

# Early childhood education and care workforce action plan

## 2011–2014



### Key priorities

The *Early childhood education and care workforce action plan 2011–2014* provides information on workforce strategies for the sector.

- **Upskill family day care educators:** Supports recognition of prior learning for existing family day care educators to gain Certificate III in Children's Services.
- **Increase number of kindergarten teachers:** Supports eligible advanced diploma and bachelor holders become qualified early childhood teachers.
- **Increase attraction to the sector:** Markets early childhood education and care sector employment opportunities using online and targeted marketing campaigns.
- **Promote opportunities in regional areas:** Supports the attraction and retention of quality educators within rural and remote Queensland by providing financial incentives and opportunities to experience rural and remote early childhood services.
- **Increase the number of Indigenous educators:** Supports on-the-job training for Indigenous educators to take up early childhood job vacancies.



## A message from the Minister

As part of our vision of a first-class education system, the Queensland Government is delivering on the next phase of our education reforms — the *Flying Start for Queensland Children White Paper*.

The White Paper reflects our commitment to improving the lives of all Queensland children and their families through a stronger education system, including improvements to early childhood education and care (ECEC).

These changes will provide all Queensland children, regardless of their location, with the best possible start in life through access to high-quality early childhood education and care services.

In line with these reforms, the Queensland and Australian governments are investing almost \$900 million to deliver universal access to kindergarten, making it the single largest investment in kindergarten in Queensland's history.

Up to 240 extra kindergarten services will be established by 2014, delivering extra kindergarten places and catering for those children not currently accessing any centre-based early childhood education and care services in Queensland.

To meet the needs of children from working families and their parents, the Queensland Government is also supporting long day care providers by including approved kindergarten programs as part of their service. Already underway, these initiatives are driving demand for qualified educators, particularly early childhood teachers.

We are also rolling out 10 children and family centres across the state to deliver a mix of early childhood education, care, parenting, family support and child and maternal health services that target the needs of local Indigenous children (up to eight years of age) and their families.

To support the implementation of these reforms, the Queensland Government is working in partnership with the early childhood education and care sector including unions, employers, employees, universities and registered training organisations.

Addressing the workforce challenges faced by the sector now and over the coming years, our government will invest \$76 million in the *Early childhood education and care workforce action plan*. The plan will focus on:

- attracting quality educators to the ECEC sector
- developing our existing educators
- retaining and valuing our ECEC workforce
- providing strong governance around policy development, data and sector engagement.

I encourage all existing and potential educators to take advantage of this plan to enhance your knowledge and skills and to support your contribution to improved quality across the early childhood education and care sector.

As Queensland's Education Minister, I want to ensure every child in our state has a pathway to education and educational excellence and every opportunity to fulfil their potential.

With the support of the *Early childhood education and care workforce action plan*, we will give our children a flying start to learning and life.

CAMERON DICK MP  
Minister for Education and Industrial Relations

## What do the reforms mean for the early childhood education and care workforce?

The Queensland Government's commitment to providing universal access to kindergarten means an increased demand for educators, particularly qualified early childhood teachers, in order to meet our ambitious implementation target of 2014. The National Quality Framework (NQF) will take effect through the passing of a national law by all Australian states and territories in 2012. This will standardise the regulation of all long day care, kindergarten, family day care and outside school hours care services across the country.

To minimise impacts to services, the Queensland Government has negotiated the phased implementation of several major improvements to educator qualification and educator-to-child ratio requirements. The key educator qualification improvements posed by the NQF include:

- all educators to hold, or be studying towards, a minimum of a Certificate III in Children's Services by 2014

- all family day care coordinators to hold, or be studying towards, a minimum of a Diploma in Children's Services by 2014
- all long day care and kindergarten services to employ an early childhood teacher and 50 per cent of all educators within these services to hold, or be studying towards, a minimum of a Diploma in Children's Services by 2014
- improved educator-to-child ratio requirements in all long day care and kindergarten services by 2016.

The ECEC workforce census, surveys, quantitative analysis and strong consultation with key industry stakeholders, employers and unions have informed the development of the initiatives outlined to assist the sector with the workforce challenges.

## Preparing for the reforms

On top of the Queensland Government's significant investment of more than \$20 million per annum in vocational education and training for the ECEC sector, we are committed to delivering the following key initiatives to assist the sector in preparing for the national and state reforms. Further information is available at [www.det.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/workforce](http://www.det.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/workforce)

Initiatives	Attracting quality educators	Develop existing workers	Retaining and valuing the workforce	Rural and remote communities	Indigenous workforce
<p><b>Early Childhood Teacher Scholarships</b></p> <p>Up to \$2.5 million for a maximum of 200 eligible three-year university qualified educators to become qualified early childhood teachers who can deliver a kindergarten program and become eligible for teacher registration. This scholarship meets course fees and provides students with a study allowance.</p>		✓	✓		
<p><b>Early Childhood Teacher Scholarships for advanced diploma holders</b></p> <p>Up to \$1.2 million to support eligible educators with an advanced diploma gain a bachelor qualification, post graduate diploma in early childhood and eligibility for teacher registration so they may work as an early childhood teacher and deliver a kindergarten program. This scholarship assists students to meet course fees and provides them with a study allowance.</p>		✓	✓		
<p><b>Kindergarten Rural and Remote Teacher Incentive Scheme</b></p> <p>Up to \$1.2 million to enhance the attraction and retention of teachers to services in rural and remote locations. The incentive benefit will be paid directly to eligible teachers. This initiative will be open to teachers starting work in rural or remote long day care services without a kindergarten program, or other services experiencing difficulties filling teacher vacancies over an extended period of time.</p>	✓		✓	✓	
<p><b>TAFE fee waiver for children's services</b></p> <p>This partnership between the Australian and Queensland Governments enables students to undertake diploma and advanced diploma qualifications in children's services at TAFE institutes across Queensland on a tuition-free basis.</p>	✓	✓			
<p><b>Early Childhood Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Package</b></p> <p>Access to a \$9.2 million Australian Government package to upskill early childhood RPL assessors (\$2 million) and provide up to 8000 existing ECEC workers in rural and remote areas across Australia with a subsidy to help them access RPL towards certificate III and above (\$7.2 million).</p>		✓		✓	
<p><b>Family Day Care Training Strategy</b></p> <p>Over \$400 000 to provide Recognition of Prior Learning to support existing family day care educators towards gaining a certificate III qualification.</p>		✓			
<p><b>Teacher Bridging Program</b></p> <p>Up to \$300 000 to enable Queensland registered primary teachers to gain an early childhood qualification, offered on a tuition-free basis until 2014.</p>	✓	✓	✓		
<p><b>Leadership Development Strategy</b></p> <p>Up to \$250 000 to provide access to leadership programs for existing and emerging leaders in the ECEC sector, with a focus on service delivery and sector leadership.</p>		✓			
<p><b>Indigenous Remote Area Strategy</b></p> <p>At least \$1.4 million to deliver certificate, diploma and advanced diploma qualification training in a targeted and culturally appropriate manner to existing and prospective educators in the Cape, Gulf and Torres Strait Islands, and other remote Indigenous locations.</p>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><b>Kindergarten Beyond the Range Program</b></p> <p>Up to \$100 000 to support selected high-achieving, pre-service teachers with financial assistance and support to undertake a rural or remote study placement.</p>	✓			✓	
<p><b>Rural and Remote Engagement Strategy</b></p> <p>Up to \$1.7 million to provide eligible students studying in children's services in rural and remote high needs areas access to a remote support teacher, additional face-to-face support, library facilities and resources.</p>				✓	
<p><b>Professional development of the sector</b></p> <p>Approximately \$400 000 to support services to provide quality kindergarten programs and form partnerships with peak sector organisations to deliver professional development activities to the broader ECEC workforce.</p>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><b>Raise the status of the sector</b></p> <p>Promotion of the early childhood education and care sector, career opportunities and training available with a revised website, careers and employment expos and events.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Summary of the 2011–2014 early childhood education and care workforce actions

	Attraction	Development	Retention	Governance
Priority workforce actions	<p><b>Raise the status of the profession</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement targeted marketing to promote the ECEC sector as a valuable career option.</li> <li>Promote employment opportunities within the ECEC sector.</li> <li>Promote state and national ECEC workforce reforms.</li> <li>Online skills calculator determining available career path options based upon qualifications, experience and position sought.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase opportunities for potential educators to gain employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with universities and registered training organisations to expand articulation pathways to ensure an adequate supply of quality graduates.</li> <li>Promote professional development supported by the government including the TAFE fee waiver program, scholarships, and other available initiatives for the workforce.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Raise the qualification levels for the existing workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide scholarships to support the upgrade from advanced diploma and bachelor level qualifications to an early childhood teaching qualification.</li> <li>Deliver an ECEC teaching bridging program for primary teachers.</li> <li>Provide RPL support for family day care educators to gain certificate III qualifications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Effectively prepare the workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support structured professional development programs that respond to national, state and local priorities.</li> <li>Provide curriculum support and resources to kindergarten teachers.</li> <li>Facilitate the development of organisational and pedagogical leadership capabilities across the sector.</li> <li>Deliver cross-cultural training.</li> <li>Facilitate the availability of specialist equipment to support the inclusion of children with physical disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facilitate effective workforce information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make available sector information updates.</li> <li>Provide links to key industrial information via the early childhood education and care website.</li> <li>Promote workforce excellence recognition programs across the sector.</li> <li>Share learning opportunities online via the early childhood website.</li> </ul> <p><b>Effectively implement reforms and change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market best practice retention and participation programs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Promote career pathways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders to develop pathways that support career progression for all educator categories across the workforce.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Industry stakeholder engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the ECEC sector through dissemination of timely and accurate information regarding new and emerging government priorities and programs.</li> <li>Implement and sustain a statewide stakeholder engagement strategy encouraging collaborative networks and mutual information sharing across the sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead data collection and research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake detailed analysis of available ECEC workforce data.</li> <li>Continue to participate in data collection and dissemination through a range of instruments.</li> </ul>
Indigenous actions	<p><b>Increase Indigenous representation across all employee groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and promote good practice.</li> <li>Identify extensions to existing programs to include ECEC pathways.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Support Indigenous development initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver an Indigenous remote area strategy providing qualifications in children's services to existing and prospective Indigenous children's services educators.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Retain and value the Indigenous ECEC workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to promote workforce diversity and support retention of the Indigenous ECEC workforce.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increase Indigenous participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase Indigenous participation on key ECEC consultative mechanisms including a cultural inclusion strategy.</li> </ul>
Rural and remote actions	<p><b>Attraction to rural and remote locations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond the Range placements in rural and remote ECEC services.</li> <li>Attract quality educators to rural and remote communities and regional locations with an incentive scheme and online promotion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Support development strategies for ECEC workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a rural and remote engagement and participation strategy targeting high needs areas.</li> <li>Encourage the identification of innovative models for the delivery of qualifications to isolated locations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Retain and value the rural and remote ECEC workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to promote and support retention of the rural and remote ECEC workforce.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increase rural and remote participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure rural and remote participation on key ECEC consultative mechanisms.</li> </ul>

## Measuring our performance

By the end of 2014 the Queensland Government will review its performance against this plan and the following key performance indicators:

- increased number of educators working in early childhood education and care services
- increased number of early childhood teachers working in early childhood education and care services
- increased number of educators holding or working towards a relevant qualification
- increased number of family day care educators participating in vocational education and training.