



## Stakeholder Reference Group

### Communique 24 – November 2023

ECU SRG membership:

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	Helen Ransom, Aboriginal Program Officer – Vocational Learning
Australian Childcare Alliance	Mel Reid-Prewer
Catholic Education Tasmania	Donna Bucher, Assistant Director Education Projects
Centre based care - long day care	Chris Symons, Centre Director, Rainbow Childcare and Early Learning Centre
Centre based care - OSHC	Tamieka Archer
Local Government provider representative	Kate Whitbread, Glenorchy City Council
Early Childhood Australia, Tasmania Branch	Annette Barwick
Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania	Sandra Mazengarb
Family Day Care Council Tasmania	Angela Stanley-Gasparin
Independent Schools Tasmania	Mark Seager, Early Years Consultant
Out of Scope services	Tracey Roberts, Wombats Child Care Centre
United Workers Union	Vacant
Parents & Families	Vacant

The ECU SRG met in November 2023. The information below reflects the discussion and outcomes from the meeting.

For information on the Education and Care Stakeholder Reference Group (ECU SRG) and the purpose behind our quarterly meetings, please see the [Terms of Reference](#)<sup>1</sup> on the [ECU website](#)<sup>2</sup>.

#### 1 ECU Update

Vidhya Chelliah has been appointed as Director, Education and Care. Allen Catalan has joined the team in the capacity of Regulatory Officer. Allen will support the Compliance Team.

The recruitment for the Manager, Education and Care will commence in early 2024.

#### 2 National Update

On 23 November 2023 the Productivity Commission released draft findings and recommendations to address the barriers that affect access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and support better outcomes for families in the report [A path to universal early childhood education and care](#)<sup>3</sup> (the PC Report).

The ECU encourages Tasmanian providers and services to [provide feedback in response to the PC Report](#)<sup>4</sup>. Written submissions are due to the Productivity Commission by Wednesday 14 February 2024.

The PC Report is part of a broader national reform agenda that aims to benefit children and families, make ECEC more accessible, affordable and flexible, and improve conditions in the ECEC sector.

Other reform work underway includes, but is not limited to:

- [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission – Childcare Inquiry 2023](#)<sup>5</sup>
- [Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the NQF](#)<sup>6</sup>
- [National Vision for Early Childhood Education and Care](#)<sup>7</sup>

The final report of the ACCC Inquiry and Review of Child Safety Arrangements are scheduled for publication by 31 December 2023. It is anticipated that the National Vision for ECEC will be finalised in early 2024.

### 3 Workforce

Vidhya provided an update on the progress of work occurring under the National ECEC Workforce Strategy – [Shaping Our Future: A ten-year strategy to ensure a sustainable, high-quality children’s education and care workforce 2022-2031](#)<sup>8</sup>.

#### 3.1 Review of staffing and qualification requirements under the NQF (FA5-1)

The final report is due for publication by 31 December 2023.

#### 3.2 Investigate options for early childhood teacher registration (FA1-2)

The ECU has completed jurisdictional analysis and development of roadmap to enable Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) Registration.

The project is now part of a broader review of the *Teachers Registration Act 2000* to be led by the Strategic Policy and Projects team within DECYP. This legislative review is scheduled for 2024.

It is anticipated that consultation with key stakeholders including the ECEC sector and peak bodies will be conducted in the first quarter of 2024.

### 4 Grants

The objective of the ECU Grants Program is to support the provision of safe, inclusive, high-quality education and care for Tasmanian children, and to support initiatives that support the Tasmanian education and care workforce.

Mid-way through the 2023-2024 financial year, the Grants Program has delivered the following:

- Operational funding provided to 10 out of scope (licensed) services.
- Minor Infrastructure Grants (MIG) – 2023-24 round was advertised in October 2023 and closes 11 December 2023.
- Leadership in Education and Care (LEEC) Program.
- Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) Scholarships - University of New England Scholarship (UNE).
- We Love Country books distributed to all services.

The ECU continues to fund the Early Years & School Aged Care (EYSAC) Workforce Strategy.

### 5 Operational Update

The ECU shared an overview of regulatory data on the Tasmanian sector with SRG representatives. We are looking at sharing data more broadly with the sector in the new year, and ongoing on a regular basis.

Updates on this data-sharing project will be provided in due course.

## 6 Other Business

### 6.1 Tasmanian Literacy Implementation

In March 2021, the Literacy Advisory Panel was tasked by then-Premier Peter Gutwein with delivering a community-wide framework and recommendations to lift literacy in Tasmania. In May 2023, the final report *Lifting Literacy* was released. It delivered a community-wide Framework, 23 Priority Recommendations and a further 24 additional recommendations. In June 2023, the Tasmanian Government committed full implementation of all 23 Priority Recommendations.

DECYP has a key role in leading and contributing to implementation of a number of recommendations, including carriage of Recommendation 9:

*DECYP will facilitate and incentivise the adult and ECEC literacy workforce (including volunteers) to participate in evidence-based professional development and engage in a community of practice.*

The SRG has been identified as a key partner to support implementation of this recommendation.

### 6.2 NQA ITS Cloud Migration

The NQA ITS is being rebuilt for the Cloud environment. The change will maintain current functionality and may include enhancements to strengthen the system's capacity to cater to a range of stakeholder needs. The look of the Public Portal will change, but it will use an intuitive 'tiles' layout and will be accessible from any device.

ACECQA is currently working with all jurisdictions to develop appropriate processes for the changeover and to test the Cloud environment.

Initial actions for approved providers will be communicated to the sector on 13 December 2024.

## 7 Impact of SRG

The ECU thanked SRG members for their advice and guidance throughout 2023 on issues that impact the sector. The insights of the SRG have helped the ECU to be more targeted in our response to sector needs.

## 8 2024 Meetings

Next meeting is scheduled for 5 March 2024. We encourage providers, services, educators, families, and communities to contact their SRG representative should they wish to raise any issues for consultation or provide information to the ECU. Details of [SRG members](#)<sup>9</sup> can be found on the [ECU website](#)<sup>10</sup>.

Vidhya Chelliah  
Director, Education and Care Unit  
Department for Education, Children and Young People

## Links

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- <sup>1</sup> ECU SRG Terms of Reference - <https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/Education-and-Care-Unit-Stakeholder-Reference-Group-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> ECU website - <https://educationandcare.tas.gov.au/>
- <sup>3</sup> Draft Report – Early childhood education and care | Australian Government Productivity Commission - <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/childhood/draft>
- <sup>4</sup> Make a Submission | Australian Government Productivity Commission - <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/childhood/make-submission#lodge>
- <sup>5</sup> Childcare inquiry 2023 | ACCC - <https://www.accc.gov.au/inquiries-and-consultations/childcare-inquiry-2023>
- <sup>6</sup> Terms of Reference - Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the NQF | ACECQA - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/Child%20Safety%20Review%20-%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> National vision for early childhood education and care – Australian Government Department of Education - <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/strategy-and-evaluation/national-vision-early-childhood-education-and-care>
- <sup>8</sup> Shaping Our Future | ACECQA - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-10/ShapingOurFutureChildrensEducationandCareNationalWorkforceStrategy-September2021.pdf>
- <sup>9</sup> SRG members | Education and Care Unit - <https://educationandcare.tas.gov.au/stakeholder-reference-group/members/>
- <sup>10</sup> ECU website - <https://educationandcare.tas.gov.au/>