

Published by Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS). ACCS In Action is a quarterly publication. If you would like to contribute an article to this publication, please email: ausccs@cccinc.org.au. For more information on ACCS visit our website: www.ausccs.org.au

Assessors in the New Quality System Must be Qualified

Prue Warrilow, National Convenor

The community children's services sector is very busy, working towards the start of the National Quality Framework (NQF) on 1 January 2012.

One of the critical success factors for the NQF (aside from a few details about the final regulations and assessment timeframes) will be the capacity of the external assessors to effectively partner with children's services in their quality assessment. This needs to be a true partnership where the assessors and service representatives can reflect and talk frankly about how the service believes it is going in delivering the NQF standards, what are the gaps and opportunities, and ways forward to inform the Quality Improvement Plan. To do this, assessors need not only to understand what the assessment tool is about but also to have appropriate qualifications and experience in children's services. My personal belief is that assessors **MUST HAVE** a minimum degree qualification in early or middle childhood or a related area such as education. How can someone without a related appropriate qualification examine and review the implementation of early or middle childhood pedagogy?

How will they be able to engage the service's pedagogical leader in reflections about how the service is implementing the early or middle childhood frameworks? How will they be able to look at different philosophical approaches such as Montessori or emergent curriculum and see the philosophy in practice at a service?

COAG has not yet decided this crucial question - there is a real risk that assessors may not be qualified or have experience in children's services. ACCS members need to be talking to your state and territory children's services departments about how they are going to ensure their existing children's services officers have the appropriate qualifications and skills to take on this new and important role. Really – what qualified children's services director/coordinator is going to give credibility to someone as an external assessor who does not have at least some early or middle childhood qualifications?

If Australian governments are committed to making the NQF work, then ensuring assessors are qualified with relevant skills and experience will be one of the most important measures of success!

Inside this Issue

Your Peak Body in Action 2

ACCS Successfully Advocating for Quality 2

Support of Compulsory Training in Care and Education for Children Under Three 4

Keeping an Eye on Corporate Child Care 4

Branch Reports 6

How to Contact ACCS State and Territory Branches 8

ACCS continues to be deeply concerned that children are still being held in detention. We are horrified that unaccompanied minors are to be sent to Malaysia to unknown conditions in detention camps.

We believe this is a breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and we call on The Federal Government to fix this immediately.

ACCS website!

You can find information about your national peak body by visiting

www.ausccs.org.au

Your Peak Body in Action

Barbara Romeril, National Secretary

ACCS has won some significant gains in our advocacy in support of improved minimum quality standards; in this newsletter we quote from a speech from the Minister and a letter from her office which both show that we are being heard. It is gratifying to see that the scare campaign by the commercial sector is not succeeding.

ACCS responded to the DEEWR discussion paper on the future of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, arguing among other things for an independent national evaluation and for ISFs to be required to hold a Diploma of Children's Services or a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

We also supported an ECA call for units on Care and Education of Babies and Toddlers to be compulsory in all children's services qualifications.

ACCS is now preparing to launch our new national on line discussion board for members – see elsewhere in this newsletter for details.

The Executive is attending the National Children's Services Forum in August including the biennial lobby day in which all national peak bodies agree on key issues to raise in meetings with an enormous variety of Members of Parliament from all parties; it is always an empowering experience bringing our concerns to the attention of Parliament. Who knows what impact this could have on future decisions in the federal parliament?

ACCS continues to participate in:

- The National Quality Framework National Stakeholder Reference Group
- Families Australia Board and coalition to support implementation of the national child protection framework
- National policy forums convened by United Voice the Child Care Union

ACCS Successfully Advocating for Quality

ACCS is one of the few voices consistently expressing support for the quality improvements currently being implemented for children's services; below are two pieces of clear evidence of our influence in the battle against the scare campaign by the commercial sector to frighten elected representatives away from increased quality in support of their profit margins.

First we quote a speech to a commercial child care peak body in which the Federal Minister quotes from an ACCS member, Clarendon Children's Centre in Victoria and expresses her unqualified commitment to full implementation of quality reforms – she says that '**All Governments remain firmly committed to these reforms**' which is very good news for

Australia's children. She also acknowledges the visionary advice that organisations including ACCS have provided 'to move immediately to a national ratio of 1:3 for children under two years of age'. We are being heard.

Secondly below we reproduce key parts of a letter from the office of the Minister to ACCS in reply to our letter querying the impression that some had gained that she was backing away from requiring long serving child care staff to become qualified, an impression which the commercial sector was exploiting to encourage its members to not prepare for the quality reforms. In this letter the Minister unequivocally corrects the misinformation that the commercial child care sector has been putting out since the unfortunate misquote in the media in late 2010 – we have it in writing that the Minister did not announce a backing away from the requirement for minimum training for long standing staff; in fact she was referring to the process for recognition of prior learning that is already available in the vocational training system for early childhood educators.

Rather than backing away from increased minimum qualification requirements, the Australian Government is investing in the sector's capacity to meet these new standards - the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) package in the 2011-12 Budget supports this by reducing the overall time cost to workers and services in upgrading staff qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

The letter states '**The Australian Government remains committed to the qualification requirements under the national quality standard for early childhood education and care services.**'

We urge ACCS members to use this evidence in your local advocacy to ensure that the community is aware that the quality reforms are coming, that they are in the best interests of children and that all levels of government must ensure that all families can afford the cost of high quality education and care.

Excerpts from Key Note Address by the Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Employment Participation, Minister for Child Care

to the Child Care Queensland National Conference
19 June 2011

...The Australian Government recognises the critical importance of early education and care to families. We know that access to quality and affordable child care is an essential enabler of workforce participation – particularly for women.

We know that the first five years of a child's life are critical and that their experiences during this time will shape their future outcomes. Through high quality early education and care we have the ability to ensure that our youngest citizens get the great start in life that they deserve. And we also know that families' demand for child care continues to grow.

Between September 2005 and September 2010, around 106 000 more children – or 78 000 families – have been using approved child care. The number of approved long day care child care services has also increased by more than 1100 over this period.

And with more and more Australian families choosing for both parents to work, our children's early experiences are being increasingly influenced by you and your colleagues.

This is why our Government has driven an ambitious reform agenda to improve access to quality, affordable care – an agenda that we have backed up by a record investment of \$20 billion over the next four years...

Families have never had more assistance with their child care fees, and they have never before had more choice, than under the Gillard Labor Government. We know this increased assistance is having a real impact for Australian families. In fact since 2004, out-of-pocket costs for families earning \$75 000 have reduced from 13 per cent of their disposable income to 7 per cent in 2010...

Of course – cost is only one part of the equation. Our investments in improving the affordability of child care must also come hand in hand with an improvement in quality.

Through our reforms, we will have, for the first time, nationally consistent educator-to-child ratios and educator qualification requirements in long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool care. As you know, these reforms will

- improve educator to child ratios so that each child gets more individual time and attention
- introduce educator qualification requirements so educators are better able to lead activities that inspire youngsters and help them learn and develop
- include a new ratings system so parents know the quality of care on offer and can make informed choices, and
- reduce regulation burden so services only have to deal with one regulator.

On top of our child care assistance funding, the Australian Government is investing \$273.7 million investment towards these objectives.

All Governments remain firmly committed to these reforms and I am pleased to report that significant progress has already been made.

We know there are many services across the country that are already meeting the National Quality Framework targets when it comes to both qualifications and ratios. In January this year, we also saw the successful roll out of the NSW Government's ratio change to 1:4 for zero to twos with minimal impact on fees. I am well aware of arguments about costs. But the reality is that there are child care centres that have already implemented the new staff-to-child ratios and their costs are consistent with other local providers.

For example, take the Clarendon Children's Centre in inner-city Melbourne. They meet every single one of the new ratio requirements and all but one staff member meets the new qualification requirements. Their fees are around \$77 per day – which is about the same as most centres in the area...

These reforms are not the result of rushed decision making and they are not the result of a thought bubble. They come after considerable consultation, extensive debate, significant lobbying from all sides of the arguments and a comprehensive policy development process.

Some have urged us to be bolder in the reforms - to move

immediately to a national ratio of 1:3 for children under two years of age, for example. Others have wanted us to move more quickly and speed up the timeframe for implementation. We believe we have got the balance right...

Of course once the National Quality Framework is in place - it all comes down to people. Especially as the framework requires greater numbers of highly trained education and care professionals. Words alone don't nurture children: caring parents, kindergarten teachers and educators – the people in this room – are the ones that do that.

While workforce issues fall into Minister Garrett's portfolio responsibilities, I know he would want me to assure you that the Australian Government had heard your calls for more support for the early childhood workforce. That is why as part of the 2011-12 Budget we announced \$9.2 million for a Recognition of Prior Learning package to improve the quality and uptake of RPL assessments for early childhood professionals. This will directly assist child care staff who have long and valuable experience working in the sector, to gain a formal qualification.

It builds on previous measures that are helping build a new early childhood education and care workforce by creating new university places, reducing HECS-HELP repayments, and removing TAFE fees for people who want to make early childhood development their career. The early data indicates that these measures are succeeding, with numbers of people studying for diplomas, advanced diplomas and degrees in child care increasingly significantly since 2008.

We value the work that child care staff do. We know that child care is about more than just baby-sitting – that it is about educating in those critical early years...

Let us continue to work together to give Australia the early childhood development services it needs and can't afford to do without. We need to look to the future – to the practical changes we can keep making together to help give children their best possible start in life.

This is what Australian parents expect of us. And this is what we will deliver.

Australian Government Reiterates Commitment to Minimum Qualifications for Early Childhood Educators June 2011

Excerpts from letter to ACCS from Marielle Smith, Advisor to Minister Kate Ellis 14.7.11

Australia is fortunate to have a passionate and dedicated workforce of early childhood educators and carers. The introduction of new national qualification requirements for those workers will mean that they are better equipped to lead the activities that help children to develop in the vital early years.

The Australian Government remains committed to the qualification requirements under the national quality standard for early childhood education and care services. The Government also appreciates that there are many experienced educators and carers in the workforce who do not currently have formal qualifications and the Government does not want to lose these talented individuals from the sector.

That is why the Government will be phasing in the new qualification requirements over several years, so as to give the sector time to adjust. The Government is also committed to ensuring a smooth transition to the new qualification requirements.

Importantly, vocational training for early childhood educators already allows for the recognition of prior learning. This means that child care professionals, who have gained relevant skills within a service or have gained skills through other life experiences, can have that important knowledge recognised as part of a formal qualification...

The Australian Government announced \$9.2 million for a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) package in the 2011-12 Budget to improve the quality and uptake of RPL assessments for early childhood professionals. The RPL package will make it easier for early childhood workers to obtain or upgrade their qualifications. The Government recognises the significant barriers that early child care workers located in rural and remote Australia have in accessing RPL and is providing additional assistance to workers in rural and remote areas.

Grants of up to \$1,125 for rural and remote child care workers to cover expenses associated with accessing RPL.

Promoting the use of RPL will reduce the overall time cost to workers and services in upgrading staff qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

Letter to Federal Ministers in Support of Compulsory Training in Care and Education of Children Under Three

The following letter was sent to Ministers Garrett and Ellis in July 2011:

Australian Community Children's Services supports the call for units in the care and education of children under three (babies and toddlers) to be included as compulsory components of all training packages and curriculum for vocational and higher education courses in regard to children's services.

We believe that an in depth understanding of the developmental trajectories of children from birth is essential knowledge for educators working in child care, preschool and/or outside school hours care.

The national *Early Years Learning Framework* (DEEWR, 2009) is based on the premise that learning begins at birth and that educators should provide continuity of care and education for children. The *Framework for School Age Care Draft for Consultation* (DEEWR, 2010) extends these principles, practices and outcomes for children who attend school age care settings. This means all educators need to have professional knowledge and practical experience of the life span period from birth to three as part of their pre-service education regardless of the age range of the children with whom they intend to work.

We understand that a number of peak bodies have written to you recommending that the pre-service qualifications approved for employment in early childhood services under the new National Law and Regulations require all educators to have completed theory and practical experience relating to the care of and education of children under three.

We wish to support these calls and look forward to your notification of the outcome of considerations of this question.

Keeping an eye on Corporate Child Care

ABC Learning Head 'Acted Against Board'

July 18, 2011 AAP

THE former head of the failed ABC Learning, Eddy Groves, acted against his board's wishes to buy three childcare centres just months before the company's collapse, a court has heard.

A committal hearing is under way in the Brisbane Magistrates Court into whether ABC Learning's former chief executive of Australia and New Zealand, Martin Vincent Kemp, should stand trial.

Kemp and ABC Learning's founder and former chief executive, Groves, allegedly breached the Corporations Act when Kemp organised to sell three childcare centres owned by companies controlled by him to ABC Learning in early 2008.

It was just months before the chain collapsed in November that year with debts totalling \$1.6 billion.

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) alleges in January 2008, with the approval of Groves, ABC paid deposits of \$3 million, approximately 75 per cent of the purchase prices, to companies associated with Kemp, Volbane Pty Ltd and Silipo Pty Ltd.

Groves has also been charged with one count of breaching the Corporations act.

ASIC alleges Groves failed to discharge his duties as an ABC director in good faith and was dishonest by approving the payments made to Kemp's companies between 9 and 12 January 2008.

Former chairwoman of ABC Learning Sallyanne Atkinson gave evidence today, saying the board had resolved to block the acquisition of more childcare centres that financial year because of the company's poor finances.

She said she had been kept in the dark about the three acquisitions.

Kemp's defence, Neil Clelland, SC, questioned why the board had not put the agreement in writing at a meeting on February 1, 2008.

Ms Atkinson said: "I cannot tell you ... specifically the wording on our resolution, I just know that it was something we spoke of and we were quite serious about it.

"Any acquisitions are subject to board approval."

Ms Atkinson also said that she had lost faith in the abilities of Kemp and that he was a "bad manager".

She added that he withheld information about how poorly their Western Australia centres were operating.

ABC Learning paid double market price

July 20, 2011 The Australian

FORMER ABC Learning executive Martin Kemp arranged for the childcare chain to buy his assets at double their market value, a court heard yesterday.

Mr Kemp is charged with three breaches of the Corporations Act concerning the exercise of his powers as ABC's Australasian chief executive until the company collapsed in 2008. He has not entered a plea.

A committal hearing in Brisbane heard yesterday how the company bought his three childcare centres for \$4.1 million, a significant mark-up on an independent valuation at the time.

The court heard the 2008 deal was authorised by global chief executive Eddy Groves with three words -- "this is approved" -- sent in an email from overseas.

Former ABC acquisitions manager Rohan Smith told the court the \$4.1m price tag met the company's "regular criteria" since modelling predicted the centres would break even after eight years.

Brandishing one of the purchase documents in the courtroom, prosecutor Craig Chowdhury remarked he could not see the word "market value" printed anywhere.

"Is there any relationship between market price and the purchase price?" he asked Mr Smith.

"No. It doesn't mean anything to me," the witness replied.

Michael McClifty, who provided the independent valuations of Mr Kemp's businesses, agreed purchase prices could sometimes attract a "special value" if they, for instance, achieved economies of scale or a favourable decrease in market competition.

But asked by Mr Chowdhury if he could recall an instance of someone paying \$1.2m for an asset valued at \$600,000, as ABC had done for Mr Kemp's childcare centre at Beenleigh, in Queensland, he said he could not. "That's a big number. That's a really big number," Mr McClifty said.

The court had previously heard how ABC's business model, premised on exponential growth, was "fatally flawed" and ultimately caused the company's demise.

Scott Zannes, who served as chief financial officer under Mr Kemp, said the defendant rarely made decisions without first consulting Mr Groves.

"Eddy's personality is 'fall into line'. He doesn't like to be challenged at all and his opinion is final," Mr Zannes said.

ABC Learning followed a policy of expansion to "meteoric" growth from 18 centres in 1997 to 825 centres in 2006. It was then the world's largest listed provider of childcare services.

The committal hearing continues.

Emails show pre-collapse fears for ABC Learning

Sue Lannin Friday, June 10, 2011 ABC Radio PM Program

BRENDAN TREMBATH: The banks which lent to collapsed childcare provider, ABC Learning, were worried about the company's financial health six months before it collapsed,

but still they went ahead with a refinancing plan to keep the company afloat.

According to an email trail, revealed in the Federal Court, one banker thought the company could default on its bank loans within a year if it couldn't sell its US business. ABC Learning's lenders included the big four banks as well as Japanese and US banks.

ABC Learning collapsed in November 2008 with debts of nearly \$2 billion.

Sue Lannin's report starts with the voices of parents of children at ABC Learning centres.

PARENT: Very disappointing. It's a great location; it's quiet, not many of those around.

PARENT 2: We thought it would survive, because it's such a good centre.

PARENT 3: Well I knew there was a possibility but they told me there was nothing to worry about.

SUE LANNIN: Parent's outside ABC Learning centres after news of its collapse. The failure of ABC learning in late 2008 left Australia's childcare system in crisis and the Federal Government had to step in to keep the system running.

The company expanded rapidly using cheap loans to buy childcare centres in Australia and around the globe. But ABC Learning was hit hard by the global financial crisis. A slump in earnings for the second half of 2007 sent its lenders and its share price into a tail spin.

ABC Learning proposed a refinancing deal, which involved selling most of its US business, but they needed the approval of the 10 banks keeping it afloat. The banks began to discuss whether they should take security over the company as a condition.

An email trail has been read out in the Federal Court as ABC Learning's liquidator, Ferrier Hodgson, examines the company's bankers over when the banks knew the company was in trouble.

EMAIL FROM VERONICA BARBETTA (voiceover): We would like to see security in the form of fixed and floating charge from the outset.

SUE LANNIN: That's Veronica Barbetta, from BankWest, in an email to the other bankers in on the 12th of May, 2008.

In an email a few days later, Westpac executive, Scott Wimberley, wrote that ABC Learning had committed itself to buying childcare centres it couldn't afford and said:

EMAIL FROM SCOTT WIMBERLEY (voiceover): It has been caught out here.

SUE LANNIN: Worries were growing within the banking syndicate that ABC Learning could collapse if the refinancing deal didn't go ahead.

In another email on the 15th of May 2008, Westpac's Scott Wimberley wrote:

EMAIL FROM SCOTT WIMBERLEY (voiceover): We don't want to structure ABC Learning into default, but likewise we do not wish to expose ourselves even further.

SUE LANNIN: In an email on the 26th of May 2008, Sean Sykes, from the Commonwealth Bank, wrote there were two possibilities facing ABC Learning: that it cut its debt, or it faced:

EMAIL FROM SEAN SYKES (voiceover): ...an event of default as early as 31st March, 2009, caused by failure to achieve its asset sales.

SUE LANNIN: A former executive from US banking giant, Citigroup, told the court that the banks were reluctant to approve the refinancing until they got a report from accounting firm Ernst & Young on ABC Learning's cash flow and capital spending, because the banks didn't trust the information they were getting from the company.

The Commonwealth Bank was the biggest lender to ABC Learning. The bank's Sean Sykes, told the court the decision to refinance was approved in late May, 2008, by the bank's top executives, because of the high level of debt.

A document signed by Westpac boss, Gail Kelly, and acting chief risk officer, Andrew Carriline, on the 27th of May, 2008, approved the refinancing, but Mr Carriline noted:

ANDREW CARRILINE STATEMENT (voiceover): I am supportive but not enthusiastic.

SUE LANNIN: He went on to say that ABC Learning was trying to sell its US assets in a difficult market, and said:

ANDREW CARRILINE STATEMENT (voiceover): Completely unsatisfactory disclosure re: Cap X commitments.

SUE LANNIN: In the months before it collapsed, ABC Learning repaid \$500 million to the banks by selling its assets.

Ferrier Hodgson, is trying to get money back for other creditors including shareholders. It's looking at whether the banks' decision to take security over the assets was valid. Among the documents presented to court was an email written by the Commonwealth's Sean Sykes to the bankers on May the 20th, 2008, in which he discusses the issue of security. The email states:

EMAIL FROM SEAN SYKES (voiceover): This is sufficient to provide receiver control in bankruptcy and mitigate the Sons of Gwalia issue.

SUE LANNIN: Sons of Gwalia was a landmark court case in which shareholders won the right to rank alongside unsecured creditors in terms of getting their money back. The liquidators are trying to prove the banks discussed the case because they wanted to take preference above other creditors if ABC Learning went under.

Questioned by Michael Cashion SC, for Ferrier Hodgson, Mr Sykes told the court.

SEAN SYKES (voiceover): The case was a discussion point across the market at the time.

SUE LANNIN: But...

SEAN SYKES (voiceover): Not in the context of it being a refinance issue for ABC.

SUE LANNIN: Despite getting the new finance deal, ABC Learning collapsed in November, 2008, leaving behind debts of nearly \$2 billion.

Founder, Eddy Groves, and former director, Martin Kemp, have been charged with breaching their duties as directors. They are fighting the charges.

Branch Reports

NSW BRANCH

Gerard Moon

The ACCS NSW Convenor and Dept Convenor met with Minister Piccoli (NSW Department of Education and Community) on the 17th June. Issues discussed included preschool funding and assistance with the NQF (particularly for Preschools). The Minister seemed interested in reforming children's services funding in NSW.

NSW Children's Services Funding was also discussed by members at special meetings of the NSW Children's Services Forum. The Forum hopes to have input into the Department's review of funding. ACCS members have voiced their concern regarding the current funding model for preschools and the funding models for additional needs support.

The NSW branch has begun organising a Conference for the 18 to 20 May 2012. The Conference themes will be change and leadership which is timely due to the changing nature of children's services. Topics include:

Leadership

- Leading teams through change
- Leadership in advocacy
- Developing pedagogical leadership

Change Management

- Responding to change in constructive ways
- Informing families on change
- Developing plans for change

Planning for the Future

- Planning around revamping the 1980s planned environments
- Long term goal setting
- Future directions for our sector

QLD BRANCH

Tanya Roessler, Qld Branch President

Recently the Queensland Branch held our AGM where we had a guest speaker, Kay Beattie from OECEC to inform us about the NQF Assessment Process and answer any questions that we may have.

The office bearers and Committee for 2011 are as follows:

President: Tanya Roessler

Vice President: Frances Snedden

Treasurer: Kerrie Wilson

Secretary: Megan Kirby

Committee Members: Marie Lewis, Cathy Kennedy

The two state delegates were elected at this meeting being Frances Snedden and Tanya Roessler who will be attending the National ACCS Face to Face meeting in October.

ACCS Qld is supporting the Big Steps campaign and keeping members updated on the dates of meetings for the United Voice the child care union.

The Qld branch is concerned about the remote teachers not having access in their local areas to English tests required for their registration so they are having to travel large distances to sit for the tests.

We are hearing from our sector that people are feeling overwhelmed with all the information and extra training required resulting in reduced time to participate in meetings. Also Workplace Health and Safety is changing to the federal level which is yet another change for services to keep updated with and to implement.

The Qld branch would also like to thank Pam Sur for all her support and help as she has been a long-standing member and is now moving into age care.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

Verity Bierenboim

ACCS SA published a media release calling for a boycott of Universal Access to 15 Hours of Preschool due to lack of funding and poor communication. The Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) reacted very quickly to the release; besides telling us that we did not lobby with them correctly and that the Minister would be informed, they did agree to a meeting.

Two meetings have been held with the DECS representative, the first was DECS stating their concern, and then a discussion of what was needed, the second was constructive and a discussion with costing occurred. It was then agreed that DECS would attend the next CCCSA meeting which is attended by a large group of Directors, to go through Universal Access costing. After having these discussions with DECS we believe each service would need to have an independent cost analysis. The offer to introduce Universal Access in our Centres is optional not compulsory.

ACCS SA and CCCSA (Community Children's Centres SA) met with federal Minister Kate Ellis and voiced our concerns on the affordability of child care. She stated that an independent survey was conducted using an independent group and the average fee increase would be \$5 to \$8 per week, the same answer that everyone else has received. We also talked about funding for infrastructure grants, NQA and our concerns with Universal Access to Preschool for the child care sector in South Australia; she said that was not her area but would pass on our concerns. It was implied that funding to address our concerns was not available.

NEW!

ACCS Member Discussion Board

You are invited to join in the discussion!

We have created an exciting new space, the ACCS Member Discussion Board, exclusively designed for members to engage in discussions with other like minded ACCS members across all states and territories of Australia.

Perhaps you'd like to raise concerns about implementing the National Quality Frameworks? Or you'd like to brainstorm lobbying strategies to advocate for a professional children's services workforce? Perhaps you'd like to launch into a robust debate about ACCS' current policy positions?

We hope you'll join us in the discussion. Please contact your ACCS state or territory Delegate who will verify your membership and provide you with an access code for entering the site.

We all had a great day on the 16th July when we had the Big Steps in Child Care Summit in South Australia. It was very well attended and it was great to hear people like Louise Tarrant of United Voice the child care union and many Directors from South Australia talking about what is happening in their Centres and the push for professional wages.

We are now waiting to see what will happen with the South Australian Government as Premier Rann has been asked to step down and it is the Minister for Education who has been nominated as the next Premier so it will be interesting to see how long it all takes. We are hoping we will have a new Minister of Education who is sympathetic to child care.

TASMANIAN BRANCH

Kathy Cripps, ACCS Tasmania (Sub-Branch of CCC Victoria)

ECEC Workforce Forum – Stakeholders met for the first time late 2010. The stakeholders include representatives from:

- Ministerial Child Care Advisory Council
- Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania
- Early Childhood Australia
- Unions (Australian Education Union, United Voice, Independent Education Union)
- Tasmanian Independent Schools Teachers Association Skills Institute
- Tasmanian Polytechnic
- Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania
- Catholic Education Office
- Independent Schools Tasmania
- Family Day Care Council of Tasmania
- Tasmanian Government (Department of Premier & Cabinet, Skills Tasmania, Child Care Unit Early Years Department of Education)

The forum continues to meet with the preparation of a discussion paper nearing readiness to be developed out of session. Topics of discussion and action included, but not limited to:

- National Quality Reform Agenda
- Teachers Registration – registration of teachers working in education and care settings
- Inclusion support
- Workforce Issues
- Professional Learning and Training Agenda (Qualifications, course content and delivery)

The Department of Education Child Care Unit has developed a survey for services to complete which will provide valuable information in relation to the current workforce and projected workforce over the next 5 years in terms of the National Quality Framework requirements.

This survey will also provide valuable information to be included in the Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Sectors Skills Plan (ECA Tasmania Branch and Skills Tasmania initiative). The skills plan will provide a strategic and co-ordinated framework between the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECE&C) and School Aged Care (SAC) sectors, the state government, and other relevant stakeholders, in the period from 2012 – 2016.

Due to the transient workforce in OSHC and the shortage of qualified and experienced educators, together with the

lack of regulations in respect of qualified educators, the Department of Education sought to provide support to newly engaged and current educators working the OSHC Sector, therefore the OSHC Project initiative was developed. The program will commence in the coming months providing a professional learning program to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities, duty of care, quality reform agenda, interactions and communication plus appropriate experiences for middle childhood. The Program will be facilitated by Campbell Burnett Training Services (A division of Lady Gowrie Tasmania).

Educators continue to access the Productivity Places Program to support costs associated with studying towards a formal qualification. ECA Tas branch partnered with Skills Institute and have been successful in the three rounds of tendering.

Concerns continue from services in relation to knowledge and understanding of the Modern Award and the impact of this award on their services.

VICTORIAN BRANCH

Barbara Romeril, Community Child Care Victoria

CCC is maintaining its advocacy for government policies which support high quality, not for profit, community owned children's services driven by the rights of children and families; and at the same time we are investing time in celebrating our achievements over the last 40 years while looking forward and doing some hard thinking about how to improve the way we engage with and empower our members to do the vital work you do for children, families and communities.

We are hoping the Federal Education Minister Peter Garrett will speak at a members' forum to recognize long serving members and staff of CCC, whose loyal contribution over many years is vital to our credibility in speaking with conviction and on strong evidence of what really works for children, families and communities.

How to Contact ACCS State and Territory Branches

Convenor

Prue Warrilow pwarrilow@familiesatwork.com

New South Wales

Gerard Moon Gerard.moon@auburn.nsw.gov.au

Queensland

Frances Sneddon fs.csmsq@gmail.com

Tanya Roessler gcitcc@bigpond.com

Victoria

Barbara Romeril bromeril@cccinc.org.au

Anne Kennedy a.m.kennedy@bigpond.com

Western Australia

Josique Lynch joonccc@inet.au

Christine Brown ChristineB@padburychildcare.com.au

South Australia

Verity Bierenboim verity@modburyccc.org.au

Robyn Geisler lurra.childcare@internode.on.net

Tasmania

Kathy Cripps Kathy@gowrie-tas.com.au

Australian Capital Territory

Vivienne Gould Vivienne.gould@anglicarecg.org.au

Northern Territory

Cheryl Anderson grayccc@bigpond.net.au

Use promotional code:
11ACCSMEM
on orders



Educational Experience

15%* DISCOUNT
FOR ACCS MEMBERS

*No further discounts apply. Not to be used with any other offers.



www.edex.com.au

1300 134 211

Call for a catalogue

2672