

30 January 2023

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC NSW Minister for Early Childhood Education Parliament of New South Wales 52 Martin Place SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Mitchell.

Re: 77.9% of NSW-based services do not support ACECQA's proposal to change the notification period for assessment & rating to 1-5 days

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW is the largest peak body representing the privately-owned early childhood education and care sector serving over 1,600 services primarily across New South Wales. Our members collectively employ over 25,000 staff and support over 125,000 families.

As a member of the Education Council, you would be aware of ACECQA's <u>announcement</u> in November 2022 that all state/territory regulatory authorities will change their Assessment & Rating process in 2023, in particular:

- "a shift to a shorter notice period of 1-5 days for most assessment and rating visits"; and
- "Approved providers should ensure an up-to-date QIP (or Self-Assessment Working Document in NSW) is uploaded to the National Quality Agenda IT System portal or via any other jurisdiction specific submission process."

In the context of severe and worsening labour shortages, ACA NSW's <u>survey results</u> of NSW-based early childhood education and care services in particular suggest that:

- 77.9% of respondents are against ACECQA's proposal to change the notification period for A&R to 1-5 days;
- 77.92% of respondents believe this change will put more pressure on existing early childhood educators/teachers;
- 75.93% of respondents believe this change will put excessive pressure on existing early childhood educators/teachers;
- 69.23% of respondents believe this change will mean some/many staff will never be able to schedule approved leave (eg annual leave, holiday, breaks) with confidence; and
- 66.50% of respondents believe this change will push more early childhood educators/teachers to leave the sector.

And while ACECQA's proposal did include references to partial assessment and ratings of services, it did not expressly limit the change of the notification period to exclusively partial assessments.

As such, ACA NSW is extremely concerned that this proposed change will have far more negative than positive consequences for NSW-based services, educators and teachers.

We are also concerned that this announcement was made when there is <u>between 33.2% and 64.1% of NSW-based services who, in our opinion, are overdue</u> for assessment and ratings. In fact, 1 NSW-based long daycare service (rated Excellent) and 2 NSW-based family daycare services (rated Working Towards the NQS) have not had their assessment and rating since 2016.

In December 2022, ACA NSW did discuss our concerns with ACECQA and the NSW Department of Education.

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The NSW Regulatory Authority did publicly <u>broadcast</u> that "... there are no imminent changes to assessment and rating" and assured us that they will engage firstly with the (NSW) sector through various forums in February and March 2023 as well as prior their own engagements.

ACA NSW is not aware of any other regulatory authority communique or clarification since.

Hence, with <u>growing media coverage</u> of NSW-based services' concerns about having adequate numbers of educators and teachers to provide the necessary education and care of children, NSW-based services are therefore right to be extremely concerned about their services' viabilities should ACECQA's announcement be implemented verbatim.

Such concerns also coincided with the NSW Productivity Commissioner's third report in December 2022, "Evaluation of NSW-specific early childcare regulations", which declared that "... the cost of NSW maintaining requirements above the national standards equates to around \$3,000 a year for each child attending ECEC."

I will contact your office to ensure your receipt of our concerns and to provide any further information/clarification you may require.

Thanking you in anticipation of your consideration of ACECQA's announced proposal to change the notification period for assessment and rating.

Yours sincerely,

Chiang Lim

CEO encl

<u>Table of services overdue</u> for assessment and rating in NSW, VIC and QLD (Source: Data based on ACECQA's national register as of 12 January 2023)

NSW Department of Education's broadcast following ACECQA's announcement



	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
DCs	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding	16 46	39 73	42 103	43 108	23 93	60 106	1 0	0 0	0	0 0		
NSW LDCs	Meeting Working Towards	387 90	415 79	463 64	468 64	421 13	24 3	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1,448	44.6%
	Significant Improvement Required	5 544	0 606	0 672	0 683	0 550	0 193	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0		
_	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
NSW Community Preschools	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding	3 7	25 34	12 17	42 104	23 30	13 9	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0		
N Commun Preschools	Meeting Working Towards	37 7	83 4	53 7	132 14	93 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0	0 0	426	56.8%
NSW	Significant Improvement Required	0 54	0 146	0 89	0 292	0 147	0 22	0	0	0	0		
	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
NSW FDCs	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding	0	0	0	0	0 5	1 4	0	0 0	0 0	0 0	Overdue	Judge of Segment
	Meeting	16	8	10	8	26	1	0	0	0	0	84	64.1%
	Working Towards Significant Improvement Required	6 0	5 0	8 0	12 0	14 0	3 0	0	0	0	0		
		23	14	18	20	45	9	2	0	0	0		
NSW OSHCs	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding	2022 3	2021	2020 8	2019 4	2018 1	2017 19	2016	2015 0	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
	Exceeding Meeting	20 280	15 276	38 353	24 211	7 92	58 14	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	546	33.2%
NSW	Working Towards Significant Improvement Required	49 3	46 0	62 0	41 0	15 0	2 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0		
		355	343	461	280	115	93	0	0	0	0		
	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018 26	2017 10	2016 3	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
VIC LDCs	Exceeding Meeting	56 254	26 148	11 72	38 247	61 239	25 122	4 11	0	0	0	921	56.7%
VICI	Working Towards	28	10	28	48	57	0	1	1	0	0	921	30.778
	Significant Improvement Required	0 385	0 212	0 117	0 349	0 383	0 157	0 19	0 1	0 0	0 0		
VIC Community Preschools	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding	74 76	68 52	5 7	15 71	37 95	23 43	0 6	0 0	0 0	0 0		
C Communi Preschools	Meeting Working Towards	113 9	72 5	10 4	102 9	112 25	41 0	9 0	1 0	0 0	0 0	578	53.3%
SK -	Significant Improvement Required	0 272	0 197	0 26	0 197	0 269	0 107	0 15	0 1	0 0	0 0		
	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	Overdue	%age of segment
soc	QUALITY RATING/LAST RATED IN Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding	2022 0 5	2021 0 1	2020 0 0	2019 0 0	2018 0 1	2017 1 2	2016 0 1	2015 0 0	2014 0 0	2013 0 0		
VIC FDCs	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Overdue 62	%age of segment
VIC FDCs	Excellent or 7xQAs Exceeding Exceeding Meeting	0 5 19	0 1 15	0 0 3	0 0 8	0 1 11	1 2 3	0 1 4	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0		
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From: NSW Department of Education < ECEDupdate@mailout.det.nsw.edu.au>

Date: 6 Dec 2022 3:22 pm

Subject: Changes to quality assessment and rating



Changes to quality assessment and rating

6 December 2022

Good afternoon

ACECQA recently published information about planned national changes to how regulatory authorities (including NSW) undertake assessment and rating under the National Quality Framework, set to occur in 2023.

The NSW Regulatory Authority wants to assure you that there are no imminent changes to assessment and rating in NSW. Partial assessment and rating will be implemented slowly with an incremental rollout planned to commence from mid-April 2023. The roll out approach will further inform the most effective way to implement the changes whilst enabling the best features of a partial assessment and rating to be realised.

We acknowledge that this initiative represents change for the sector and sits alongside a range of other changes the sector is working through. To support the change process and enable more dialogue about the new partial assessment and rating approach, we will be engaging with the Early Childhood and Advisory Group (ECAG), the Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) and peak bodies on the NSW approach so that we can understand how to best tailor this initiative to the NSW context.

Further to this, we intend to speak with you at various forums during February and March to provide information on the NSW approach and answer any questions you may have.

How you will be supported

- Roadshows will be conducted by the NSW Regulatory Authority to educate the sector on the upcoming changes and how services can prepare.
- The NSW Regulatory Authority will engage with the sector through established advisory groups and peak bodies on how this will look in NSW.
- The NSW Regulatory Authority is developing an online live self-assessment and quality improvement planning portal that will facilitate services to be "always ready" for assessment and rating and support services to engage in a continuous improvement journey.
- Transparent communication will occur from the NSW Regulatory Authority to the sector throughout the implementation of the new approach.

For more information

More information about the planned national changes is available in ACECQA's Information Sheet: Making quality assessment and rating more effective.

If you have any questions about your service operation you can contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au.

For the latest COVID-19 advice please visit the <u>COVID-19 guidelines for ECEC</u> services.





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