



Stakeholder Reference Group

Communique 23 – June 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	Vacant
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	Gwen Alcock, National Strategic Coordinator – Early Childhood, United Workers Union

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

1 Child Care Subsidy and Payment Integrity

Please refer to the Australian Government handout for details.

2 ECU Staffing – Update

- Vidhya Chelliah has been appointed as Director Education and Care for a fixed term until October 2023.
- Janelle Brennan has successfully applied to continue as Manager - Education and Care Unit until 30 April 2023.
- Susanna Mazzola has joined the ECU as Project Manager Education and Care Workforce.
- Kellie-Anne Dixon, Policy and Administration Officer, has returned after a period of extended leave.
- Lisette Graham has been appointed as an Education and Care Assessor for a fixed term until April 2024.
- Education and Care Assessor Hannah Steele has commenced a period of extended leave. Education and Care Assessor Pamela Hollins and Regulatory Officer Petra Ambrosiussen have resigned and finished with the ECU in May and June respectively.

Recruitment to vacant positions is underway.

3 ECU updates

ECU operations managers provided updates on regulatory requirements and ECU practices. Updates will be communicated to provider and services contacts by email or in the ECU newsletter regarding a range of matters including:

- NQF changes coming into effect from 1 July,
- Nominate Supervisor requirements,
- Child Care Regulation changes,
- Leading in Early Education and Care (LEEC) Program 2023 professional development opportunity,
- reduced A&R notice period and
- QIP submission processes.

4 Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds

Tim Denby and Suzanne Purdon are leading Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds work for DECYP and attended SRG to provide an update on the co-design process for Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds. During Phase Two, Connect, Explore and Gather, of the co-design process DECYP sought feedback from a range of different people across the state to have their say on the future of quality and affordable early learning in their community. 32 Early Learning workshops were held in 25 towns and cities across the South, North, North-West, East and West of the state, attended by over 230 people including parents, grandparents, family members, ECEC services and a mix of people who deliver early years services including schools and other key stakeholders. 110 responses to a public survey titled 'Online Consultation for Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds' were received in April and May 2023 and responses were from parents, families, and service providers from across the state.

During the workshops the design principles were tested, and participants supported the principles, and some asked that 'developmentally' be added to 'quality, age-appropriate and play-based'. Some of the common themes included:

- Early Learning provision needs to be holistic and inclusive with flexible access to suit needs of the child and family.
- Communities want early learning with a 'village' approach including a mix of more ECEC and Children and Family Learning Centre-type services and supports that are accessible locally.
- Aboriginal cultural practices need to be imbedded into service delivery and design.
- People providing services need to have the skills, attributes and knowledge to ensure quality early learning for every child.
- Services need to be place-based with flexible, local provision.
- Staff and workforce challenges are common, too many communities expressed concerns about wages, workload, training, and attracting/retaining quality staff.

DECYP are now preparing a summary of the workshops and survey responses, and this will be released publicly at the end of June. From this and other data sets a selection of communities will be chosen to test and trial Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds prototypes during Phase Four of the co-design process – Test, Evaluate, Refine and Review.

The Co-Design Planning Group continue to provide valuable input and advice and have now met seven times since January. The assessment for the trial sites will not involve the Planning Group to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. It is anticipated that the trial sites will be announced in July and then Local Enabling Groups will be established in each trial site community to lead Phase Four.

Communique 4 is being prepared for ECEC services and other interested services and community members with an update of the co-design process to date and the next steps.

For any questions, please email SPP.admin@decyp.tas.gov.au

5 Workforce Project Manager Update

Susanna Mazzola, Project Manager Education and Care Workforce, is leading the Department's approach to national and state initiatives relating to the issues affecting the ECEC workforce including the implementation of 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](https://www.acecqa.gov.au) ([acecqa.gov.au](https://www.acecqa.gov.au)). In her first four weeks, Susanna focused on familiarizing and connecting with a variety of stakeholders that will support her work within the workforce space.

Tasmania has committed to review specific requirements to develop a roadmap to enable Teachers Registration by the end of 2023, in line with the National Workforce Strategy FAI.

Susanna's main responsibility will be progressing the Teachers Registration project from Phase One to Phase Two, which will focus on formal consultation with the ECEC sector, key stakeholders, and peak bodies.

The ECU continues to fund the Early Years & School Age Care (EYSAC) work undertaken by ECA Tasmania through its grants program.

6 2023 Meetings

Next meeting is scheduled for 5th September 2023 via Microsoft Teams. We encourage providers, services, educators, families, and communities to contact their SRG representatives, should they wish to raise any issues for consultation or provide information to the ECU. Details of [SRG members](#) can be found on the [ECU website](#).

Janelle Brennan
Manager, Education and Care Unit
Department for Education, Children and Young People



Key messages from Compliance Operations Team SRG Meeting - Department for Education, Children and Young People – Tasmania - 6 June 2023

1. The Australian Government Department of Education (Department) works closely with States and Territories in the administration and regulation of the Family Assistance Law and National Law.
 - a. The Department has joined with some State departments/bodies in multi-disciplinary and compliance work which has achieved positive outcomes countering non-compliance and fraud.
 - b. We have suspended and cancelled a number of providers for serious non-compliance.
 - c. We are currently updating our Enforcement Action Register. Under the FAL, the Department is permitted to publish certain sanctions: [Child Care Enforcement Action Register - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)
2. The Department undertakes early intervention work where it sees non-compliance which is suitable to be resolved through educating and guiding entities towards compliance.
 - a. To date this approach has been focussed on session reporting and fee reporting and we have seen that the vast majority of the sector becomes compliant with this approach.
 - b. Where the non-compliance persisted the department issued infringement notices which can reach \$16750 for bodies corporate and \$3300 for individuals.
 - c. The Department can also seek civil penalty orders, in some cases prosecute for crimes, suspend, cancel or place conditions on approvals, or in some cases suspend payment of child care subsidy for three weeks
3. The Department know that the majority of entities in the scheme want to do the right thing. We recommend checking that you are meeting all of your obligations so that you can achieve this.
 - a. When there is non-compliance the department takes a risk based proportionate response. This does not mean that not doing something low risk repeatedly will not attract regulatory attention – the attitude of people in a regulated sector towards compliance is a good indicator of risk. Those who self-identify or have a problem pointed out to them and who work promptly to resolve it are low risk; those who do not are higher risk.
4. The Department is examining compliance with providers reporting the status of working with children checks to it. This is a separate obligation to the requirement to have or report that status to the State/Territory regulators.
5. We are also looking at compliance with reporting all persons with management and control – not just some.
6. And we are looking at fee accuracy – we achieved a positive outcome of reporting fees, but when we checked we can see that fee accuracy is a problem.