

MEDIA RELEASE – 24 NOVEMBER 2019

PEAK BODY SAYS NSW'S NEW STAR RATING SYSTEM WILL NOT HAVE MAJORITY SUPPORT FROM CHILDCARE SERVICE PROVIDERS OR EDUCATORS

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW has responded in disillusionment following the announcement by the NSW Coalition Government of a new star rating system to be imposed in 2020 on over 5,500 New South Wales-based early childhood education and care services.

“As the largest NSW peak body by the number of services we represent, we were not invited to be part of any consultation for this new star rating proposal. And had we been invited, we would have advised the NSW Government and the NSW Department of Education that this would not work. The reason being the existing underlying systemic issues cause too many confused yet satisfied parents to question why their services were given the ratings they were given by the NSW Department of Education,” said Mr Chiang Lim, CEO of ACA NSW.

Mr Lim was referring to the first 12 months when National Quality Standards (NQS) was “streamlined” yet 57.1% of those re-assessed NSW-based services who were previously rated Exceeding were downgraded to the lower Meeting or Working Towards the NQS ratings.

It is also worth knowing that since 2012, the National Law and National Regulations require every early childhood education and care service provider to publicly present the service’s quality ratings for the benefit of existing and prospective parents.

There are five quality ratings – Excellent, Exceeding, Meeting, Working Towards and Significant Improvement Required for the National Quality Standards. And the NSW Government can also impose penalties of up to \$2,000 if approved providers falsely represent their ratings.

The proposed new star rating by the NSW Government is intended to replace the words-based rating with one-to-four different coloured stars – a red star for services rated Significant Improvement Required, a yellow star for Working Towards, a green star for Meeting and a blue star for Exceeding. There is insufficient information about the fifth star.

“If this new star system is superior to the current requirement in highlighting underperforming childcare centres, why does NSW appear to be going alone with this new system, especially when NSW’s ratings are consistently below the national averages for Excellent, Exceeding and Meeting, and sadly higher than we should be on Working Towards and Significant Improvement Required,” said Mr Lim. (See attached table of ratings for NSW and nationally.)

During 2018 and 2019, ACA NSW has participated in the majority of four industry sector consultations (known as the NSW Department of Education’s roadshows) where it and others had consistently and overtly raised its concerns about the inconsistencies and subjectiveness of NSW’s assessment and ratings process.

“If service providers and educators do not have faith in the current assessment and rating system, how can parents have faith in the new star rating in NSW. Instead, it will only serve to further disenfranchise the very people the NSW Government needs to implement its public policy, leaving parents none the wiser as to why their services are rated the way they are,” said Mr Lim.

ACA NSW will reiterate its concerns and present again its 1,600 member services’ suggested solutions to the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, and the NSW Department of Education, for their re-consideration.

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Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW (www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au) is the peak body for privately owned early childhood education and care services in NSW, numbering approximately 1,600 childcare services, employing over 25,000 staff and supporting over 125,000 families. ACA NSW provides advocacy, policy and regulatory and business support and advice, member services and professional development for members and their staff across the state.

**For further media inquiries, please contact
ACA NSW CEO Chiang Lim on 0427 277 299**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES WHO HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AND RATED
UNDER THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS**

Ratings	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Excellent	14	10	10	9	0	2	1	46
Exceeding	1,346	1,297	862	546	216	156	38	4,461
Meeting	2,464	2,056	1,541	387	569	93	116	7,226
Working Towards	1,330	631	426	197	325	76	72	3,047
Significant Improvement Required	8	-	2	-	-	-	-	10
	5,162	3,994	2,841	1,139	1,110	327	217	14,790

%age of each rating intra state	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	ACT	NT	Nation
Excellent	0.27%	0.25%	0.35%	0.79%	-	0.61%	0.46%	0.31%
Exceeding	26.08%	32.47%	30.34%	47.94%	19.46%	47.71%	17.51%	30.16%
Meeting	47.73%	51.48%	54.24%	33.98%	51.26%	28.44%	53.46%	48.86%
Working Towards	25.77%	15.80%	14.99%	17.30%	29.28%	23.24%	33.18%	20.60%
Significant Improvement Required	0.15%	-	0.07%	-	-	-	-	0.07%
	100%							

SOURCE: The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's National Register as of 1 November 2019.
(<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers>)