

Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan 2016–2019

Review consultation paper



It is the passionate and skilled early childhood workforce that inspires the future, shaping and nurturing young minds.

Overview

In October 2015, the Minister for Education launched the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan 2016 – 2019 (ECEC WAP) as part of the Palaszczuk Government's Working Queensland jobs plan.

The ECEC WAP aims to deliver on the vision for a Queensland early childhood education and care workforce that is professional, qualified and skilled. The ECEC WAP has three key objectives:

1. Promote the professional standing of careers in early childhood.
2. Increase the number of suitably qualified early childhood educators across the sector, with a focus on early childhood teachers (ECTs).
3. Develop the skills of educators to enhance children's learning in the early years.

Under the ECEC WAP, the Queensland Government committed to genuine consultation and engagement with all stakeholders throughout the life of the ECEC WAP to ensure the programs and strategies delivered on the sector's vision for their workforce.

Aim of the review

From March to May 2019 the Department of Education (DoE) will undertake consultation with stakeholders to inform a review of initiatives under the ECEC WAP. The review will consider the progress of these initiatives and identify key priorities to support the Queensland Government and the early childhood sector to build a strong, capable and stable workforce.



Achievements in 2018

Since 2015, there has been significant progress to ensure Queensland has a valued, skilled and qualified early childhood workforce. The sector continues to grow with over 34,103 educators in 2018. This growth has been supported by Queensland government funding to approximately 17,000 educators for Certificate III and Diploma ECEC qualifications. This funding has ensured educators working and studying continue to meet their legislative requirements (**Figure 1.2**).

Whilst 17,000 educators have progressed through Vocational Education and Training, attracting and retaining qualified ECTs continues to be a challenge. The total number of ECTs has remained stable for three years to 2017; however, in 2018 there has been a small rise in ECT numbers. As transitional arrangements for ECTs end in 2020, there will be a new requirement for a second ECT for large centre-based services and for qualified ECTs in the majority of early childhood services to meet the National Quality Framework. This will mean an increased demand for qualified ECTs in Queensland over the coming years.

A numbers of educators, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators living in rural and remote Queensland, have been supported through targeted initiatives including the rural and remote study support programs. The RATEP (a community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher training program) was expanded to include early childhood. These targeted initiatives have continued to support a qualified workforce throughout the span of the 2016-2019 ECEC WAP.

From 2016-2019, the WAP has committed each year, to track progress and identify priorities for implementation. In 2018, the *Mentoring Beginning Early Childhood Teacher* program was developed based on stakeholder feedback for support and professional development for new ECTs.

The program, which commenced in early 2019, provides experienced ECTs with an opportunity to build the professional practice of new ECTs within a region and enables provisionally registered ECTs to transition to full teacher registration with the Queensland College of Teachers.



25,000+

people viewing inspire the future.



402

educators completing targeted skills sets.

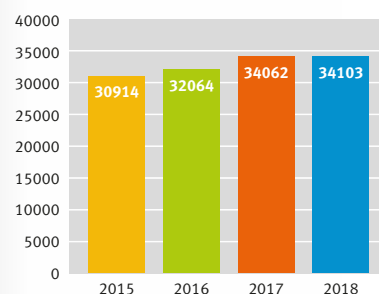


240+

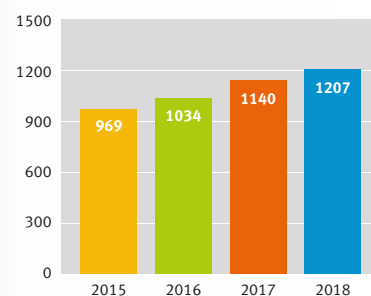
rural and remote educators supported to progress through qualifications.

Figure 1.2 Growth of early childhood educators from 2015 to 2018 snapshot.

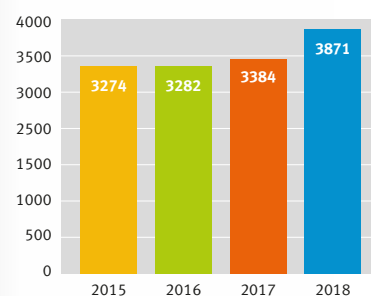
Total no. of educators



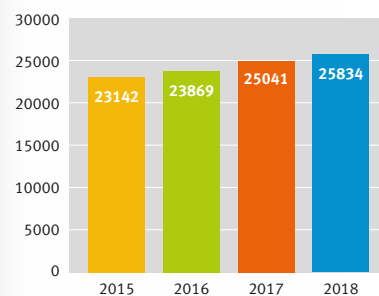
Total no. of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators



Total no. of Early Childhood Teachers



Total no. of educators holding a relevant qualification



Source: 2015 to 2018 Queensland Department of Education Early Childhood Census.



1. Being valued

The value of working in the early childhood sector needs to be better understood and promoted if the profession is to be seen as a career of choice.

Recruitment and retention of high quality educators will improve if early childhood education and care is seen as a rewarding, challenging and important career with clear pathways for progression and recognition.

Promote the value and professional standing of careers in ECEC through:

- › **ECEC careers campaign** – *Inspire the future. Choose a career in early childhood.* This exciting campaign targets new entrants, career changers and existing ECEC staff, highlighting the ways early childhood careers offer opportunities to make a difference during the most critical time in a child's development.
- › Consulting with the ECEC sector and other key stakeholders regarding options for professional **registration for early childhood teachers**.

Being valued and professional

1. Have you heard of, or benefited from (if applicable), any of these Early Childhood Education and Care WAP initiatives? Which one/s?
2. For those who have been involved in these initiatives, can you offer any feedback on benefits and improvements for future programs?
3. What is your service doing to attract quality staff and promote the value of Early Childhood Education and Care?





2. Qualifications

As the sector continues to expand, support for priority qualifications will help to maintain a supply of suitably qualified educators, while targeted strategies will provide additional support for educators in rural and remote services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, studying for their qualifications.

Effective pathways to ECT qualifications is a key priority.

Increase the number of suitably qualified early childhood educators across the sector through:

- › Qualification subsidies for the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care through the **Certificate 3 Guarantee**.
- › Qualification subsidies for the Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Diploma of School Age Education and Care through the **Higher Level Skills** Program.
- › Support for educators to meet the new pre-requisite requirements for entry into early childhood teaching degrees.
- › Access to a diploma subsidy to enable registered primary teachers to gain an approved early childhood teaching qualification through the **Early Childhood Teacher Bridging Program**.
- › Provide additional study support for rural and remote educators through the **Growing Our Own Program** across the state to meet legislative qualification requirements.
- › **Indigenous Remote Support Coordination** Project support educators in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gain approved early childhood qualifications.
- › **Early Childhood Teaching Scholarships** to support Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualified educators in rural and remote services to gain an approved early childhood teaching qualification.

Qualifications

1. Have you heard of, or benefited from, any of these ECEC WAP initiatives? Which one/s?
2. For those who have been involved in these initiatives, can you offer any feedback on benefits and improvements for future programs?
3. For kindergarten and long day care services, does your service have a plan to meet 2020 transitional requirements? Yes/No? Please explain?
4. In the past two years, have you developed your skills or qualifications through government-funded training? Yes/No? Please explain?





3. Skills

Targeted skills development, professional development and networking will support educators to respond to the demands of their role.

Skills development will enhance the focus on children's learning and development, as well as continuity and connection of services across early childhood education and care settings and the early years of school.

Professional development opportunities will help to retain valued staff and reduce turnover.

Increase the skills of early childhood educators to respond to the demands of their role through:

- › **Early Years Connect** service for educators working with children with additional needs, including children with disability and complex emotional and social behaviours.
- › **Skillset Subsidies** for three targeted and industry-endorsed skill sets under the Higher Levels Skills Program:
 - Team leader skills set
 - Supporting children and families with complex needs skills set
 - Building inclusive practices skills set.
- › Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional capacity **leadership development** in ECEC through professional development programs.
- › Support teachers in the early years of schooling to **refocus on age-appropriate pedagogies** through a classroom-based action research project in a cross-section of metropolitan and rural and remote schools, supplemented by the online resources.
- › Work with sector peak bodies to develop and implement **professional development programs**, training materials and curriculum resources to improve educational program and practice.

Skills

1. Have you heard of, or benefited from, any of these ECEC WAP initiatives? Which one/s?
2. For those who have been involved in these initiatives, can you offer any feedback on benefits and improvements for future programs?
3. What is your service doing to support and develop staff; and reduce staff turnover?



Identifying future early childhood education and care workforce needs

1. What do you consider to be the current and future issues and priorities that should be considered?
2. Are there needs, issues and priorities that are specific to service types? Please specify?
3. How can the early childhood sector and Queensland government work together through co-contribution arrangements to support these future workforce priorities?

Contact us

Any feedback you have regarding the information contained within this Consultation Paper or questions about the review can be directed to Workforce.ECEC@qed.qld.gov.au.

