

Welcome to the ACCS national newsletter. Here you can discover the latest news about our national lobbying activities campaigns and hot issues affecting the sector.

[View this email in your browser](#)



ACCS In Action!

September 2015

National Convenor's Report

Prue Warrilow

ACCS is pleased to have participated in an important collaboration with sister advocacy organisations, jointly signing a [letter](#) to the federal Minister Scott Morrison in support of maintaining quality in early childhood education and care services. This is now expanding into an ongoing joint advocacy campaign 'Early Learning - Everyone Benefits'. We will keep members informed of opportunities to participate in this campaign.

I continue to represent ACCS on the Early Childhood Ministerial Advisory Committee and have attended several meetings in recent months. Participants are required to keep all discussions strictly confidential.

We are preparing for the federal election campaign in 2016 - the national meeting in Sydney in November will be an important opportunity for ACCS delegates to plan together how the community children's services sector can influence the policies of whoever wins government next.

VET Training Update

Review of Training Packages

Brian Newman (Vic)

On behalf of ACCS I attended a meeting of the Community Services and Health

Industry Skills Council's Training Package Advisory Committee. Although the agenda was primarily around finalising endorsement of revised packages for Community Services and Health areas, it was useful to learn about how the different sectors tackle Training Package revision.

It was also significant to learn more about the implications of the government's agenda regarding the VET sector. The Skills Council has just received funding in order to complete current projects up to the end of this year, when the new structures will be put in place. The work will be put out to tender, and there will no longer be a requirement for groups such as trade unions to be involved in the new structures. These are significant changes for the VET sector and the impact will be felt into the future. It is important that training packages reflect the needs and interests of children, and not just the financial interests of business owners.

Meanwhile, the Australian Skills Quality Authority's inquiry into Early Childhood workforce training, including concerns about the poor quality of some VET providers is yet to be released. However, in Victoria, Certificate III ECEC qualifications from one particular provider have recently been disendorsed.

Call for Formal Nomination of ACCS Representative

ACCS has been fortunate that Brian Newman has been willing to represent us on the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council Training Package Advisory Committee, ably assisted by Kim Bertino of the NSW Branch.

We would now like to call for formal nominations for this important role, using the new [ACCS policy](#) for appointment of representatives.

If you are interested in offering your services to represent ACCS on this important forum then please fill in the attached [Expression of Interest](#) and return it asap to secretariat@ausccs.org.au

Improving Quality of Training for E.C.E.C.

Kim Bertino, ACCS NSW

On 20 August, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) released the report of its national strategic review of training for early childhood education and care. ACCS is pleased that the recommendations reflect the issues and concerns we raised in the consultation and on the management committee for the Review. Hopefully the implementation of the strategic review's recommendations will strengthen the quality of early childhood education and care training and assessment.

The key findings will be familiar to many in our sector:

- Most registered training organisations have difficulty complying with assessment requirements.
- Training courses are often being delivered in too short a time to enable the development of sufficient skills and knowledge and for valid assessment decisions to be made.

- Learning and assessment in a structured workplace environment is not being done well by many registered training organisations delivering early childhood education and care.

ACCS believes that it is important that members are aware of the Report findings, and use the opportunities it creates for engagement with the sector and training organisations to build a strong platform that ensures that quality training is accessible for those working in, or aspiring to work in early childhood.

This strategic review was initiated by ASQA Commissioners in response to concerns raised by the Productivity Commission in its 2011 research report *Early Childhood Workforce* about the quality of vocational education and training (VET) and assessment being provided. The review was guided by a management committee drawn from key stakeholders from industry, employers, unions and government and chaired by ASQA's Chief Commissioner. ACCS was invited to participate in the management committee and has had representation on the committee since the commencement in January 2014.

Over the past 18 months, ACCS has been able to give a voice to the members and wider sector on issues in the VET sector affecting our services, and contribute to the formation of a series of recommendations from the review.

To access the Report click on this [link](#).

ACCS has written to ASQA congratulating them on their good consultation process and urging them to maintain a close watch on how the VET sector performs in future. Read the letter [here](#).

ACECQA Forum on revised National Quality Standards

Linda Davison, CCC Victoria

ACECQA hosted a Regulatory Impact Statement Consultation Session in Melbourne on 8th April 2015 with peak bodies, including ACCS, in attendance. Department of Education and Training (Victorian office) presented the session and advised that the draft revised National Quality Standards had received mixed responses in the consultation with peak bodies, large service providers and services who operate one or a few services.

While 80% of single or small service providers indicated they support change, peak bodies and large service providers, in general, did not. Responses from small services included requests for clearer guidelines and reduced repetition. Services also liked the introduction of a conceptual column in the draft new NQS which identifies overarching concepts under which the each of the rating elements sits. Peak bodies, on the other hand, expressed concern about any "watering down" of the Standards, a sense of

“change fatigue” in the sector and the additional costs needed to implement changes.

56% of services (as of April) nationally have been through the Assessment and Rating Process.

Why revise the NQF?

- ACECEQA research indicates that the sector finds it more time consuming;
- Costing of a visit is expensive and 42% of funding from regulatory budget goes into the Assessment and Rating Process (individual visits cost \$2,000 - \$12,000);
- Wolcott Feedback advised that the sector finds the terminology confusing;
- Productivity Commission Report indicated change is needed;
- Support a more streamlined system of descriptors to make it easier for regulatory authorities to assess quality accurately and consistently; and
- If the opportunity to make changes is not taken now, the next opportunity will not be until 2017/2020.

Aim of revising the NQF?

- Clarify the concepts and reduce conceptual duplication and overlap between elements and standards;
- Retain a focus on continuous quality improvement;
- Retain applicability across all service types;
- Ensure that language is clear and understandable;
- Retain benchmark of current National Quality Standard;
- Provide more balance in the number of elements in each standard;
- Continue to underpin by National Law and Regulations

The areas that were discussed with opportunity for consultation and thoughts to be expressed on were:

Quality Area 1 - Less emphasis on documentation – No reference to ‘intentional teaching’ and ‘pedagogy’

Quality Area 3 – Removal of reference to ‘sustainability’ – combines two previous standards

Quality Area 4 – Staffing Arrangements – ratio and qualifications are not specifically referenced

Quality Area 7 – Administration Systems – consolidation of elements about decision making and systems

No changes would be expected to occur prior to July 2016, by which time all services should have been through the Assessment & Rating process at least once.

ACCS National Council

The AGM for the ACCS National Council was held in March and elected a new Executive:

- National Convenor - Prue Warrilow (NSW)
- Deputy National Convenor - Linda Davison (Vic)
- National Secretary - Kim Bertino (NSW)
- National Treasurer (appointed later) - Sally Griffiths (WA)

The meeting discussed the significant national policy work that is occurring at present, which will have a major impact on children's services including the Productivity Commission report and the Reform of Federation.

The National Council has been active since the AGM, responding to the Regulatory Impact Statement on the Child Care Assistance Package and planning for a national meeting of delegates in Sydney in November.

Branch Reports

Victorian branch report

Community Child Care Victoria [responded](#) to the Federal Budget initiatives in the Child Care Assistance Package, and expanded on this in our [response](#) to the Regulatory Impact Statement for the , expressing concerns about the consultation process and welcoming some of the key proposals, in particular combining CCB and CCR into a single payment paid directly to services.

Copyright © Australian Community Children's Services All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

PO Box 11 Northcote Plaza, Northcote Victoria 3070
email: secretariat@ausccs.org.au

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)