

ACCS In Action Oct 2014

National Convenor Report **Prue Warrilow**

ACCS National Executive, state/territory representatives and members all continue to work hard engaging in conversations, advocacy and lobbying to support the needs and interests of families and children to access high quality, affordable children's services that suit the needs and requirements of local communities.

I know many of you did lots of work around the Productivity Commission informing staff, families, writing submissions and attending some of the hearings. The outcomes of the Productivity Commission review have the potential to create great change for children and families and the services they use. It is not known what the Commissioners may have taken on board regarding the feedback they received around the differences between education and care particularly for children aged less than three years; the importance of formal and relevant early childhood qualifications for ALL children attending children's services regardless of age; the impact of proposed fee models particularly on vulnerable children and families, and the detrimental effect of the proposed tax changes for not-for-profit children's services. These messages were delivered loud and clear, along with supporting evidence - let's hope the Commissioners had their receptors tuned in.

ACCS continues to participate in a national Productivity Commission conversation group that has been convened by Goodstart Early Learning. This group has been loosely convened to allow like-minded not-for-profit children's services organisations to share information, intelligence, ideas, issues, and common themes around organisational submissions and presentations in relation to the PC. This information sharing, I believe, has created the opportunity for a lot of consistent feedback to the Commissioners, and allowed like-minded organisations to support each other through the sharing of intelligence. Members of this conversation group include Goodstart, ACCS, KU Children's Services, ECA, CCCH, ELAA, ECMS, C&K, Uniting Care, Benevolent Society, Mission Australia, MCRI, ARACY, and Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The Families Australia AGM is coming up in mid-November and I'm planning to renominate to be elected onto the board on behalf of ACCS. Participation in Families Australia Board provides ACCS with another opportunity to influence the political agenda at a national level for families and children. Sometimes the important role that formal children's services have in engaging with children and their families, particularly those that may be vulnerable or at risk, can be forgotten in a wider conversation about family services. It's great to have the opportunity to highlight formal children's services as safe entry point for some families to commence conversations about their needs, requirements and opportunities.

ACCS has been pleased to participate on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Child Care and Early Learning. The Council which is chaired by Assistant Minister for Education Sussan Ley, has been established to provide a forum where strategic policies affecting the child care and early learning sector can be considered, and where informative consultation with the sector can take place. The Council will meet three times per year. The first meeting took place on 28 July and included discussion on the Productivity Commission and the NQF Review. Following this meeting ACCS provided further feedback on some aspects of the National Quality Framework, which can be read [here](#)

The next Ministerial Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for 18 November. I will continue to use my position on this Council, to represent Australia's not-for-profit community owned education and care services and those who support the right of children to access these services.

On behalf of ACCS I have also been asked to attend a regular quarterly meeting with the executive team of ACECQA. The first meeting will be Monday 20 October. The aim of this meeting is to have a different opportunity for engagement and communication with ACECQA stakeholders which includes ACCS. It will provide a chance to talk about operational issues related to the NQF, exchange information and discuss some of the opportunities and challenges for both ACECQA and ACCS.

To help inform our advocacy work in a range of forums your ongoing feedback and thoughts around your experiences with the NQF, including some of the recent changes and proposed changes, would be greatly appreciated. As well as discussing these issues with Branch Delegates you are also invited to send any

feedback via the ACCS National Secretariat:

<mailto:ausccs@cccinc.org.au>

Productivity Commission Childcare and Early Childhood Learning Inquiry Update

The Productivity Commission certainly received plenty of feedback from ACCS about its draft Report. Along with ACCS National, the following ACCS Branches all provided comprehensive written submissions: ACCS South Australia, Carewest, ACCS NSW and Community Child Care Victoria. Many ACCS members from around the country also wrote individual submissions providing valuable data and insights from their individual services perspectives.

The Productivity Commission is due to submit its final report to the Australian Government on 31 October 2014. The government then has 25 parliamentary sitting days to consider the report before it must be released in full to the public (March 2015). At this stage we have no indication if the Australian Government will release any or all of its recommendations prior to this.

The ACCS National Submission to the draft Report can be read [here](#)

The transcript of ACCS National appearance at the Public Hearings can be read [here](#)

ACCS South Australia Branch Update

Verity Bierenboim, Convenor

We have had a busy few months, like everyone else gathering information and then writing submissions for the Productivity Commission. We are very happy that Universal Access will be continuing for a further 12 months, but of course that is not enough. ACCS SA will continue advocating for the longevity of Universal Access, as well as the many other points of contention in

the Productivity Commission Draft with the State and Federal Ministers.

ACCS SA funded a couple of its members, so they could attend the ECA conference in Melbourne, which was great as they were also able to attend the National ACCS meetings while there. It was a good opportunity to catch up with colleagues and discuss issues face to face.

We held our AGM on the 30th September with the executive staying the same, Verity Bierenboim Convenor and Robyn Geisler Secretary/Treasurer, the bulk of the committee stayed the same and we welcomed three new members.

We are sad to say we have lost another two community children's centres over the last couple of months, both with very little warning but we still have a majority of community children's centres in South Australia compared to private centres.

You can read the ACCS SA submission to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report [here](#)

Community Child Care (ACCS Victorian Branch)

Lynn Turner

Community Child Care engaged extensively with the sector about the draft Productivity Commission Childcare and Early Childhood Learning Inquiry Report. We distributed Take Action Information Sheets to members highlighting some of the key concerns in the draft Report. It was great to see more than 12 services writing their own detailed submissions, others using our email tool to encourage families to make comments (which resulted in the Productivity Commission receiving more than 45 comments from families using community owned Victorian services) and a couple of services appearing at the Melbourne Public Hearings.

Leanne Giardina and Brian Newman appeared at the

Productivity Commission's Public Hearing on behalf of Community Child Care and we provided an extensive submission which focused on the following main points:

- Maintain current qualification requirements for educators working with children under 3 years
- Do not allow services to temporarily operate with staffing levels below required ratios
- Maintain appropriate ratio and qualification requirements for OSHC
- Maintain Pay Roll Tax Exemptions and Fringe Benefit Tax Exemptions for Not for Profit Providers
- Do not mandate or encourage external provision of OSHC services
- Ensure new funding arrangements do not result in reduced access for many families and reduced financial support for vulnerable families and children and for families in crisis
- Do not simplify the National Quality Standard
- Ensure regulatory compliance, quality assurance and support for all service types in the scope of NQF and for all service types eligible for government fee subsidies

The Victorian State election will be held on 29 November. Our Call to Parties is available [here](#)

We are pleased to have representatives from the major parties attending our AGM on 29 October. Members and others interested in community owned education and care are encouraged to take this opportunity to bring along educators and families to this important election opportunity.

**Invitation to attend the
Community Child Care Association
Annual General Meeting**

2.30pm - 5.00pm, Wednesday 29th October, 2014,
Preston, Victoria.

*Guest Speaker: Andrew Jackomos, Victoria's
Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People*

Election Policy Statements from:

Hon. Wendy Lovell, Minister for Children and Early
Childhood Development

Jenny Mikakos, Shadow Minister for Children

Colleen Hartland, Greens Spokesperson for Children and
Young People

RSVP CCC ph 03 9486 3455

ACCS Tasmania Update

Zoe Manning

The major concern to the Early Childhood sector in Tasmania at present is unemployment in the North and North West of the state and the effect it is having on utilisation of child care centres. Many centres have had to close rooms and even face shutting down if there isn't a turn around to the employment status. The State Liberal Government have strategies in place to boost employment in these areas, hopefully it won't be too little too late.

There has recently been 6 new people employed in the Education and Care Unit and hopefully this will see more centres going through the rating and assessment system. Currently only 35% of services have been through the rating and assessment process and whilst this is in line with the national average, we would like to see an increased number of services being assessed and a reduction in waiting time from visit to draft report which

is currently over 7 weeks. The good news is that the outcomes of the majority of services going through rating and assessment has been positive and most educators are saying they much prefer the new system to the previous accreditation system.

Our service put in a submission in response to the draft Productivity Commission Report which can be read [here](#). I also distributed information to services to share with families and it was encouraging to see several families from services in Tasmania taking action and sending in comments to the Productivity Commission.

ACCS Qld

Unfortunately the ACCS Qld Branch decided to dissolve their association, as they were unable to fill their office bearer positions and meet their constitutional requirements. Members in Qld are interested in becoming a sub branch of ACCS NSW and the mechanisms for this are currently being explored. We thank all the Qld members who have made significant contributions to the work of ACCS National over the years, including Frances Sneddon whose commitment and support over time ensured that the Qld ACCS contributed significantly on a state and national level. We also thank ACCS Qld for contributing funds towards the current wave of Trends in Community Children's Services Survey.

Cathy Kennedy from Churches of Christ is the Qld contact person for ACCS and ACCS Qld has also nominated several others to be contacted on national issues to ensure there is a Qld perspective. It was also great to see Marisa Phillips from Queensland at the ACCS National Dinner and Meeting in September.

ACCS NSW Branch

ACCS NSW welcomes Kim Gavin, Operations Manager with UnitingCare Children's Services, as it's new Branch

Convenor.

Kim Bertino attended the ACCS National Dinner and Meeting in September in Melbourne and highlighted the following issues as key for NSW:

- Review of the NQF, concern over the quality of the consultation process
- The high cost of preschool in NSW compared to other states, and the issues of the state government not passing on funding to the sector
- PC response, in particular the issue of qualification for under 3's
- How to realign the value of the not for profit sector to government
- Quality of some RTO's training and concern over graduates being capable to work in sector.

The ACCS NSW submission in response to the Productivity Commission's draft Report can be found [here](#)

Carewest (ACCS Western Australia Branch)

Josique Lynch and Sally Griffiths came to Melbourne and attended the ACCS National Dinner and Meeting in September and the ACCS National Open Forum at the ECA conference. They also managed to fit in a meeting with Community Child Care, the Victorian ACCS Branch and National ACCS Secretariat, which was a great opportunity for networking and exchanging ideas and information about ACCS National and state based issues.

The Carewest submission in response to the Productivity Commission's draft Report can be found [here](#)

Your Peak Body in Action

ACCS makes sure that the voice for not for profit and

community owned education and care is heard far and wide. If you would like further information about any of the following one off or ongoing forums or consultations or would like to provide input into future opportunities please contact the ACCS National Secretariat at <mailto:ausccs@cccinc.org.au>

Early Learning Language Australia (ELLA) Advisory Network

Liz Rouse from Community Child Care Victoria attended this meeting on 28 August 2014. The next one is scheduled for November.

ACECQA Forum

Prue Warrilow ACCS National Convenor will attend the next ACECQA Forum on 4 December 2015.

Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council Joint Training Package Advisory Committee (TPAC)

Diane Lewis attended this Council on 17 July 2014

Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council Industry Compact

ACCS has agreed to be a signatory to this Compact. Kim Bertino from ACCS NSW will attend a formal signing ceremony on 14 November 2014 on ACCS behalf. The text of the Compact can be read [here](#)

Productivity Commission Workshop on Deemed Cost

Linda Davison, ACCS National Treasurer, attended this workshop on behalf of ACCS on 15 September 2014. Her notes are available [here](#)

Hunter Institute of Mental Health – National Reference Group – Early Childhood Mental Health Resource

Amanda Holt from ACCS NSW has been representing ACCS on this group. The resource *Connections, A*

resource for early childhood educators about children's well-being has now been finalised and distributed by the Department of Education. An electronic copy is available at:

http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/pdf_connections.pdf

Keeping an Eye on Corporate Child Care

The Australian Business Review (17/10/14) introduces us to another corporate player – Think Childcare and Education.

The article 'Kroger back with \$12m childcare foray' by Ben Butler and Eli Greenblat states that:

'Michael Kroger and his associates are set to reap up to \$12.5 million from the Liberal Party powerbroker's second foray into the listed childcare sector in a decade. A trust associated with Mr Kroger is among the vendors of 15 childcare centres sold into Think Childcare and Education, which is set to list on the ASX next week in a bid to cash in on the booming industry. Think, which is attempting to raise \$22m from investors, plans to pay Mr Kroger and the other childcare centre owners a total of \$13.9m in cash. On figures in the Think prospectus, about \$10m of the purchase price should fall to Mr Kroger and his associates....Think had planned to float as early as today, but sponsoring broker Pattersons said the listing date had been pushed back to next week. It is forecasting a profit after tax for 2015 of \$4.4m.'

ACCS believes a system that allows for cashing in on children's education and care is not in our national interest. Let's celebrate the amazing work of the community sector where all decisions are made with children's best interest at heart!

ACCS National Executive

The following ACCS Delegates were elected to the ACCS National Executive Council at the ACCS AGM on 28 March 2014

National Convenor

Prue Warrilow, ACCS NSW Branch

Deputy National Convenor

Verity Bierenboim, ACCS SA Branch

National Secretary

Anne Kennedy, ACCS Victoria Branch

National Treasurer

Linda Davison, ACCS Victoria Branch

ACCS Branch Delegates

Western Australia

Josique Lynch, Sally Griffiths, Alisha Berry

South Australia

Verity Bierenboim, Robyn Geisler

Queensland

Bev Book, Marisa Phillips

Tasmania

Zoe Manning

NSW

Prue Warrilow, Lisa Bryant

Victoria

Anne Kennedy, Linda Davison

To contact ACCS National Executive and Branch

Delegates email the ACCS National Secretariat [Here](#)

