

SKILLS *Tasmania*

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE AND SCHOOL AGED CARE SECTORS SKILLS PLAN 2012 - 2016



**Early Childhood
Australia**

A voice for young children

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List of Abbreviations

COAG	Council of Australian Governments
ECA Tasmania	Early Childhood Association, Tasmania Branch
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
LDC	Long Day Care
FDC	Family Day Care
FDCCT	Family Day Care Council of Tasmania
NQA	National Quality Reform Agenda for ECEC
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
OSHC	Outside School Hours Care (<i>used interchangeably with 'SAC'</i>)
PSC Tasmania	Professional Support Co-ordinator Tasmania
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
SAC	School Aged Care (<i>used interchangeably with 'OSHC'</i>)
UTas	University of Tasmania
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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The information contained in this document has been sourced from various consultations, publications and websites.

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Foreword

Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch, the peak body for early childhood education and care in Tasmania, is a not for profit organisation which acts in the best interests of children from birth to eight years of age.

ECA Tasmania has a major commitment to support educators working with children in a variety of early childhood education and care settings, including family day care settings, long day care centres, kindergartens and children up to 12 years in outside school hours care programmes.

The National Reform Agenda presents a unique opportunity to increase the status and standing of the ECEC profession through improved qualifications and adult:ratios, as well as through the implementation of new quality standards.

ECA Tasmania is committed to working collaboratively with Skills Tasmania to develop key strategies to support the intent of the National Reform Agenda.

As the peak body for early childhood education and care with members across all areas of the sector, ECA is the voice for children, and in this role the *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and School Age Care (SAC) Sector Skills Plan* is a strategy to improve outcomes for children.

ECA Tasmania welcomes this Skills Plan as a crucial step towards achieving the high standards of practice we are aiming to achieve in the sector over the period 2012 – 2016.

ECA Tasmania endorses the Skills Plan and commends it to the sector.

Lyn Woolley

President

ECA -Tasmania

The Early Childhood Education and Care sector is undergoing significant changes as a result of the introduction of the national Early Years Learning Framework. This is an historic moment in the way that caring for and educating young children is understood, and leads to greater expectations of the workforce of professional carers and educators.

Skills Tasmania has been actively supporting this shift to higher qualifications. Between 2009-2011 we supported 272 Certificate IIIs, 108 Diplomas and 27 Advanced Diplomas in Children's Services through our Productivity Places Program.

The actions in this Skills Plan bring together many of the successful initiatives already undertaken, and point to a number of strategically agreed on 'next steps' to ensure that Tasmania's Early Childhood Education and Care sector successfully meet the challenges of the new national framework.

I congratulate ECA for its commitment to increasing skill levels in the sector, now and in the future, and assisting operators to meet the new national requirements.

Mike Brough

A/General Manager

Skills Tasmania

24 August 2011

Background to the *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and School Age Care (SAC) Skills Plan 2012 - 2016*

The National Perspective

In December 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed and committed to the National Quality Reform Agenda for ECEC (NQA), to support COAG's vision that all Australian children will have access to high quality education and care.

ECEC comprises different types of services that are increasingly combining education and care, e.g. LDC, pre-schools, FDC and OSHC.

The national reform agenda is based on international and Australian research and evidence that shows skills, knowledge and professional practices are essential to maximising the capacity of ECEC services to provide quality education and care for young children.

As a consequence, the NQA initiatives include the development of a National Quality Framework (NQF), which will bring together the range of state/territory based licensing and quality systems into one nationally consistent system. The NQF will incorporate, for example, improved and nationally standardised adult:child ratios, and mandatory qualifications. The NQF will standardise the regulation of all kindergarten, long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services across Australia.

Existing regulatory arrangements in ECEC reflect a historical distinction between education and care for young children. COAG's ECEC reforms reflect a new approach to quality, regulatory consistency and service delivery. In seeking to create a nationally consistent regulatory framework for all ECEC services, the reforms pose significant challenges for regulators, providers and workers. The draft Productivity Commission Research Report, *Early Childhood Development Workforce*, acknowledges that '...the entire ECEC workforce as well as regulators will be on a steep learning curve, and it is expected that the levels of stress will be high in the industry (sic)'.¹

Implementation of the NQA will commence in 2012.

Changing Role of the ECEC workforce

The research and scientific findings over past two decades '...has created a paradigm shift in the way Early Childhood Development is viewed by policy makers. The ECEC workforce is now expected to provide not just child care, but also education services which enhance the development of children. This new emphasis on education is embodied in the national *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*.'²

The EYLF is Australia's first national framework for early childhood educators. It aims to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school.

Under the NQA, all educators working with children will be required to have, or be working towards, a Certificate III in early childhood education and care, with a minimum of 50% of educators holding or working towards a Diploma qualification, and, depending upon the size of the service, the service must either employ or have access to a degree qualified educator.

¹ *Early Childhood Development Workforce*, draft Productivity Commission Research Report June 2011 p41

² *Early Childhood Development Workforce*, draft Productivity Commission Research Report June 2011 p48

These requirements demand rigorous and robust training by Registered Training Organisations which will underpin and support a well trained workforce.

Overview of the existing, national ECEC workforce

According to the draft Productivity Commission Research Report, *Early Childhood Development Workforce* (refer p 47), the *national* ECEC workforce:

- is overwhelmingly female (97%);
- has two distinct groups of workers:
 - a) approximately 30% - qualified directors or teachers, who generally hold higher education qualifications; and
 - b) approximately 70% - educators who commonly work on a part-time or casual basis, who hold VET qualifications (or no qualification);³
- provides some career pathways from educator through to director roles after obtaining higher level tertiary qualifications and relevant experience;
- however, provides few career pathways for many educators; and insufficient financial or other incentives to obtain additional qualifications necessary for career progression;
- has a significant cohort of transitory workers; and
- has a turnover rate⁴ which, although consistent with other areas of the national workforce, is high.

Presently, it is assumed that approximately 25% or more of Tasmanian educators hold no qualifications. The Child Care Unit (DoE – Early Years) is currently undertaking data collection to gather more precise information around these statistics.

Note: The term ‘educator’ is defined as ‘early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.’⁵

The Challenge for the Tasmanian ECEC Workforce in the period 2012 - 2016

1. Greater integration of the early childhood care and early childhood education sectors, to build a common approach to professional practice and reflection, to share professional learning opportunities, i.e. to become more mutually inclusive and supportive through the implementation of the National Reforms and all of its elements.
2. To meet the NQF requirements, several crucial improvements to educator qualifications must occur:

³ Note – the draft Productivity Report focuses on the national ECEC workforce overview: the Child Care Unit is currently conducting research on the situation in Tasmanian services

⁴ According to United Voice, the turnover in Tasmania is approximately 30% ; and adds to the already significant costs of early childhood services’ limited professional development budget.

⁵ *Belonging, Being and Becoming* The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, DEEWR, 2009 p5

- All educators in LDC and FDC to hold, or be studying towards, a minimum of a Certificate III in Children's Services by 2014
- 50% of educators in LDC services to hold, or be studying towards, a minimum of a Diploma in Children's Services by 2014
- All FDC co-ordinators to hold a minimum of a Diploma in Children's Services by 2014
- All LDC services and Kindergartens to employ or as a minimum (dependent on size of the service) have access to the services of an early childhood teacher by 2014.

The Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Skills Plan 2012 - 2016

The *Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Skills Plan 2012 -2016* has been developed by Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch (ECA Tasmania) on behalf of the ECEC and SAC sectors in Tasmania. The Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

ECA Tasmania is the membership organisation with a membership base representing a diversity of programs for children birth to eight years of age.

ECA Tasmania is aware that, to meet the higher NQA requirements for educational leadership, improved qualifications, and improved adult:child ratios, strategies to retain current professionals in addition to attracting new entrants to the Tasmanian ECEC sector will need to be implemented in the immediate future.

The *Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Skills Plan 2012 - 2016* will provide an overarching strategic framework between the ECEC and SAC sectors, the state government, and other relevant stakeholders, to promote and facilitate skill development in the ECEC and SAC sectors in the period 2012 – 2016, following the implementation of the NQF in January 2012.

The Plan identifies strategic actions, owned by the stakeholders in the ECECC and SAC sectors, which with financial resources can be implemented over the next four years, helping to reduce current and future workforce challenges specific to the ECECC and SAC sectors, and re-shaping the skills profile of the sector. Sustainability of the strategies must be supported through improved wages and conditions for the sector.

The purpose of the Plan therefore is to ensure the delivery of quality skill development opportunities to meet the requirements of the NQF, and to promote the development of a highly skilled and professional Tasmanian ECEC and SAC services workforce.

To progress and monitor this Skills Plan ECA Tasmania and Skills Tasmania will formalise and extend their partnership and establish appropriate review arrangements.

This Skills Plan supports:

- ECA Tasmania in achieving its goals, identified in its *Strategic Direction 2011 – 2014*, namely:
 - being a strong and credible voice for children;
 - promoting high standards of practice for those who care for and educate young children;
 - working collaboratively with government and non-government agencies to support initiatives which aim to improve outcomes for young children; and
 - promoting a cohesive early childhood education and care sector, keeping abreast of emerging education and care issues and ensuring members remain informed;

- Skills Tasmania in achieving four Action Areas identified in the *Tasmanian Skills Strategy 2008 – 2015*, namely:
 - deliver responsive, high quality education and training
 - skills for innovation and future industries
 - meet industry demand for skills; and
 - improve workforce development;
- Skills Tasmania in its overall priority setting for purchasing and funding skill development activities.

The Consultation Phase of the Skills Plan

Relevant ECEC and SAC stakeholders include:

- ECA Tasmania
- Family Day Care Council of Tasmania
- Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania
- Local Government Association of Tasmania (child care service representatives – LDC, FDC and OSHC)
- United Voice
- Australian Services Union
- Skills Tasmania
- Department of Education – Early Years
- The Skills Institute (TSI)
- Tasmanian Polytechnic
- Private Registered Training Organisations – Campbell Page
- Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (via email)
- The Minister’s Child Care Advisory Council (MCCAC)
- Professional Support Co-ordination (Tasmania)
- Individual educators in LDC service (Blackman’s Bay Children’s Services)
- Centacare OSHC Services

The consultations identified benefits of several programs currently occurring:

1. The Professional Learning programs and resources in relation to the introduction of the EYLF, offered through PSC Tasmania – ECEC and SAC services are generally pleased with the relevant content, presentation, and accompanying resources. Participation in such programs is determined by the commitment of individual services to ongoing professional learning.
2. The recent Recognition Project, undertaken by TSI, which has trained a number of people to be workplace coaches. These coaches have achieved the assessor units of the TAE qualification. The outcome of having a number of trained assessors in the LDC workplace, who understand the training requirements of Certificate III and Diploma in Children’s Services, is widely acknowledged as extremely valuable.

3. Several services are well organised, and taking initial steps to engaging with the EYLF, e.g. with regard to program planning, understanding that the EYLF requires on-going professional learning to enable educators to develop deeper level understanding about how children learn.
4. In addition, several services are involved in workforce planning, ensuring that personnel are undertaking study towards a relevant qualification.

However, the consultations also identified significant concerns:

1. The wide variation in the levels of preparedness of ECEC and SAC services for the implementation of the NQF, both in terms of planning for the qualification requirements as from 2012, and professional learning for educators.
2. Many Tasmanian ECEC services have a strong commitment to ensuring training and professional development opportunities for their educators, but
 - a) may deal with individual annual training plans, rather than link such opportunities to the process of workforce planning and development; and
 - b) in many services, the professional development component may be one of the first budget areas to suffer, especially where compounded by costs of 'backfilling' staff.

In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that many services do not fully understand the funding options in relation to educators achieving a formal qualification which may be available to them.

3. Services report significant concerns about the quality of training provided by RTO's.

This is consistent with a concern expressed in the Productivity Commission draft report that '...the sharp increase in demand for ECEC training has the potential to reduce the general standard of training offered across the sector because of increased pressure on the supply of workers capable of providing ECEC training.'⁶
4. Services report concern with:
 - a) the variable/inadequate level of on-site support by RTO's for students
 - b) an RTO's capacity in 3 or 4 on-site visits to properly assess the student's on-going demonstration of competence and underlying knowledge
 - c) the reliance by RTOs on service staff to mentor, support and report on the progress of the student, and
 - d) because of the impost of time and cost to the service of (c), the question of an appropriate remuneration for service personnel for undertaking these responsibilities is also widely expressed. There is a view that the RTO receives the income for the role yet the functions are delegated primarily to the service at no cost. It is therefore seen as an inequitable system in a sector that is currently resource poor.
5. Significant concern has been expressed about the quality of, in particular, pre-service entrants into the VET sector, and consequently, the standard of those graduates, including their lack of work preparedness.

⁶ *Early Childhood Development Workforce*, draft Productivity Commission Research Report June 2011 p166

6. On the other hand, some RTOs note difficulties associated with ensuring quality practicum placements.
7. An issue for Polytechnic is that a significant proportion of students who sign up at the start of the year are offered employment and therefore change to TSI to complete their studies – this impacts on Polytechnic’s direct teaching in class hours, e.g. in the South over 20% of those who enrolled at the start of the year have moved to the TSI.
8. Significant concern has been expressed about the lack of appropriate opportunities for ‘leadership’ training – 2 streams required
 - Educational (Pedagogical)
 - Management
9. Significant concern has been expressed about issues associated with requirements around employing people with an early childhood or equivalent degree, e.g.
 - the cost of employing a degree qualified person/s
 - new, inexperienced graduates leading experienced early childhood educator teams
 - an anticipation that many degree qualified personnel will stay in the ECEC sector only until a permanent position becomes available in school sector; and so on.
10. Concern that there will be appropriate opportunities for the up-skilling of experienced Diploma qualified staff to a degree qualification, i.e. that the training is flexible, takes cognisance of their workload, and is supportive of these staff developing skills of reflective thinking, etc.

Degree qualifications acceptable under the NQF are still to be finalised and published by ACEQA.

11. The FDC sector has particular issues around, for example:
 - the ageing FDC workforce, recruiting and/or developing a career path to retain experienced, skilled FDC educators
 - the ‘centre based care’ emphasis within the training packages; and
 - ensuring RTO’s have current information and understanding of best practice in FDC
 - need to develop relevant competencies/modules in VET training packages for co-ordination unit staff – complexity of roles
 - need for co-ordination unit staff and selected FDC educators to become assessors and work in partnership with RTOs to provide RCC for those lacking confidence to enrol in formal qualification
 - need for FDC focussed professional learning re EYLF and intentional programming, especially for FDC educators who are bi-lingual
 - need for a ‘bridging course’ to cover the gap between Advanced Diploma and an early childhood degree.
12. The SAC (OSHC) sector has particular issues around, for example
 - recruiting and retention of appropriate staff – there is a high turnover of educators, eg an area of recruitment is students undertaking a teaching/EC degree, who are prepared to work for a limited period of time, whilst undergraduates, etc
 - whether the Teachers Assistant – OSHC nexus a realistic expectation, especially during term times (eg potential difficulties integrating educators’ hours for BSC, school, and ASC)

- given the high turnover of personnel, cost of relevant in-service training, quite apart from costs of training for a qualification
- the need for OSHC focussed professional learning opportunities in relation to implementing the Framework for SAC, *'My Time, Our Place'*. (One description was '..there is a need to drill down to next level now...')
- to have educators effectively manage change, there is a need for more clarity around the 'change process' in order to initiate continuous improvement;
- cost of training and RPL, particularly where OSHC employment is below 20 hours per week
- collaboration between a school's OSHC program and the whole school community – much work to be done to support this collaboration.

13. On-going need to attract more males into the ECEC and SAC workforce.

In summary, there are several 'themes' arising from these concerns:

(1) Workforce Planning and Development

- There appears to have been little opportunity for statewide ECEC and SAC sector discussion to specifically develop and promote an agreed vision for a highly skilled, professional Tasmanian ECEC and SAC workforce.
- The need to promote this vision in terms of ECEC and SAC as a valuable and valued career to a range of potential workforce entrants, AND to support those already in the workforce to further develop their skills and knowledge and lead engagement with the EYLF.
- Lack of understanding of workforce planning for the period 2012 – 2016 on the part of many ECEC and SAC services.
- Capacity of those entering the workforce, and their commitment to ECEC as a career. This includes issues such as inappropriate 'streaming' at Years 10, 11 and 12; VET selection processes; literacy levels, etc.

(2) Capacity and Capability Building

- There is widespread sector concern re the quality of VET training offered by RTOs and related issues, such as assessment procedures.
- This includes the sector's understanding of its capacity to drive the content and standard of delivery of training, and therefore its capacity to lead the development of appropriate training and development solutions for the sector, eg leadership training.

(3) Skilling and Developing the Workforce

- Moving from the VET to Higher Education sector – there is a need for an easily understood process and ‘sympathetic’ articulation pathways which support those already in the ECEC workforce.
- Retention of experienced, unqualified educators in order to avoid exacerbating the shortage of skilled personnel in 2014 when the NQS qualification requirements are implemented.
- The need to establish a ‘pool’ of educators with mentorship/coaching/assessment skills.
- Specific issues within certain parts of the sector, e.g. FDC and OSHC.

(4) Capacity to Implement the Skills Plan

Concerns can be summarised briefly – how can the sector afford to implement the steps necessary to achieve NQA requirements during the period 2012 – 2016?

Skills Plan Outcomes

The NQF intends to raise the developmental outcomes for children by enriching their learning and development from birth to 5 years and, as a consequence, will lift levels of professionalism, and improve adult:ratios in ECEC settings.

However, the NQF does not specifically address the underlying issues of wages and conditions of educators, and the discrepancies which currently exist within different areas of ECEC (eg school and child care).

This Skills Plan recognises that several strategies, eg marketing the ECEC and SAC sectors, may be problematic when wages and conditions are not commensurate with the current, let alone the impending, responsibilities and qualification requirements,

However, the lead-up to the implementation of the NQF is an apt time to undertake new marketing strategies, to raise the profile of educators, and to heighten community awareness of how the early childhood care and early childhood education sectors are becoming more mutually inclusive and supportive through the implementation of all aspects of the NRA.

Much of the Tasmanian ECEC and SAC sector is resource poor, and therefore moving to the NQF will be a challenge. ECA Tasmania will apply to Skills Tasmania for funding for an Innovative Partnership to progress the development and delivery of appropriate strategies within the Skills Plan.

Note: This Skills Plan also acknowledges that several identified strategies to progress workforce planning and development may not be possible unless appropriate funding avenues and partnerships can be established.

I. Workforce Planning

The ECEC and SAC sectors are able to clearly identify issues of concern in relation to the current workforce, and also anticipate significant issues with the introduction of the NQF in 2012.

To successfully manage the requirements of the COAG National Reform Agenda in the period 2012 - 2016, the Tasmanian ECEC and SAC sectors must first develop an agreed sector vision for a skilled, professional workforce.

This vision should aim to:

- promote the valuable role that EC educators play in the lives of young children and their families
- recruit suitable, capable candidates who can realistically be employed within the sector
- train the increased number of educators, as required under the NQS, within the timeframe
- upskill those already in the sector to effectively provide for improved outcomes for children
- provide relevant professional development for educational leadership
- promote the professional integration of the early childhood care and early childhood education sectors
- outline potential career pathways for those entering and exiting at different points, eg entry pathways to an ECEC/SAC career; or existing educators with VET qualifications moving to a degree qualification, etc.

In order that the ECEC and SAC sectors have access to a sufficient supply of appropriately qualified workers to meet the requirements of the NQF during the period 2012 – 2016, workforce planning objectives additional to the sector vision include:

1. Develop and implement an effective marketing strategy/ies to promote the ECEC sector as a valuable career option, and target recruitment strategies.
2. Improve workforce planning practices adopted by enterprises in the ECEC and SAC sectors through professional development opportunities and individual service support, where required.
3. Increase the sector's understanding of the range of funding options in relation to educators achieving a formal qualification, which may be available to them.
4. Facilitate the achievement of a degree qualification by those holding a VET qualification, and/or relevant experience, leadership capacity and ambition.

2. Building the Capability and Capacity of the ECEC and SAC sectors and improving Quality Training outcomes

As already noted, many Tasmanian ECEC and SAC services have a strong commitment to ensuring training and professional development opportunities for their personnel. Indeed, many services already have strong partnerships with one or more RTOs.

On the whole, however, the sector expresses on-going concerns about the quality of current VET training, the variable level of support for, and the assessment of demonstration of student competence, and services' capacity to support and mentor students of behalf of an RTO.

In addition, the introduction of the NQF demands a significant shift in style of delivery of qualifications. The sector is concerned re RTOs level of understanding of the NQA, and their understanding and engagement with the EYLF. The introduction of qualification requirements in 2014 will challenge RTOs capacity to accommodate a greater number of pre-service and in-service students.

The need to strengthen the sector's capacity to improve training outcomes in Tasmania reflects concerns at a national level. A Workforce Development Committee is considering similar issues from a national perspective, as part of the Commonwealth's overall ECD strategy. The Productivity Commission Enquiry will feed into this process.

In addition, a Workforce Forum, was convened in late 2010 by the then Tasmanian Minister for Education (Lin Thorp) with aim of discussing a range of related issues and initiatives. The Forum will provide a position paper to the Minister on issues including

- wages and conditions in ECEC settings;
- increasing costs of child care including the impact of the NQA ;
- improving linkages between ECEC settings, including effective communications strategies for schools and colleges, and relevant Professional Learning in schools
- progress on Teacher Registration for those teaching in child care ECEC settings; and
- appropriate training/qualification for Teacher Assistants.

For training and professional development to be effective, there must be a strong partnership between the stakeholders, with each party clearly understanding their role and responsibilities:

- The ECEC and SAC sectors need to be clear re their expectations of RTO's, and aware that the sector has a responsibility to drive the standard of training delivery. T
- RTOs need to know and appreciate the ECEC and SAC sector vision for 2012 - 2016, and understand the NQF and NQS requirements. R
- Both RTOs and the sector need to be able to identify gaps in existing training, particularly as the move to the NQF may require new skills and knowledge. B

A Skills Audit will map required skills sets, and identify training gaps, eg around educational leadership. A Skills Audit will provide an excellent tool for the sector to work with RTOs to clarify expected performance standards in the workplace, in reviewing training packages and skill sets, and training delivery.

To achieve the objective that the ECEC and SAC sectors will build the capacity and capability to drive training and professional development, and to ensure that VET and higher education providers deliver quality training to the standards required under NQF, strategies include:

- I. Establish a representative ECEC and SAC Training and Professional Development Reference Group (T&PD Reference Group) in order that the ECEC and SAC sectors have a mechanism to drive training and professional development, and to ensure that VET delivers quality training to the standards required under NQF.

2. Through the mechanism of a Training and Professional Development Round Table, RTOs, the VET sector and higher education providers will develop a good understanding of the professional development and qualifications requirements of the ECEC and SAC sectors during the period 2012 – 2016, and the ECEC and SAC sectors will develop a good understanding of the VET and higher education sectors.
3. The ECEC and SAC sectors will collaborate with training providers to map the gaps in current training provision, via a Skills Audit.
4. The ECEC and SAC sectors will enter into partnerships/collaborate with VET providers to achieve delivery of quality training which meets sector needs.
5. The ECEC and SAC sectors will enter into partnerships/collaborate with higher education providers to achieve delivery of quality training which meets sector needs.

3. Skilling and Developing the ECEC and SAC Workforce

Skills development opportunities must be available at a variety of points – entry level, those re-entering the workforce after a break from the profession, and for those in the workforce, on-going professional development, and/or opportunities to upgrade qualifications.

The ECEC and SAC workforce currently includes a significant body of skilled, experienced educators who currently hold no relevant EC qualification. It is important to develop strategies to retain these educators, and encourage their commitment to undertake Certificate III, the minimum qualification.

In addition, there is a group of experienced educators who recently have successfully completed the assessor component of the TAE. This group has an important, continuing role to play in supporting other educators to achieve the qualifications, skills and knowledge required under the NQF and NQS.

A ‘pressure point’ identified by the sectors is the difficulties of many graduates to adjust to the demands of the workplace. It is crucial to support these new graduates so they are confident to commence an ECEC career rather than leave the sector at this stage.

It is important, too, that ECEC and Sac services develop and budget for appropriate support mechanisms for all educators as they undertake professional learning and development.

To achieve the objective that the ECEC and SAC workforce have the required qualifications, skills and knowledge to ensure that learning and development outcomes for children meet those outlined in the NQF and NQS, within the timeframe 2012 – 2016, strategies include:

1. Utilise the proposed national RPL assessment tools and enable the current workplace coaches to continue as assessors.
2. Source funding to provide on-going assessor training, and include personnel from FDC and SAC sectors, which will improve sectors’ capacity to collaborate with training providers in delivery of quality training outcomes.

3. Source funding to establish a program to support experienced but not yet qualified educators towards a minimum qualification through RPL and other suitable assessment mechanisms.
4. Source funding to support new graduates in the workplace to embed knowledge and skills, promote their confidence and nurture their leadership capacity.
5. In conjunction with the FDC sector, specifically address issues in relation to assessment of FDC educators in a FDC workplace, promote RTO understanding of best practice in FDC, develop skills sets that address the needs of Scheme (Co-ordination Unit) personnel.
6. Tailor professional learning to assist SAC personnel engage with the national Framework for School Aged Care, *My Time, Our Place*.

4. Implementing the ECEC and SAC Skills Plan

Generally, the sector is 'resource poor'. Services expressed concern that much of the cost of upskilling the workforce to meet NQA requirements will need to be passed on to parents through fee increases, unless adequate funding for workplace development projects can be accessed.

Several national and state funding initiatives *are* available, but lead stakeholders may need assistance to investigate funding alternatives, prepare submissions and implement projects.

To achieve the objective of sourcing adequate funding to implement the Skills Plan, strategies include:

1. ECA Tasmania will, by September 2011, prioritise the strategies identified in the Skills Plan and establish whether funding is currently available, eg National Workforce Funding for relevant skills sets such as assessment (TAE) – refer to 3.2
2. ECA Tasmania will, by September 2011, apply to Skills Tasmania for funding for an Innovative Partnership to assist with development and delivery of strategic Workforce Planning projects.
3. ECA Tasmania will collaborate with Skills Tasmania to disseminate information and promote access by services and educators to a range of national and other state funding sources.
4. To progress and monitor the Skills Plan, ECA Tasmania and Skills Tasmania will establish appropriate review arrangements. This will include a formal review in June/July 2012

NB: It is recognised that the implementation of the NQF may highlight issues that are not anticipated at this stage. It is therefore imperative that the Skills Plan is flexible, and open to review.

I. WORKFORCE PLANNING					
Outcome:					
The ECEC and SAC sectors will have access to a sufficient supply of appropriately qualified workers to meet the requirements of the NQF during the period 2012 - 2016					
		Priority	Stakeholders	Timeframe	Status
1.1	Develop a Position Statement to facilitate the adoption by ECA Tasmania, and ECEC and SAC services of a vision for a skilled, professional ECEC and SAC workforce in Tasmania	High	*ECA Tasmania ECEC and SAC services Early childhood education sector	Sep 2011	New
1.2	<p>1.2.1 Develop an effective marketing campaign to promote the ECEC as a career of choice. Campaign could be phased, and focus on, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific age groups e.g. Grade 11/12 • Males • Specific sector, e.g. OSHC or FDC <p>1.2.2 In order to attract candidates with appropriate capacity, and an interest/commitment to a career in ECEC and SAC sectors, work with Senior Secondary Colleges to further knowledge of teaching staff re NQA, and specifically to encourage the promotion of Cert II and III as entry level training to ECEC career path</p> <p>1.2.3 In order to attract candidates with appropriate capacity, and an interest/commitment to a career in ECEC and SAC sectors, work with employment services providers to promote awareness of NQA, and realistic educator requirements, and therefore 're-shape' recruitment material, etc</p>	High	<p>1.2.1 *ECA Tasmania Skills Tasmania RTOs</p> <p>1.2.2 *ECA Tas/PD Reference Grp Skills Tasmania Senior Secondary Colleges/DoE TQA</p> <p>1.2.3 *ECA Tasmania ECA Australia Skills Tasmania RTOs Employment services providers</p>	<p>2012</p> <p>2011 – 2012</p> <p>2011 - 2012</p>	<p>New</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>
1.3	<p>Improve workforce planning practices adopted by enterprises in the ECEC and SAC sectors by:</p> <p>1) Hold workshops and develop a resource such as a 'Best Practice Guide to Professional Development' [parallel to the 'Better Workplaces – Employer Resource Kit' (Tas Dep't of Economic Development)] to promote ECEC and SAC services' understanding of workforce planning.</p> <p>2) Have a consultant/adviser with relevant skills work with each service individually to</p>	High	<p>1) *Skills Tasmania ECEC and SAC services PSC Tasmania</p> <p>2) *Skills Tasmania DoE – Early Years (research</p>	<p>2012</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>New</p> <p>New</p>

	<p>evaluate existing/establish workforce planning for that service</p> <p>3) Investigate funding options eg Workplace Skills to continue the partnership between PSC and Jenard Training to deliver the module <i>Management Workforce Planning BSBHRM504A</i> in each region to embed knowledge re workforce planning</p> <p>4) Facilitate a short-term project to promote the sector's understanding of funding options in relation to educators achieving a formal qualification (VET or higher education) which may be available to them, potentially including development of a suitable resource (eg pamphlet)</p>		<p>data analysis) PSC Tasmania</p> <p>3) *PSC Tas Skills Tasmania ECEC and SAC services</p> <p>4) *ECA Tas Skills Tasmania Employment services providers</p>	<p>2012</p> <p>2011</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>
1.4	<p>1.4.1 Work with UTas, DoE, VET and Higher Education providers to ensure articulation of qualifications is achievable, and supportive of the needs of those holding VET qualifications and/or relevant experience, leadership capacity and ambition, who are currently in the ECEC workforce. [eg through representation on UTas Pre-service Course Advisory Committee and the Professional Experience Advisory Group]</p> <p>1.4.2 Short-term project to collate information about relevant ECEC degree courses in Tasmania or offered via distance education, and support programs, e.g. University Preparation Program (UTas), and case studies (eg the learning journeys of educators who have successfully achieved a degree qualification) into a resource for educators planning to undertake a degree</p>	High	<p>1.4.1 *UTas ECA Tasmania DoE – Early Years Other Universities</p> <p>1.4.2 *ECA Tasmania UTas Other universities</p>	<p>2011 – 2012</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>

2. BUILDING THE CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY OF THE ECEC AND SAC SECTORS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES OF QUALITY TRAINING					
Outcome:					
The ECEC and SAC sectors will build the capacity and capability to drive training and professional development, and to ensure that VET and higher education providers deliver quality training to the standards required under NQF.					
		Priority	Stakeholders	Timeframe	
2.1	Establish an ECEC and SAC Training and Professional Development Reference Group (T&PD Reference Group)	High	* ECA Tasmania ECEC and SAC services	2011 – on-going	New
2.2	Establish an ECEC and SAC Training and Professional Development Round Table which meets regularly with RTOs and Higher Education to review training outcomes against skills required, and identify and address training gaps, and review outcomes of training initiatives in the period 2012 - 2016.	High	* ECA Tasmania * Skills Tasmania RTOs UTas PSC Tasmania	2011 - ongoing	New
2.3	Conduct a Skills Audit to map required skills and skills sets, and identify training gaps, eg around educational leadership, to inform 'Round Table' discussion	High	* T&PD Reference Group * Skills Tasmania ECA Tasmania PSC Tasmania CS&H ISC	2011 - 2012	New
2.4	Promote and facilitate sector awareness of the CS&H ISC, its role and projects in order to maximise Tasmanian ECEC and SAC sector feedback to CS&H ISC in review of current, and development of future, training packages	On-going	* Skills Tasmania CS&H ISC T&PD Reference Group ECA Tasmania ECEC and SAC services	2011- ongoing	New

2.5	<p>2.5.1 Hold a Forum/Workshop for RTOs, focussing on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of all elements of the NRA • 'Best Practice in FDC' <p>2.5.2 Investigate a partnership to offer the EYLF Professional Learning program available through PSC to RTOs in order to broaden RTOs understanding of the workforce development requirements during the period 2012 – 2016, and to improve RTO delivery of relevant qualifications.</p> <p>2.5.3 Fund a short-term project to develop guidelines which will facilitate workplace placements of RTO personnel to ensure currency of their knowledge of the range of ECEC and SAC workplace environments, skills/ skills sets required under the NQF</p>	High	<p>2.5.1 *Skills Tasmania PSC Tasmania ECA Tasmania RTOs CS&H ISC FDC Tasmania</p> <p>2.5.2*PSC Tasmania Skills Tasmania RTOs</p> <p>2.5.3 *Skills Tasmania T&PD Reference Group RTOs ECEC and SAC services</p>	2012 2012 2012 – ongoing	New New New
2.6	<p>Improve standards of delivery of Certificates II and III in Children's Services (entry level qualifications) in Senior Secondary Colleges, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with Senior Secondary Colleges to ensure rigorous delivery of Cert 2 and 3 by personnel with relevant ECEC qualifications, and industry experience • holding a Forum/Workshop for relevant teaching staff, focussing on delivery of all elements of the NRA 	High	<p>*T&PD Reference Group Senior Secondary Colleges Selected RTOs</p> <p>*Skills Tasmania T&PD Reference Group ECA Tasmania PSC Tasmania</p>	2011 – 2012 2011 - 2012	New New

3. SKILLING AND DEVELOPING THE ECEC AND SAC WORKFORCE

Outcome:

The ECEC and SAC workforce will have required skills and knowledge to ensure that learning and development outcomes for children meet that outlined in the NQF and NQS

		Priority	Stakeholders	Timeframe	Status
3.1	3.1.1 Establish a project to apply for DEEWR funding in relation to the proposed national RPL assessment tool, in order to	High	3.1.1 *ECA Tasmania	2011	New
	3.1.2 Appoint an RTO to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate existing workplace coaches to continue their role as assessors within LDC services • Support on-going networking/validation and moderation workshops/professional learning for these workplace assessors • Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of workplace coaches, as per national RPL project 	High	3.1.2 *Selected RTO Skills Tasmania/DEEWR ECEC and SAC services	2012	New
3.2	Establish a funded project to provide rigorous training in assessment (TAE) to selected educators, including those from the FDC sector, to increase the pool of workplace coaches and assessors	High	*FDCCTasmania Selected RTO Skills Tasmania ECEC and SAC services	2012	Existing/ new elements
3.3	3.3.1 Establish a funded pilot project in partnership with a selected RTO, to facilitate the retention of long-term, unqualified but highly experienced ECEC and SAC educators, and to encourage their commitment to undertake the minimum qual (Cert 3), through Recognition (on-site assessment) and relevant skills sets; supported by their service. Utilise DoE – Early Years research data to determine the size of this group	High	3.3.1 *ECA Tasmania or T&PD Reference Group Selected RTO Skills Tasmania DoE – Early Years	2012 – 2013	New elements
	3.3.2, Apply for PPP funding to continue and improve on the pilot project.	High	3.3.2 *Selected RTO Skills Tasmania ECEC and SAC services	2013	
3.4	In conjunction with the FDC sector, establish partnerships to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Offer 'Best Practice in FDC' workshops to RTOS 2) Offer training for co-ordination staff, and selected FDC educators, re translating the 	High	1) *FDCCTasmania Skills Tasmania/RTOS 2) *FDCCTasmania	2012 – on-going	New New

	EYLF into practice, in order to appropriately support FDC educators		PSC Tasmania		elements
	3) Work with RTO's to recognise the educators' home as a valid assessment alternative to centre-based care		3) * FDCCTasmania Selected RTO/RTO's CS&H ISC		Existing
	4) Work with RTO's to develop skills sets which will adequately prepare co-ordination staff for their role, i.e. leadership, complaints handling, supervision, HR, mentoring, etc		4)* FDCCTasmania CS&H ISC RTOs		Existing
	5) Investigate the possibility of assessing a standardised <i>Orientation program</i> and on-going professional development against Certificate 3 competencies		5)* FDCCTasmania CS&H ISC RTOs		New
3.5	In conjunction with the SAC sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training for co-ordinator/managers re translating the FSAC into practice, in order to appropriately support SAC educators working with children aged 5 – 12 years 	High	* PSC Tasmania ECA Tasmania (SAC reps) Skills Tasmania ECEC and SAC services	2012	New elements
3.6	Establish a pilot project - a partnership between a selected RTO and the sector, whereby selected pre-service candidates are placed with qualified coaches/mentors are released from their usual role, in order to provide good role modelling in areas of educational leadership, and remunerated	High	* PSC Tasmania ECEC and SAC services Skills Tasmania	2012	New
3.7	Establish a partnership project which will support new graduates in the workforce, through networking, mentoring and professional learning opportunities	High	* ECA Tasmania Skills Tasmania Selected RTO ECEC and SAC services	2012	New
3.8	Review the Child Care Scholarship Scheme to ensure that funds are appropriately targeted to support educators	High	* ECA Tasmania * DoE – Early Years	Aug – Dec 2011	Existing

5. IMPLEMENTING THE ECEC AND SAC SKILLS PLAN

Outcome:

ECA in collaboration with Skills Tasmania will work towards achieving adequate funding to implement the Skills Plan.

		Priority	Stakeholders	Timeframe	Status
4.1	ECA Tasmania will prioritise the strategies identified in the Skills Plan and establish whether funding is currently available, eg National Workforce Funding for relevant skills sets such as assessment (TAE) – refer to 3.2	High	* ECA Tasmania PSC FDCC Tasmania	September 2011	New
4.2	ECA Tasmania will apply to Skills Tasmania for funding for an Innovative Partnership to assist with development and delivery of strategic Workforce Planning projects.	High	* ECA Tasmania * Skills Tasmania	September 2011	New
4.3	ECA Tasmania will collaborate with Skills Tasmania to disseminate information and promote access by services and educators to a range of national and other state funding sources.	High	* ECA Tasmania * Skills Tasmania	2011 and on-going	New
4.4	To progress and monitor the Skills Plan, ECA Tasmania and Skills Tasmania will establish appropriate review arrangements.	High	* ECA Tasmania * Skills Tasmania	June/July 2012 and on-going	New

References

1. ECA Tasmania Branch *Strategic Direction 2011 – 2014*
2. *Early Childhood Development Workforce*, Draft Research Report Australian Government Productivity Commission June 2011
3. *Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* DEEWR for COAG 2009
4. *Better Workplaces – Employer Resource Kit* Tas Dep't of Economic Development www.development.tas.gov.au/___data/assets/file/0004/17356/Better_Workplaces.pdf
5. Draft Regulations
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Documents/EducationandCareServicesNationalRegulations.pdf
6. Draft NQS
http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/QualityStandards.aspx
7. *My Time, Our Place* Framework for School Aged Care
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Pages/FrameSchAgeCare.aspx
8. *2010 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* The Social Research Centre, Victoria June 2011
9. *Work, life and VET participation amongst lower-paid workers* NCVET Monograph Series 05/2011. Pocock B, Skinner N, McMahon C, and Pritchard S Centre for Work + Life, University of South Australia

Early Childhood Australia Tasmania Branch

Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Sector Skills Plan Priority Listings

27th September 2011

ECA Tasmania has established a sub committee to work on prioritising the strategies indentified in the Skills Plan. The committee has reviewed the outcomes and have prioritised these into the following areas;

- 1) Project
- 2) Priorities stage 1, 2 & 3
- 3) Work currently being undertaken in these areas
- 4) Further information required before determining the priority area

ECA Tasmania will apply to Skills Tasmania for funding for an Innovative Partnership to assist with development and delivery of strategic Workforce Planning projects aligned with the Skills Plan outcomes.

Project

1.1	Develop a Position Statement to facilitate the adoption by ECA Tasmania, and ECEC and SAC services of a vision for a skilled, professional ECEC and SAC workforce in Tasmania
2.1	Establish an ECEC and SAC Training and Professional Development Reference Group (T&PD Reference Group)
2.2	Establish an ECEC and SAC Training and Professional Development Round Table which meets regularly with RTOs and Higher Education to review training outcomes against skills required, and identify and address training gaps, and review outcomes of training initiatives in the period 2012 - 2016.
2.4	Promote and facilitate sector awareness of the CS&H ISC, its role and projects in order to maximise Tasmanian ECEC and SAC sector feedback to CS&H ISC in review of current, and development of future, training packages

Appendix 1

4.1	ECA Tasmania will prioritise the strategies identified in the Skills Plan and establish whether funding is currently available, eg National Workforce Funding for relevant skills sets such as assessment (TAE) – refer to 3.2
4.2	ECA Tasmania will apply to Skills Tasmania for funding for an Innovative Partnership to assist with development and delivery of strategic Workforce Planning projects.
4.3	ECA Tasmania will collaborate with Skills Tasmania to disseminate information and promote access by services and educators to a range of national and other state funding sources.
4.4	To progress and monitor the Skills Plan, ECA Tasmania and Skills Tasmania will establish appropriate review arrangements.

Priority 1

1.3 (4)	Facilitate a short-term project to promote the sector’s understanding of funding options in relation to educators achieving a formal qualification (VET or higher education) which may be available to them, potentially including development of a suitable resource (eg pamphlet)
1.4 (2)	Short-term project to collate information about relevant ECEC degree courses in Tasmania or offered via distance education, and support programs, e.g. University Preparation Program (UTas), and case studies (eg the learning journeys of educators who have successfully achieved a degree qualification) into a resource for educators planning to undertake a degree
3.6	Establish a pilot project - a partnership between a selected RTO and the sector, whereby selected pre-service candidates are placed with qualified coaches/mentors are released from their usual role, in order to provide good role modelling in areas of educational leadership, and remunerated
3.7	Establish a partnership project which will support new graduates in the workforce, through networking, mentoring and professional learning opportunities

Appendix 1

Priority 2

2.3	Conduct a Skills Audit to map required skills and skills sets, and identify training gaps, eg around educational leadership, to inform 'Round Table' discussion
2.5	<p>2.5.1 Hold a Forum/Workshop for RTOs, focussing on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivery of all elements of the NRA <p>'Best Practice in FDC'</p> <p>2.5.4 Investigate a partnership to offer the EYLF Professional Learning program available through PSC to RTOs in order to broaden RTOs understanding of the workforce development requirements during the period 2012 – 2016, and to improve RTO delivery of relevant qualifications.</p> <p>2.5.5 Fund a short-term project to develop guidelines which will facilitate workplace placements of RTO personnel to ensure currency of their knowledge of the range of ECEC and SAC workplace environments, skills/ skills sets required under the NQF</p>
2.6	<p>Improve standards of delivery of Certificates II and III in Children's Services (entry level qualifications) in Senior Secondary Colleges, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• working with Senior Secondary Colleges to ensure rigorous delivery of Cert 2 and 3 by personnel with relevant ECEC qualifications, and industry experience• holding a Forum/Workshop for relevant teaching staff, focussing on delivery of all elements of the NRA
3.4	<p>In conjunction with the FDC sector, establish partnerships to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6) Offer 'Best Practice in FDC' workshops to RTOS

Appendix 1

Priority 3

1.2	<p>1.2.1 Develop an effective marketing campaign to promote the ECEC as a career of choice. Campaign could be phased, and focus on, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific age groups e.g. Grade 11/12• Males• Specific sector, e.g. OSHC or FDC <p>1.2.4 In order to attract candidates with appropriate capacity, and an interest/commitment to a career in ECEC and SAC sectors, work with Senior Secondary Colleges to further knowledge of teaching staff re NQA, and specifically to encourage the promotion of Cert II and III as entry level training to ECEC career path</p> <p>1.2.5 In order to attract candidates with appropriate capacity, and an interest/commitment to a career in ECEC and SAC sectors, work with employment services providers to promote awareness of NQA, and realistic educator requirements, and therefore ‘re-shape’ recruitment material, etc</p>
1.3	<p>Improve workforce planning practices adopted by enterprises in the ECEC and SAC sectors by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">5) Hold workshops and develop a resource such as a ‘Best Practice Guide to Professional Development’ [parallel to the ‘Better Workplaces – Employer Resource Kit’ (Tas Dep’t of Economic Development)] to promote ECEC and SAC services’ understanding of workforce planning.6) Have a consultant/adviser with relevant skills work with each service individually to evaluate existing/establish workforce planning for that service

Work already being done in a variety of contexts

1.3	3) Investigate funding options eg Workplace Skills to continue the partnership between PSC and Jenard Training to deliver the module <i>Management Workforce Planning BSBHRM504A</i> in each region to embed knowledge re workforce planning
1.4 (1)	Work with UTAs, DoE, VET and Higher Education providers to ensure articulation of qualifications is achievable, and supportive of the needs of those holding VET qualifications and/or relevant experience, leadership capacity and ambition, who are currently in the ECEC workforce. [eg through representation on UTAs Pre-service Course Advisory Committee and the Professional Experience Advisory Group]
3.4	In conjunction with the FDC sector, establish partnerships to 2) Offer training for co-ordination staff, and selected FDC educators, re translating the EYLF into practice, in order to appropriately support FDC educators 7) Work with RTO's to recognise the educators' home as a valid assessment alternative to centre-based care 8) Work with RTO's to develop skills sets which will adequately prepare co-ordination staff for their role, i.e. leadership, complaints handling, supervision, HR, mentoring, etc 5) Investigate the possibility of assessing a standardised Orientation program and on-going professional development against Certificate 3 competencies
3.5	In conjunction with the SAC sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training for co-ordinator/managers re translating the FSAC into practice, in order to appropriately support SAC educators working with children aged 5 – 12 years
3.8	Review the Child Care Scholarship Scheme to ensure that funds are appropriately targeted to support educators

Further information required

<p>3.1</p>	<p>3.1.1 Establish a project to apply for DEEWR funding in relation to the proposed national RPL assessment tool, in order to</p> <p>3.1.2 Appoint an RTO to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate existing workplace coaches to continue their role as assessors within LDC services • Support on-going networking/validation and moderation workshops/professional learning for these workplace assessors • Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of workplace coaches, as per national RPL project
<p>3.2</p>	<p>Establish a funded project to provide rigorous training in assessment (TAE) to selected educators, including those from the FDC sector, to increase the pool of workplace coaches and assessors</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p>3.3.1 Establish a funded pilot project in partnership with a selected RTO, to facilitate the retention of long-term, unqualified but highly experienced ECEC and SAC educators, and to encourage their commitment to undertake the minimum qual (Cert 3), through Recognition (on-site assessment) and relevant skills sets; supported by their service. Utilise DoE – Early Years research data to determine the size of this group</p> <p>3.3.2, Apply for PPP funding to continue and improve on the pilot project.</p>