



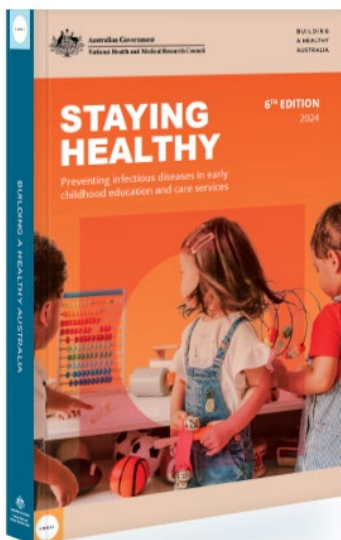
EDUCATION AND CARE

ECU NEWSLETTER

ECU Newsletter #5 2024 – issued 29
November 2024

Staying Healthy Guidelines updated

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has released [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services \(Staying Healthy\) - 6th Edition](#)¹.



[Staying healthy](#)² is a best-practice resource that provides simple and effective ways for educators and other staff to help limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases in education and care settings.

The updated guideline was developed by the Staying Healthy Advisory Committee, which is made up of members with expertise in paediatrics, infectious disease, microbiology, public health, general practice, environmental health and the administration, regulation and staffing of the early childhood education sector.

Further information and resources including [fact sheets](#)³, [posters](#)⁴ and [technical reports](#)⁵ can be found on the NHMRC website.

Outside School Hours Care Qualifications Project

Would you like to get involved in providing advice on OSHC qualifications?



In recognition of the rapid growth of the Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) workforce, HumanAbility is excited to announce the [Outside School Hours Care Project](#)⁶. This initiative aims to transition the nationally recognised and accredited 10983NAT Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care to the CHC Community Services Training Package.

Currently, the 10983NAT Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care meets a critical training need that is not yet addressed by the CHC Community Services Training Package. HumanAbility's project will review and incorporate this qualification to better support the OSHC sector across the following roles:

- Outside School Hours Care Educator
- Outside School Hours Care Assistant
- Play Leader
- Recreation Assistant (Children's Services).

To guide this transition, HumanAbility is establishing a Technical Committee (TC) composed of experts who will provide crucial insights. If you are interested in contributing or learning more, please visit [HumanAbility's website](#)⁷ for details on how to get involved.

- Project details: [Outside School Hours Care Project - HumanAbility](#)⁸
- Register here: [Registration for a Project](#)⁹

Productivity Commission inquiry ECEC report released

The Productivity Commission has released its final report on early childhood education care (ECEC) – [A path to universal early childhood education and care. – Inquiry Report](#)¹⁰.



This inquiry examined the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector including centre-based care, preschools, family day care; outside school hours care and in-home care. The report outlines a vision for a universal ECEC system in Australia, proposing significant reforms to address issues such as service availability, inclusion, affordability, quality and equity.

The report's recommendations highlight potential changes, that if adopted by governments, could remove barriers to ECEC access and support better outcomes for children and families. The report suggests a phased approach to implementing recommended reforms, starting with critical workforce actions. Building a skilled and supported workforce is foundational to achieving other reforms, as it ensures that quality education and care can be delivered across the sector.

While these recommendations have not yet been endorsed by governments, they set out ideas that may inform future government policies and funding priorities. Any move toward implementing the recommendations is anticipated to involve further policy exploration and extensive consultation with key stakeholders.

Information about the inquiry can be viewed on the Australian Government [Productivity Commission Public inquiry - Early childhood education and care](#)¹¹.

Staying safe this summer

As summer approaches it's useful to consider how you can identify and manage hazards and risks that the change of season brings.

Sun protection

[National Skin Cancer Action Week 2024](#)¹² ran from 17-23 November and this year the Cancer Council is urging all Australians to make sun protection part of their daily routine, all year round. The Cancer Council [SunSmart App](#)¹³ provides reliable at-a-glance real-time and forecast UV levels and is a useful reference tool. ACECQA has developed [Sun Protection Policy Guidelines](#)¹⁴ to assist in the development of your service's policies and procedures required under regulations 168 and 169. It may be timely to share your service's sun protection policy and procedures as summer approaches.



Asthma management

During the summer months anyone living with asthma may be at increased risk due to bushfires or thunderstorms. It may be timely to review processes and ensure educators are familiar with medical management plans and asthma action plans.



Information on risks is available in National Asthma Council fact sheets:

- [Bushfires and asthma - National Asthma Council Australia](#)¹⁵
- [Thunderstorm asthma - National Asthma Council Australia](#)¹⁶

Safe transportation of children

As the summer season approaches, it's vital for education and care services to prioritise the safe transportation of children. With rising temperatures, the risk of heat-related incidents increases, particularly when children are left unattended in vehicles.

Campaigns such as *Look Before You Lock* remind us that a quick check can prevent tragedies. Always conduct a thorough sweep of vehicles before locking them, ensuring no child is left behind. This practice is essential, regardless of how brief a stop may seem.



ACECQA's [Safe Transportation of Children - Policy Guidelines](#)¹⁷ offer valuable guidance for creating safe and effective transport policies and procedures.

Having an effective policy and procedures in place can reduce the risk of harm to children, while continuing to provide them with the transport that may be needed as part of their education and care, meaning services and family day care educators can protect children and give families peace of mind. For more information, refer to the *Look Before You Lock* resources and ACECQA's [Safe Transportation of Children - Policy Guidelines](#)¹⁸.

Staying emergency aware



Planning for and being aware of incidents, hazards and emergencies is important for effective risk management. Common emergencies in Tasmania are bushfire, flood and storms but there are other hazards and causes of emergencies.

TasALERT

[TasALERT](#)¹⁹ provides a centralised source of emergency warnings and information from Tasmanian emergency services and other government agencies during an emergency.



TasALERT also includes practical advice on [helping you get ready for an emergency](#)²⁰.

You can drill down to see guidance on what to do before, during and after each hazard listed.

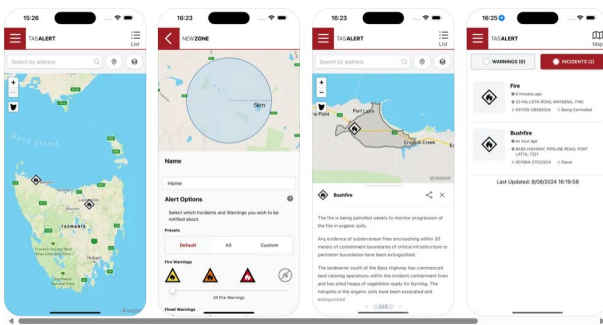
Email info@alert.tas.gov.au if you have any questions about using the TasALERT website or app.

TasALERT app available

[TasALERT](#)²¹ have developed an app that's an extension of the TasALERT website.

Download the TasALERT app from the Apple or Google Play app stores or visit TasALERT.com/download²² to receive timely and accurate warnings.

The new app includes all the features of the website plus you can set up user accounts and watch zones. Users can decide up to 10 areas of interest to watch (watch zones) and select the warnings and incidents they want to get notifications for. See [About the TasALERT App](#)²³ for info including the TasALERT terms of use, how to download and FAQs.



What to do in an emergency

The ECU have shared information about what to do in case of emergency in response to previous events. As a reminder, the first priority is to monitor and manage risks and to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children.

Service closures

If an event or emergency occurs and you're considering whether you should close, please seek advice from [TasAlert](#)²⁴, the [Tasmania State Emergency Service \(SES\)](#)²⁵ or emergency services personnel as required. The health, safety and wellbeing of children and if you can provide safe operations needs to be the primary considerations in making a decision about whether you can operate (i.e. are you able to meet ratio and qualification requirements

if staff attendance is impacted due to weather conditions, do you have power and water to provide safe and hygienic care etc).

Notifications and reporting

In instances when you are required to close, please send a notification via [NQAITS](#)²⁶. Please see advice in the [National Decision Tree: An incident | ACECQA](#)²⁷ regarding a [Service closure or reduction in numbers due to an incident | ACECQA](#)²⁸ for guidance.

For services on school sites, if there are any instances where there is damage to premises, please report damages through the school principal and business manager in addition to advising the ECU.

For information regarding DECYP site closures, see [Alerts for the Department for Education, Children and Young People Schools and Other Sites](#)²⁹.

Recovery and supports

[TasRECOVERY](#)³⁰ is the official source of information about the Tasmanian Government's current recovery activities.



[TasRECOVERY](#)³¹ can connect you with the support, advice and services you

need.

The Australian Government, Department of Education also has information on [Help in an emergency](#)³². Help is available for families and early childhood education and care services in an emergency, like bushfires, cyclones, or floods. Support includes gap fee waivers, extra absences and support for service closures.

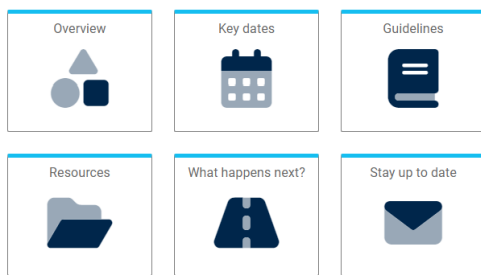
You can also join the [Child Care Subsidy approved providers and services Facebook group](#)³³ and turn on post notifications to get the latest alerts on a range of updates.

Worker retention payment

Grant applications are now open if you wish to apply for the Australian Government worker retention payment. Visit [Early childhood wages - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)³⁴ for the latest details and information including an overview, key dates, guidelines, resources, what happens next and how to stay up to date.

Early childhood wages

The Australian Government will support a wage increase for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce through a worker retention payment.



ECU Grants Program - Minor Infrastructure Grants

The [Minor Infrastructure Grants Round 2024-25](#)³⁵ is open until 6 December 2024.

The ECU Grants Program - Minor Infrastructure Grants provide funding to assist eligible education and care and child care services to complete minor infrastructure projects. When assessing and approving applications for Minor Infrastructure Grants the ECU prioritises funding infrastructure projects that directly support the health and safety of children.

Education and care and child care service providers who wish to apply should review the [Information sheet - Minor Infrastructure Grants 2024-25](#)³⁶ and the [Minor Infrastructure Grant Application Guidelines 2024-25](#)³⁷ for information including eligibility criteria, assessment criteria, accountability requirements and how to apply.

ECU Grants Program – ECT Scholarships

In the [ECU Newsletter Issue 4 2024](#)³⁸ we started sharing the stories of Tasmanian ECEC educators who were awarded scholarships in 2019 and 2020 and who have now successfully completed the ACECQA-approved Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) from the University of New England. In this newsletter we're excited to celebrate graduation and achievements of Valerie Kirby.



Valerie Kirby - Graduate, Education and Care Scholarship Program

When offered the opportunity to study a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) (ECT), I was excited, as I would, not only fulfil a lifelong ambition; I would also extend my knowledge through formal processes.

Embarking on my study journey was a massive challenge to start. Working in the early education and care sector since 1980 as a Mothercraft Nurse and later a Diploma in Child Care, I had attended many workshops and read much research; however, I had not studied formally for about 30 years. This fear subsided due to the amazing study support systems of the University of New England (UNE).

I found being able to study online while working to be advantageous. Planning a study guide prior to the commencement of units was necessary, enabling a balance between work, study and life. Planning also supported my time management by way of practical tasks being undertaken while playing and learning with children and families.

Adopting this system of task management meant more family involvement and listening intently, which I found beneficial to building and maintaining strong relationships. The trusting relationships of children and families supported me to better utilise my experience, known and developing knowledge to deliver pedagogy derived from their choices and interests.

Completing my ECT has deepened my passion for learning with and alongside children and families, as I consider it enjoyable, rewarding, and a noble occupation. I encourage anyone who is passionate about children developing to their best potential to further their professional career through upskilling and recommend UNE.

I thank the Education and Care Unit (TAS), Houn Valley Children's Services for their encouragement, study time, and sponsorship. I also thank my family for tremendous ongoing support during these busy years of our life.

Words by Valerie Kirby BE (ECT), DipCC, MN

View previous ECU Newsletters

You can access the [archive of previous ECU Newsletters](#)³⁹ on the ECU website.

Contact details:
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Links

- ¹ Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - 6th Edition | <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines>
- ² Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - 6th Edition | <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines>
- ³ NHMRC Staying Healthy - fact sheets | <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines/fact-sheets>
- ⁴ NHMRC Staying Healthy - posters <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines/posters-information-sheet>
- ⁵ NHMRC Staying healthy guidelines - technical reports | <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines-download>
- ⁶ Outside School Hours Care Project - HumanAbility | <https://humanability.com.au/projects/outside-school-hours-care.aspx>
- ⁷ HumanAbility | <https://humanability.com.au/>
- ⁸ Outside School Hours Care Project – HumanAbility | <https://humanability.com.au/projects/outside-school-hours-care.aspx>
- ⁹ HumanAbility - Registration for a project | <https://customervoice.microsoft.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HumanAbility.OSHC.Project>
- ¹⁰ Inquiry Report - A path to universal early childhood education and care - Productivity Commission | <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood/report>
- ¹¹ Productivity Commission Public inquiry - Early childhood education and care | <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood-report>
- ¹² National Skin Cancer Action Week | Combatting Australia's 'national cancer' | Cancer Council | <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/campaigns-and-events/national-skin-cancer-action-week>
- ¹³ The Cancer Council SunSmart App | <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-app>
- ¹⁴ Sun Protection Policy Guidelines | <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/SunProtectionGuidelines.pdf>
- ¹⁵ Bushfires and asthma - National Asthma Council Australia | <https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/patients-carers/factsheets/bushfires-and-asthma>
- ¹⁶ Thunderstorm asthma - National Asthma Council Australia | <https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/patients-carers/factsheets/thunderstorm-asthma>
- ¹⁷ Safe Transportation of Children - Policy Guidelines | https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/PolicyGuidelines_SafeTransportationOfChildren_0.pdf
- ¹⁸ Safe Transportation of Children - Policy Guidelines | https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/PolicyGuidelines_SafeTransportationOfChildren_0.pdf
- ¹⁹ TasALERT | <https://alert.tas.gov.au>
- ²⁰ TasALERT - Get Ready | <https://alert.tas.gov.au/get-ready/>
- ²¹ TasALERT | <https://alert.tas.gov.au>
- ²² TasALERT App download | <https://alert.tas.gov.au/about-app>
- ²³ About the TasALERT App | <https://alert.tas.gov.au/about-app>
- ²⁴ TasALERT | <https://alert.tas.gov.au>
- ²⁵ Tasmania State Emergency Service (SES) | <https://www.ses.tas.gov.au/>
- ²⁶ NQAITS | <https://portal.nqaits.gov.au>
- ²⁷ National Decision Tree: An incident | ACECQA | <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/notify/incident>
- ²⁸ Service closure or reduction in numbers due to an incident | ACECQA | <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/notify/incident/service-closure-or-reduction-numbers-due-incident>
- ²⁹ Alerts for the Department for Education, Children and Young People Schools and Other Sites | <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/alerts/>
- ³⁰ TasRECOVERY | <https://alert.tas.gov.au/recovery/>
- ³¹ TasRECOVERY | <https://alert.tas.gov.au/recovery/>
- ³² Help in an emergency | <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/help-emergency>
- ³³ Child Care Subsidy approved providers and services Facebook group | <https://www.facebook.com/groups/359334192803179>
- ³⁴ Early childhood wages - Department of Education, Australian Government | <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/workforce/wages>
- ³⁵ Minor Infrastructure Grants Round 2024-25 | <https://educationandcare.tas.gov.au/news/alert-minor-infrastructure-grants-2024-25/>
- ³⁶ Information sheet - Minor Infrastructure Grants 2024-25 | <https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared/Documents/Information-sheet-ECU-Capital-Upgrade.pdf>
- ³⁷ Minor Infrastructure Grant Application Guidelines 2024-25 | <https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared/Documents/Minor-Infrastructure-Grant-Application-Guidelines-2024-25.pdf>
- ³⁸ ECU Newsletter Issue 4 2024 | <https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/ECU-Newsletter-Issue-4-2024.pdf>
- ³⁹ Archive of previous ECU Newsletters | <https://educationandcare.tas.gov.au/news/newsletters-archive/>