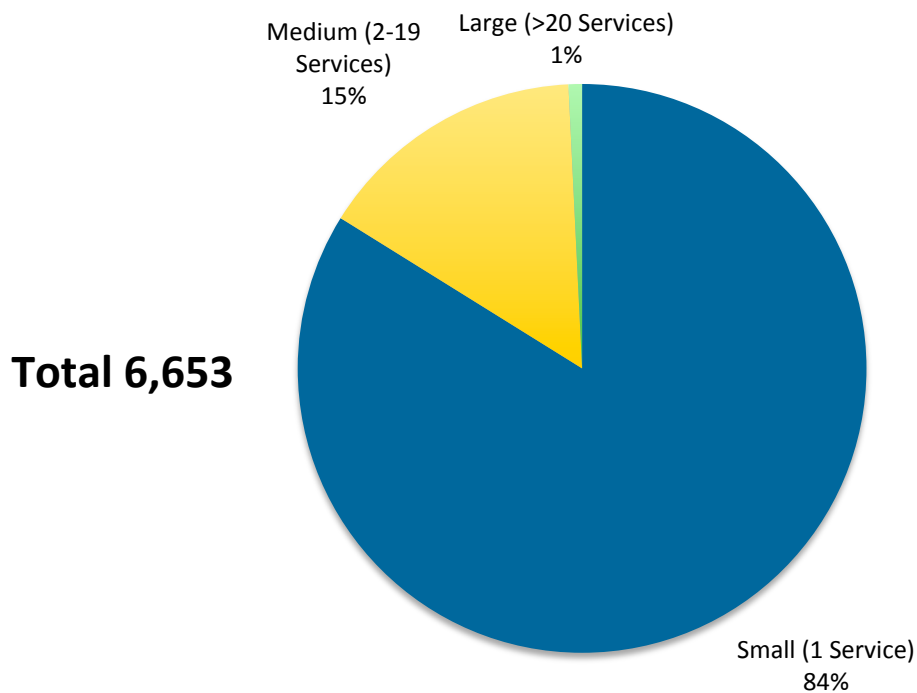


Table 1 shows the number of centre-based services and family day care services by jurisdiction. Nationally there are 12,414 centre-based services and 472 family day care services. Victoria has the most family day care services of any jurisdiction.

The three largest jurisdictions make up about 78 per cent of services nationally. NSW accounts for about 30 per cent (3,813 services) followed by Victoria with 29 per cent (3,728 services) and Queensland with 20 per cent of services (2,536).

Table 1: The number of approved services, by jurisdiction and service type, as at 31 March 2013

Jurisdiction	Centre-based care	Family day care	TOTAL
ACT	301	6	307
NSW	3,684	129	3,813
NT	196	1	197
QLD	2,436	100	2,536
SA	1,098	19	1,117
TAS	210	13	223
VIC	3,554	174	3,728
WA	935	30	965
TOTAL	12,414	472	12,886

Note: The service type 'centre-based care' includes outside school hours care, preschool, kindergarten and/or long-day care, but does not include preschools in Western Australia or Tasmania.

There were 52,038 approved holders of supervisor certificates recorded in the NQA ITS as at 31 March 2013. These are people who hold a national approval from a regulatory authority to hold the role of nominated supervisor in an education and care service or have responsibility for the day-to-day running of the service.

Quality Rating

At 31 March 2013, 1,620 services had a current quality rating against the NQS. This is 13 per cent of all approved education and care services (see Table 2). This number has risen steadily since quality rating started around the middle of 2012.

Table 2 shows that the three largest jurisdictions as measured by number of services (NSW, Victoria and Queensland) together make up 85 per cent (1,375 services with a quality rating) of finalised ratings. These jurisdictions combined regulate about 78 per cent of education and care services in Australia.

Western Australia has completed the smallest proportion of quality ratings as this jurisdiction started the assessment and rating process later due to the commencement date of parallel legislation in Western Australia in August 2012.

Table 2: The number and proportion of approved services with a quality rating, by jurisdiction as at 31 March 2013

	Number of services with a quality rating	Number of services	Proportion of services with a quality rating
ACT	46	307	15%
NSW	490	3,813	13%
NT	48	197	24%
QLD	327	2,536	13%
SA	88	1,117	8%
TAS	26	223	12%
VIC	558	3,728	15%
WA	37	965	4%
TOTAL	1,620	12,886	13%

Note: The proportion of services with a quality rating in Western Australia is lower than other jurisdictions due to the later commencement of the NQF.

Table 3 illustrates that family day care services are currently more likely to have been quality rated than centre-based services.

Table 3: The number and proportion of approved services with a quality rating, by service type as at 31 March 2013

	Number of services with a quality rating	Number of services	Proportion of services with a quality rating
Family day care	96	472	20%
Centre-based care	1,524	12,414	12%
TOTAL	1,620	12,886	13%

The profile of education and care services and their quality rating

Table 4 shows that nationally over 55 per cent of rated services are rated as either Meeting (33.1 per cent) or Exceeding the NQS (22.5 per cent). This is a positive indicator that the NQS is working as intended by being achievable and yet, still a stretch for many existing services.

Table 4: The number of approved services with a quality rating, by quality rating level and jurisdiction as at 31 March 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	TOTAL
ACT	-	33	7	6	46
NSW	4	282	118	86	490
NT	3	37	3	5	48
QLD	-	121	97	109	327
SA	1	27	25	35	88
TAS	-	17	3	6	26
VIC	1	165	279	113	558
WA	-	28	5	4	37
TOTAL	9	710	537	364	1,620
% of Quality Ratings	0.6%	43.8%	33.1%	22.5%	100.0%

Note: The proportion of services with a quality rating in Western Australia is lower than other jurisdictions due to the later commencement of the NQS.

There is a small difference between the spread of ratings and service type as shown in Table 5. Of services quality rated to date, centre-based education and care services are more likely to be Meeting or Exceeding NQS (56 per cent) than family day care services (48 per cent).

Table 5: The number of approved services with a quality rating, by quality rating level by service type, as at 31 March 2013

	Significant improvement required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	TOTAL
Family day care	2	48	23	23	96
Centre-based care	7	662	514	341	1,524
TOTAL	9	710	537	364	1,620

Quality Areas

Each education and care service receives a rating for the seven quality areas and an overall rating. The seven quality areas are:

- Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice
- Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 3 - Physical environment
- Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements
- Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children
- Quality Area 6 - Partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 - Leadership and service management

Table 6 displays the quality ratings results for each of the seven quality areas. At a national level, services are more commonly Working Towards NQS in Quality Areas 1 and 3. Services are most likely to be Exceeding NQS in Quality Area 5 and Meeting NQS in Quality Area 4.

Table 6: The number of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area nationally as at 31 March 2013

	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	358	349	349	426	587	496	426
Meeting NQS	687	877	773	1,013	761	830	755
Working Towards NQS	573	386	495	179	270	294	437
Significant improvement required	2	8	3	2	2	-	2
TOTAL	1,620	1,620	1,620	1,620	1,620	1,620	1,620

Table 7 and Table 8 show the spread of quality ratings in each quality area for family day care services and centre-based services.

There does not appear to be significant differences between the spread of the quality area ratings between service types among those services that have been rated to date. In both service types Quality Areas 1 and 3 have the largest number of services with a rating of Working Towards NQS. Centre-based services are also more likely to receive a rating of Exceeding NQS in Quality Areas 5 and 6. This mirrors the national picture (Table 6).

Table 7: The number of approved family day care services with a finalised quality rating, by quality area, as at 31 March 2013

	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	14	17	20	30	33	35	43
Meeting NQS	38	54	38	57	48	42	32
Working Towards NQS	43	23	36	8	15	19	19
Significant improvement required	1	2	2	1	-	-	2
TOTAL	96	96	96	96	96	96	96

Table 8: The number of approved centre-based care services with a finalised quality rating, by quality area, as at 31 March 2013

	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	QA7
Exceeding NQS	344	332	329	396	554	461	383
Meeting NQS	649	823	735	956	713	788	723
Working Towards NQS	530	363	459	171	255	275	418
Significant improvement required	1	6	1	1	2	-	-
TOTAL	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524

Quality areas by jurisdiction

A comparison between ratings in quality areas across jurisdictions is presented in Figures 2 - 9 below. The figures show some initial differences between jurisdictions. However, caution should be taken when making comparisons between jurisdictions as some jurisdictions have rated only a small number of services and the services rated are not a random sample (Refer to technical note at end).

Figure 2: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (ACT)

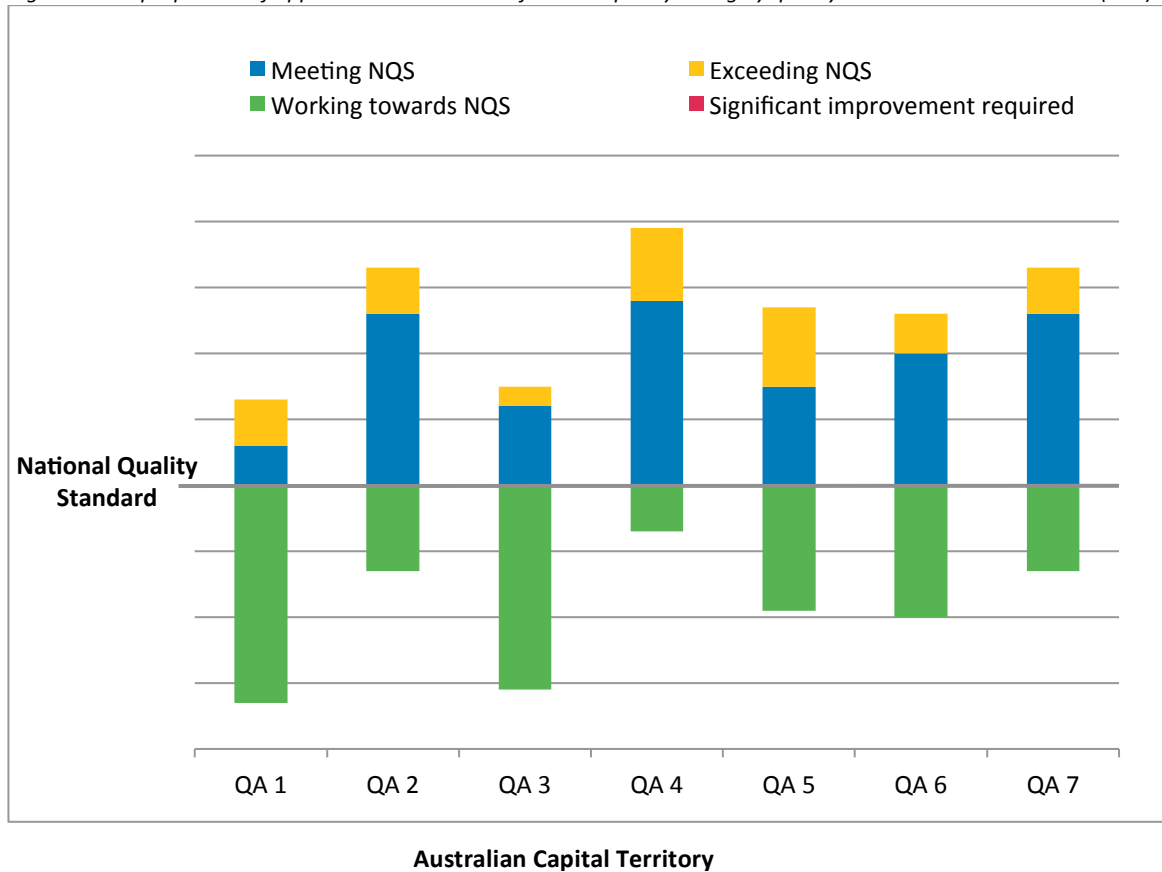


Figure 3: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (NSW)

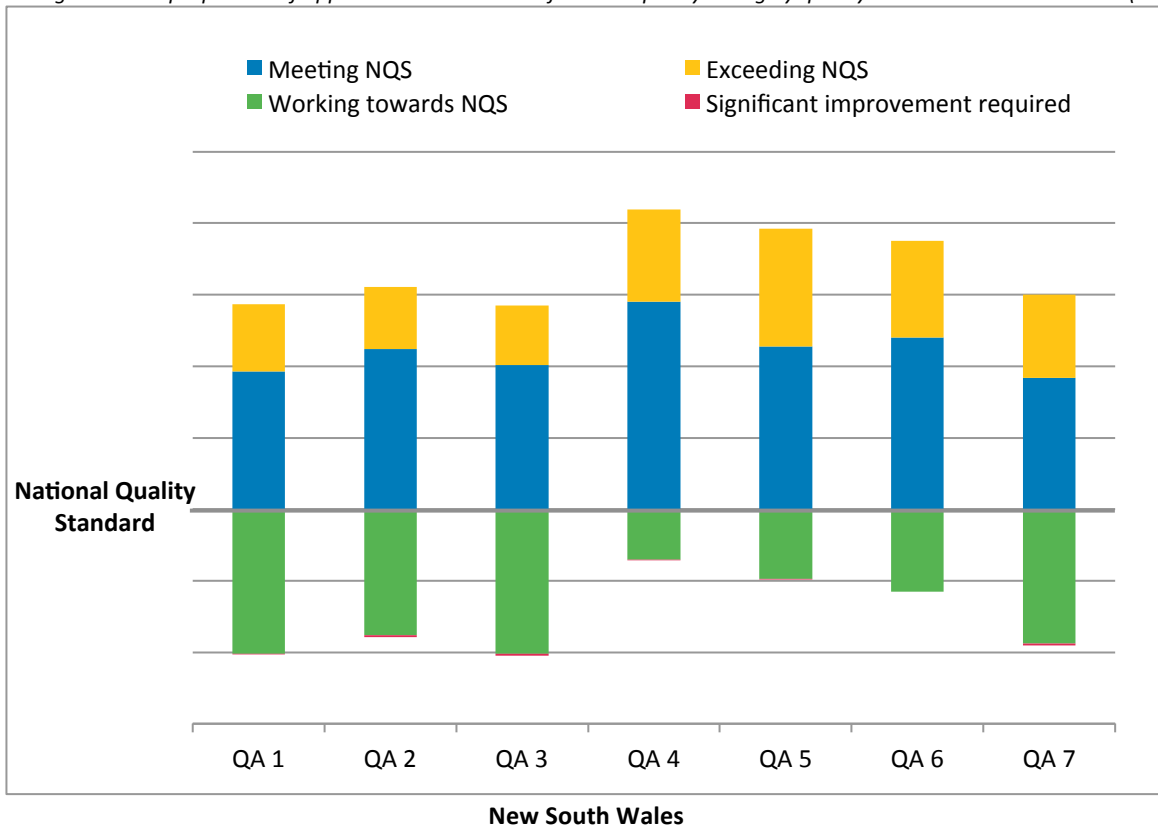


Figure 4: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (NT)

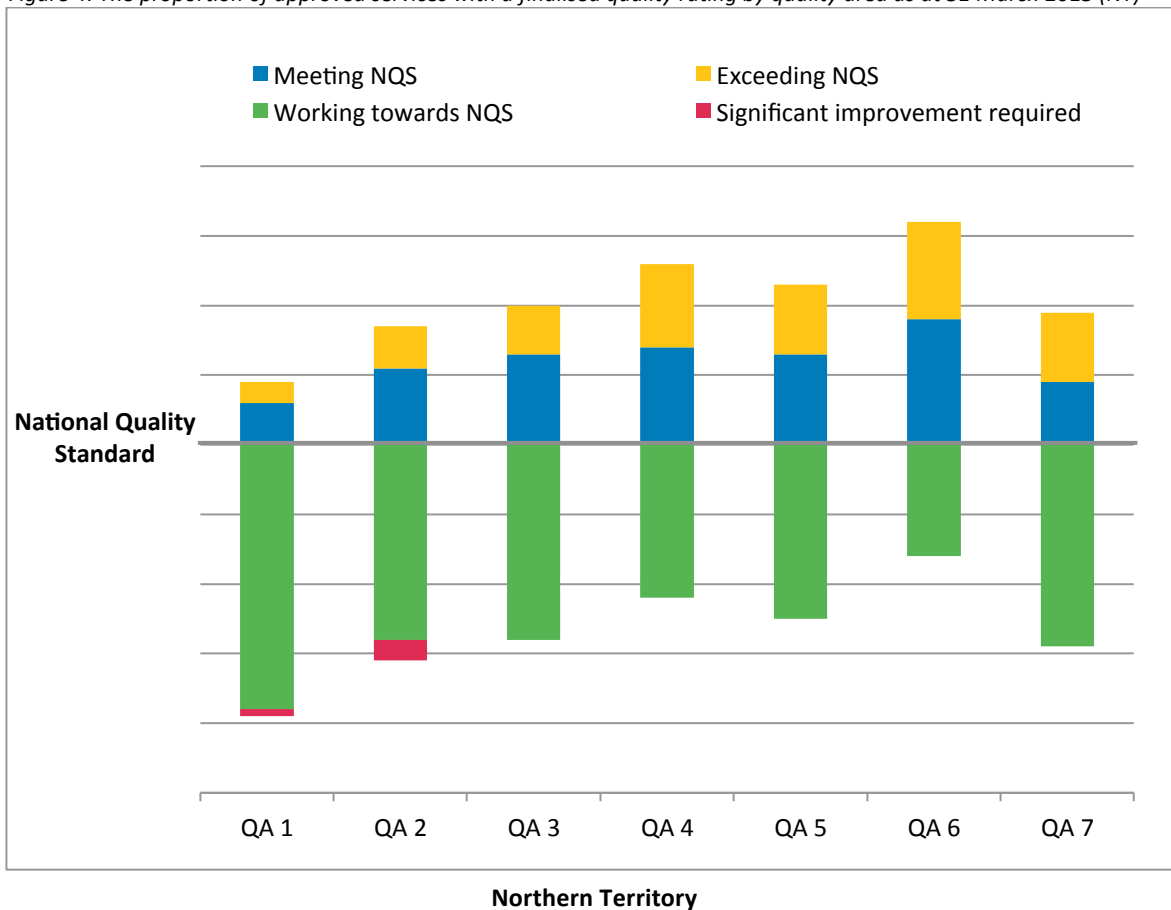


Figure 5: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (Qld)

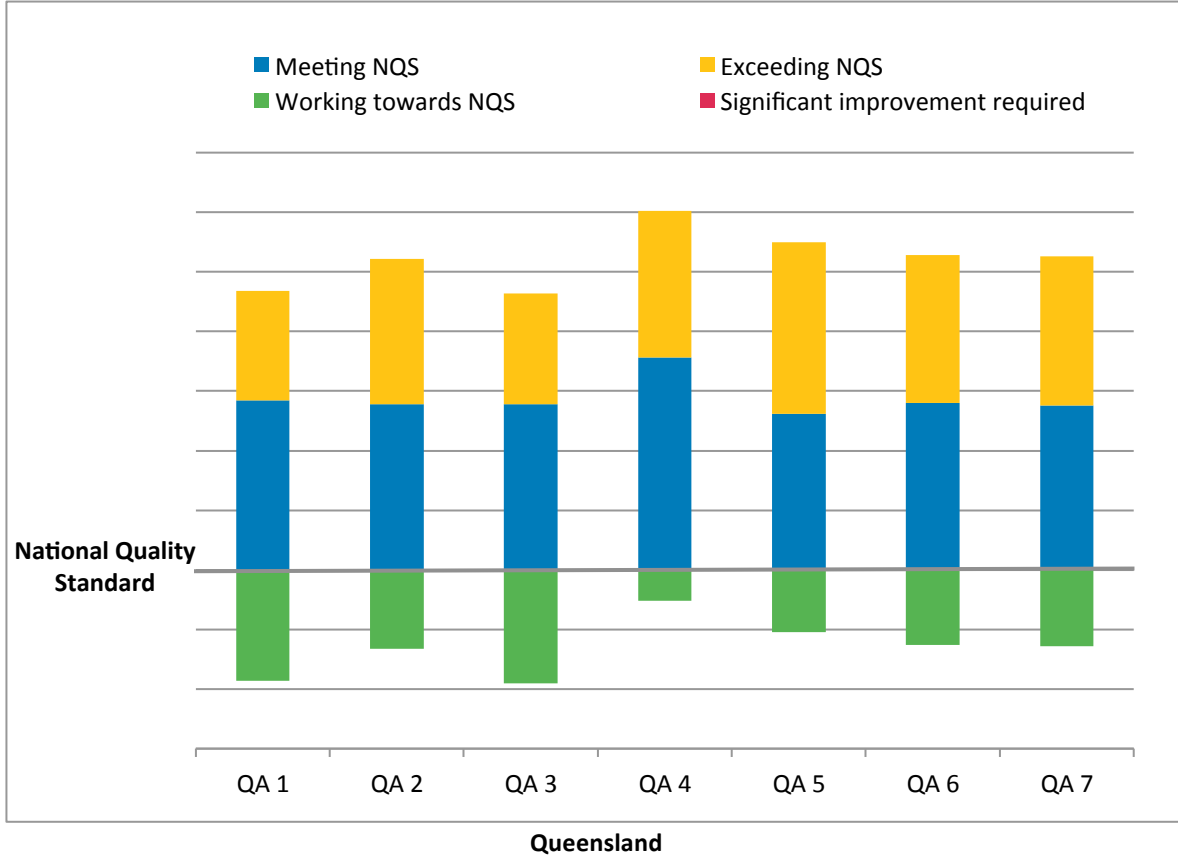


Figure 6: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (SA)

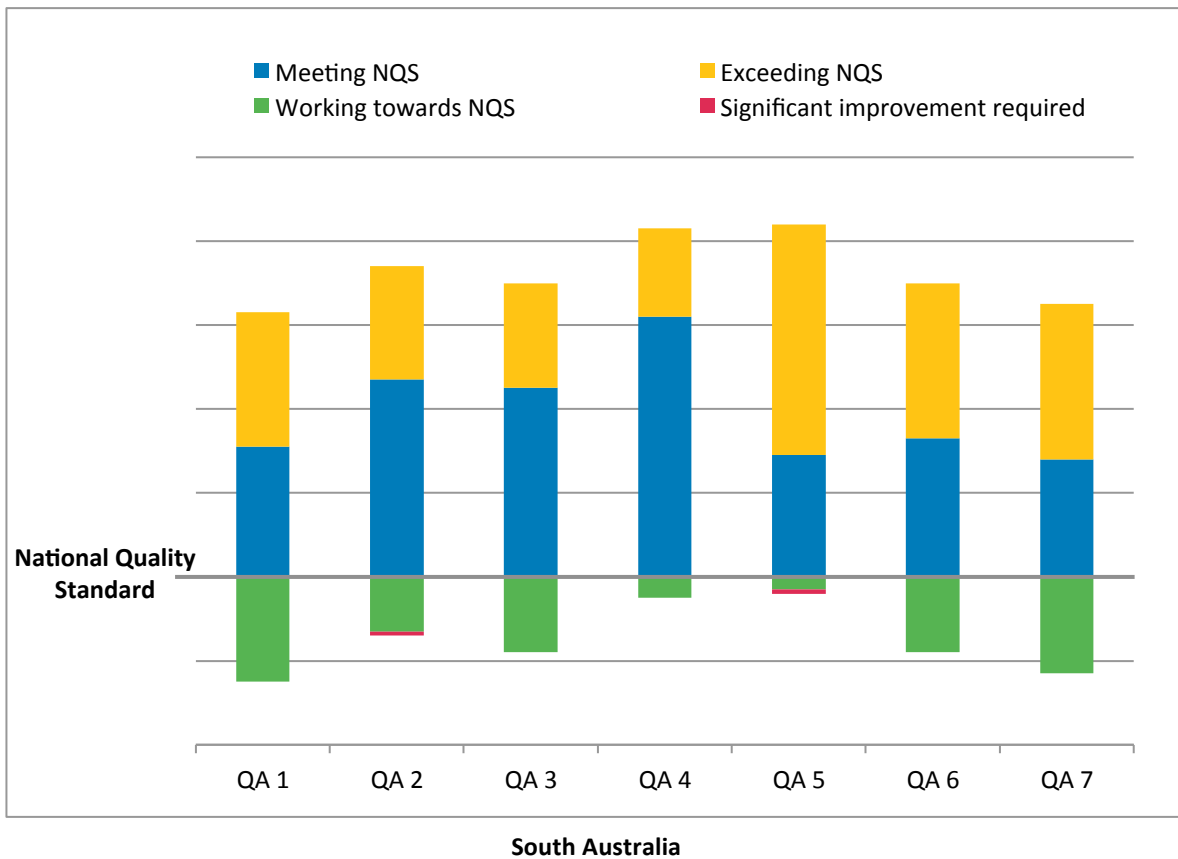


Figure 7: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (Tas)

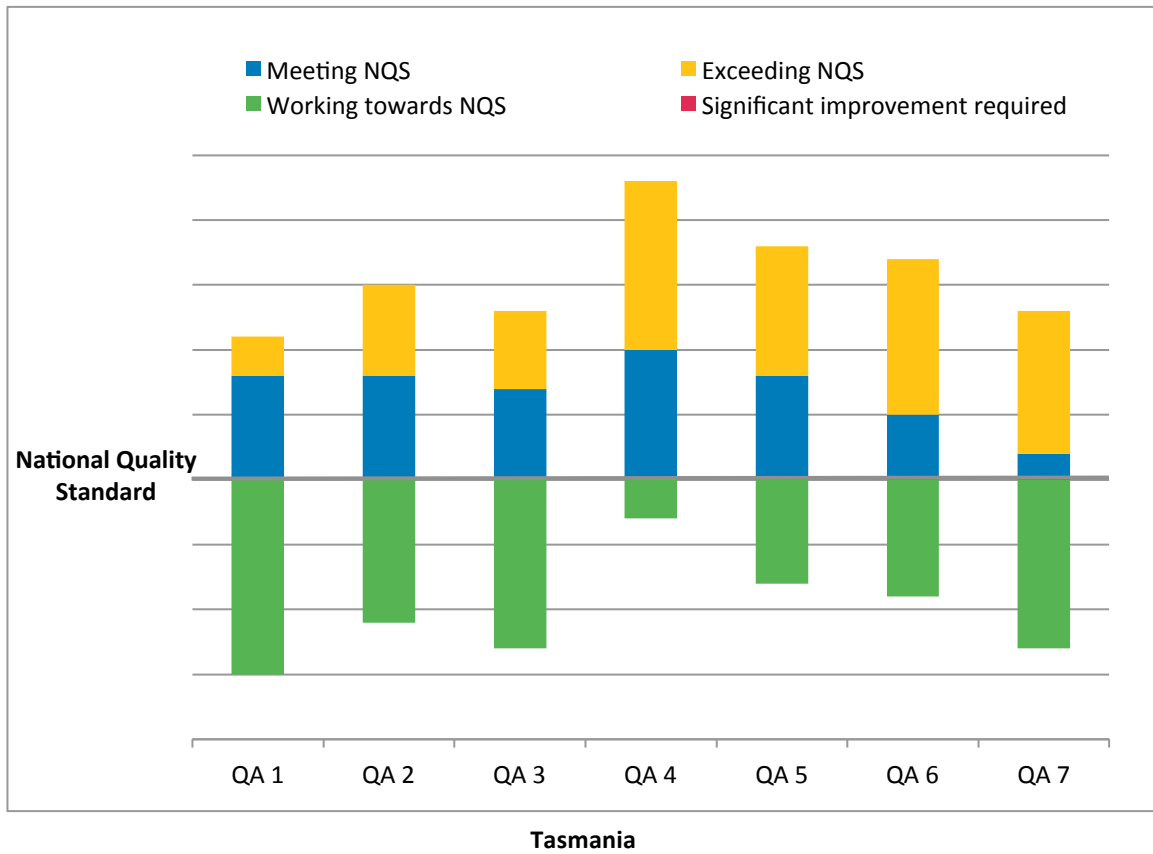


Figure 8: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (Vic)

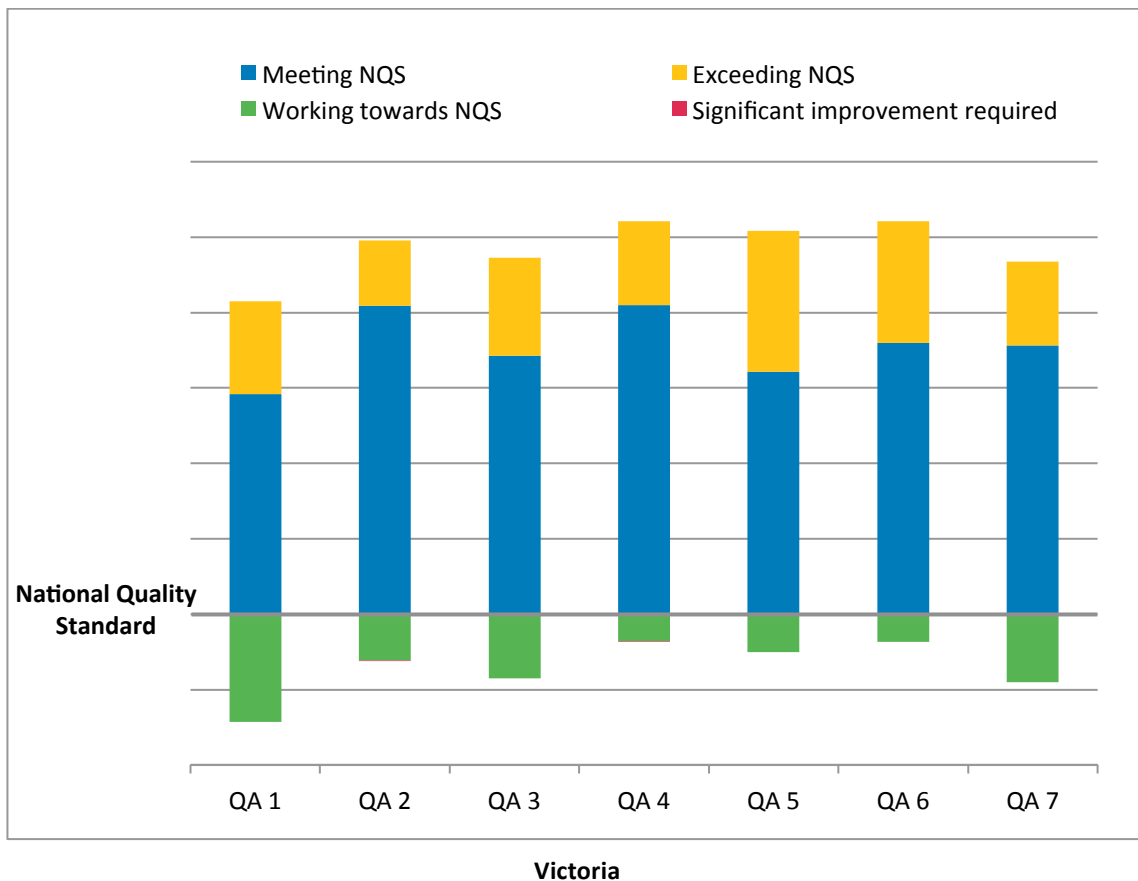
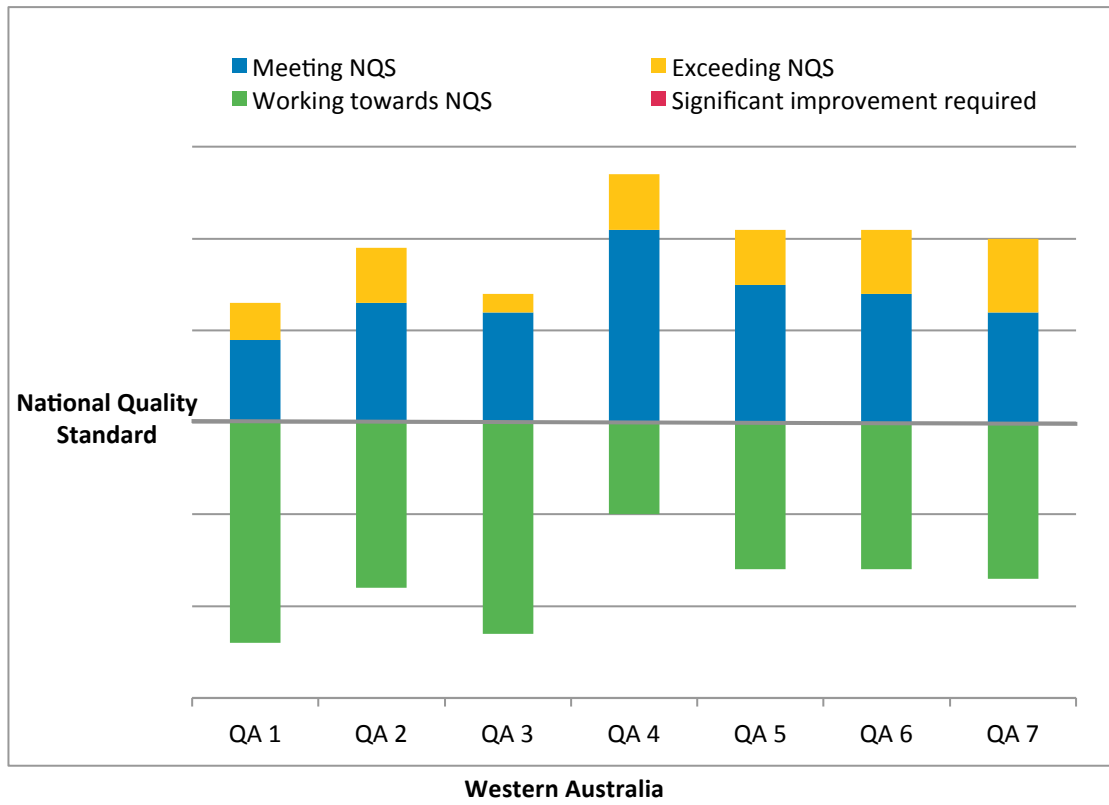


Figure 9: The proportion of approved services with a finalised quality rating by quality area as at 31 March 2013 (WA)



Technical note

The children's education and care services in this report that have been quality rated by regulatory authorities up to the end of March 2013 are not a randomly selected sample or necessarily a representative cross-section of all services.

Decisions to include a service in the first group to be assessed were made for a variety of reasons, including each service's last accreditation date (where relevant) and its last licence renewal or visit date, as well as the workforce capacity of regulatory authorities.

Further, a range of decisions have been taken by governments which have influenced the cross-section of services that have been quality rated. For example, to date, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services are not yet being assessed and rated in New South Wales and only Long Day Care (LDC) services are being assessed and rated in the Northern Territory. In Western Australia the first services to be quality rated volunteered to be involved, and this was due to the later passage of the NQF legislation in that jurisdiction. Also, preschool services in Tasmania and Western Australia are not covered by the NQF legislation and so are not included among the rated services.

Regulatory authorities did attempt to ensure that each jurisdiction had a number of each service type and that the services were located across all regions of the jurisdiction to inform the November 2012 evaluation report from the Australian Council for Educational Research on the assessment and rating process.

The implication for readers of the May 2013 *ACECQA Snapshot* is that differences in the pattern of quality ratings, across jurisdictions, or between service types that may be identified are not based on a representative cross-section of services, making it difficult to draw conclusions about any underlying causes for the differences. As the number of services that are quality rated increases and is more representative of the total population, then more conclusive analysis of patterns and trends in quality rating will become possible.

This report uses data drawn from the NQA ITS. It should be noted that ACECQA is not responsible for updating data in the NQA ITS. Regulatory authorities in each state and territory and services update information in the NQA ITS.