

AUTUMN 2019

the nurture nook

Childcare Oversupply

Local councils are realising the unintended negative impacts

Different Payroll Taxes

What the upcoming elections could mean for your weekly wages

Social Media Risks

The potential business pitfalls in the age of mass communication

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The benefits of a trusting mentor/student relationship

FUTURE OF THE NQF

Exploring what could possibly happen under Liberals/Nationals vs. Labor



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New South Wales



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Australian Childcare Alliance NSW
PO Box 660, Parramatta NSW 2124, Australia
ABN 60 277 501 947

t 1300 556 330
e nsw@childcarealliance.org.au
w nsw.childcarealliance.org.au

f www.facebook.com/ChildCareNSW
t @ChildCareNSW
in www.linkedin.com/company/child-care-new-south-wales

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It's already Autumn 2019! *Time is just flying past so fast!*

As we predicted, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW has been in full-swing with not one but two elections since our Summer Break – the NSW State Election on 23 March 2019 and the Federal Election due by mid-May 2019.

Calls so far on NSW Government

You will have read and heard about ACA NSW's concerns of over-regulations experienced by NSW service providers and their impact ultimately on the cost-of-living pressures on young parents who have their children enrolled at our services. Although we are proud that Australia and NSW have a world-class early childhood education and care service, it is time for governments to do more if it wants to reduce the negative impacts on both parents and providers.

We have also called for a fairer distribution of governments' preschool funding for children in long daycare services. For many years now, NSW's 4-year-old children in long daycare have attracted up to \$456 per year, yet for example in Victoria, their 4-year-old children attract \$3,695/year of government preschool program funding. So why do NSW children receive less?

Two Elections in 2019

The early childhood education and care issues in the lead up to the NSW state election on 23 March 2019 will focus on state government funding priorities, the future of the National Quality Framework

(NQF), the assessment and rating system under the revised NQF, over-regulation, the approval process of new services, the State Environmental Planning Policy of Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities (including the problem of childcare oversupply), labour shortages as well as payroll taxes.

Similarly, the federal election due in May 2019 is likely to focus on government funding of the two years before school, the future of the Child Care Subsidy, school starting age, red tape, the future of the National Quality Framework, childcare oversupply, labour shortages (and a consistent national teacher registration process).

Fair Work Commission

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is still deliberating with the 4-yearly review of the Modern Awards. Currently, the discussions are focussed on the inflexible nature of rostering where services must give at least 7 days' notice to staff for when they are expected to work.

Also, the FWC is considering the request to change the official closing time of normal hours for all services currently at 6.30 pm to perhaps 7.30 pm. While still respecting the maximum 38 hours per week requirement, this change of time will provide additional flexibility especially for services in outer suburbs where parents can commute back to their (delete 'parents' and insert 'home location after finishing work'. And with

Sydney's traffic getting worse and not better for the foreseeable future, commuting time is only going to be more challenging.

The FWC is also poised to consider the union's application to increase pay rates for degree qualified teachers. The same union has not withdrawn its existing application to increase the pay of degree qualified teachers on the basis of an Equal Remuneration Order. Some have estimated that possible increases could be between 30%-59%. Through our ACA National Committee, ACA NSW members are being represented, particularly to defend how our members and our sector will be able to pay such significant increases in pay.

On behalf of the elected ACA NSW Executive Committee, we look forward to seeing you at all our ACA NSW events, including our 10 Executive Committee meetings, 26 Network Meetings, 4 Bus Tours, our 8 Quickies training sessions, and later this year our 2019 Early Childhood Education Gala Awards Night!

Lyn Connolly, President
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW

There is just so much going on! *Where do I begin?*

Two Elections in 2019

As you know, ACA NSW has been in regular communications with all the major parties as well as crossbench parliamentarians. The two years since late 2016 have been spent engaging all the key decision makers for them to understand the concerns of our members, as well as offering them with possible solutions for their consideration. And in the lead-up to the NSW state election on 23 March 2019, we are particularly looking for reliable solutions and promises regarding additional government funding (especially for preschool funding for 3 and 4-year-old children), improvements in the National Quality Framework, new service approvals, planning reform, and payroll taxes.

And before 23 March 2019, ACA NSW members and their families will also be able to access videos of each of the political parties and learn about their track records and what their objectives are in the next term of parliament.

ACA NSW will also have summaries of the various parties' positions, and will focus on at least 6 marginal electorates, even suggesting how parents should vote in each electorate based on their party's policies and promises, and on the Member of Parliament's track record - only as a guide.

Immunisation Loophole Closed

Already, the NSW Government has quickly moved to solve an immunisation loophole that would have put service providers in a most conflicted of positions where an unimmunised child could encourage parents to pull their children out of the service, or the service provider could receive a racial discrimination complaint if they refuse to enrol the unimmunised

child. Thankfully, the NSW Minister for Health, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, overruled NSW Health and will remove the loophole before the NSW election.

"Quickies" – A new series of Two Hours Only Presentations/ Training

Based on the feedback of members and their staff, they are all very time poor. Consequently, ACA NSW is very proud to introduce in 2019 a series of "Quickies" where key operational aspects of early childhood education and care are covered by professionals and experts.

The "Quickies" topics include:

- Help with NSW's service provider approval process
- Secrets of what to do during A&R visits
- Maximising & Managing Staff Performance ... Legally

New "Quickies" topics under development include:

- Exceeding the NQF through your QIP
- How to be fully prepared for an A&R
- Getting only the very best out of your staff

Eventually, these "Quickies" will also be available as videos for training purposes, especially for those who cannot physically attend the sessions.

26 Network Meetings in 2019

Yes. ACA NSW is again be conducting its 26 Network Meetings (which includes 4 on-line versions) to ensure members and non-members across NSW are fully across all the upcoming issues and challenges.

Most of our ACA NSW Network Meetings

are also now used to build and support the local communities of approved providers, with ACA NSW as a support mechanism for the local issues and concerns.

Topics of discussion include Child Care Subsidy, Child Care Finder, CCS software, childcare oversupply, labour shortages, the future of the NQF, preschool funding, assessments and ratings, etc.

For the latest information on the next Network Meeting, please visit www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/events/network-meetings-2019

4 Wheels on the Bus Tours in 2019

Following last year's success of bus tours, ACA NSW is proud to be conducting another 4 Wheels on the Bus Tours for 2019. And this year, one of those tours will focus specifically on out-of-school-hours-care services.

Always visiting Exceeding rated services, ACA NSW's Wheels on the Bus Tours enable approved providers, educational leaders, teachers and educators to learn from other exemplary services as well as from other participants and get some new ideas for their own services. Book early because our Wheels on the Bus Tours are extremely popular. For further information, please visit www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/events/2019-bus-tours

Chiang Lim, CEO
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW



ACA NSW CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH - JUNE 2019

MARCH

04 MARCH 2019

**ACA NSW CHATSWOOD
NETWORK MEETING**

06 MARCH 2019

**ACA NSW QUICKIES
TRAINING**

18 MARCH 2019

**ACA NSW CENTRAL COAST
NETWORK MEETING**

25 FEBRUARY 2019

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING**

30 MARCH 2019

**WHEELS ON THE BUS
TOUR - LDCs**

APRIL

01 APRIL 2019

**ACA NSW BLACKTOWN
NETWORK MEETING**

09 APRIL 2019

**ACA NSW QUICKIES
TRAINING**

15 APRIL 2019

**ACA NSW COFFS HARBOUR
NETWORK MEETING**

29 APRIL 2019

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING**

29 APRIL 2019

**ACA NSW SUTHERLAND
NETWORK MEETING**

MAY

06 MAY 2019

**ACA NSW WOLLONGONG
NETWORK MEETING**

08 MAY 2019

**ACA NSW QUICKIES
TRAINING**

11-12 MAY 2019

ACA NSW BUS RETREAT

15 MAY 2019

**ACA NSW QUICKIES
TRAINING**

20 MAY 2019

**ACA NSW PARRAMATTA
NETWORK MEETING**

27 MAY 2019

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING**

JUNE

01 JUNE 2019

**WHEELS ON THE BUS
TOUR - OSHCs**

03 JUNE 2019

**ACA NSW NEWCASTLE
NETWORK MEETING**

05 JUNE 2019

**ACA NSW QUICKIES
TRAINING**

17 JUNE 2019

**ACA NSW CHATSWOOD
NETWORK MEETING**

24 JUNE 2019

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING**

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Australian Childcare Alliance
New South Wales

feature article

EXPLORING THE
FUTURE OF
THE NQF

A national review of the National Quality Framework (NQF) is due in 2019 and it will be led by NSW. This review, we understand, has been given the support of the Commonwealth Government and all States and Territories through their Education Council.

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW hopes that the Review will result in a more consistent and efficient framework for all services across the country allowing families to have the peace of mind that any regulated service in the country is of a consistently high standard.

ACA NSW has already asked the NSW Department of Education, the Education Council and the Federal Department of Education and Training for further information on the Review in order to ensure that all members and families are aware of this important issue that affects the day to day lives of the thousands of children who are receiving an early childhood education in Australia. At present, we are still awaiting details from these organisations about specifics such as the process, timeline and other important criteria.

We believe that the Review is likely to take place after the Federal Election in May 2019. This is likely to allow clarity of the elected governments'

direction, especially if one or both governments were to change.

ACA NSW chooses to continue engaging with the NSW Department of Education and other stakeholders as to how the Review of the NQF in 2019 will be conducted, and how our members can be assured of effective and constructive input into the Future of the NQF. Stay tuned for further updates as we receive them.

Why were 57.1% of assessed Exceeding Centres in NSW in 2018 downgraded?

In the 2018 year alone, the NSW Department of Education has downgraded 57.1% of services (141 of 247) that had their assessments and ratings conducted that year from Exceeding to Meeting or Working Towards. This is despite the \$200 million dollars that the government provided for the professional development of educators and teachers between 2014 and 2017. That the result of the professional

development program is the large-scale downgrading of services is alarming.

ACA NSW members are concerned about the lack of clarity and transparency around the Assessment and Rating system as conducted in NSW, and the amount of time it takes away from the core work of interacting with children and building relationships to ensure their growth and development. *The sector as a whole* appears to be suffering from change fatigue and having increasingly complex requirements for assessment and ratings is causing anxiety and frustrations in educators, teachers and providers alike. ACA NSW will continue to engage the relevant authorities and stakeholders to work towards improving the system for all.

Easier process for documentation and administration

The cost of over-regulation, compliance and other paperwork is a significant issue for ACA NSW members, educators, teachers and families. ACA NSW has been

asking the NSW Government to find ways to improve efficiency thereby allowing those who have chosen to work in this field and have a passion for their work, to get back to their core priority of children's education and care.

For two years in a row, the largest survey of the early childhood sector, conducted by an independent body, has reported that educators and teachers are spending around 40% of their time on paperwork and documentation. This means that for every dollar that a parent spends on fees, 40 cents is going on educators sitting in an office and doing paperwork, not spending time with their children. This percentage has no doubt increased significantly with the advent of the Child Care Subsidy system.

ACA NSW has proposed a number of initiatives to the NSW Government to reduce regulatory burden and improve access to early learning for all children and families.

Will the NSW Government address the problem of having the lowest participation rate in the country and one of the highest costs?

With NSW having the lowest participation rate in the country for children accessing early learning in the year before school, as well as one of the highest average daily fees for childcare, ACA NSW has been calling on the NSW

Government to help address the inequities that NSW families and services are dealing with. Issues such as the cost of hiring 4 degree qualified teachers in an 80-place centre, when other states only need 1 degree qualified teacher, as well as the large number of NSW families that prefer to send their child to long daycare services require additional support from the NSW Government in order to make Early Learning accessible for all children and ensure that NSW has the brightest future possible.

"ACA NSW chooses to continue engaging with the NSW Department of Education and other stakeholders as to how the Review of the NQF in 2019 will be conducted"

The NSW Government also needs to address planning

and approval issues to ensure that new services are built in areas of need and there are incentives and support for rural and remote services. The current oversupply across many areas have led to an increase in fees and left many children and families unable to access any kind of early learning.

The recent Report on Government Services from the Productivity Commission stated that children who do not access early learning before attending school are almost twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable as those who have attended an early learning setting.

Increasing access for all children would not only reduce the pressure on primary schools, but would ensure that Australian children have access to early intervention services that allow them to address issues earlier and more easily and have the best start in life.



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LOCAL COUNCILS ARE NOW REALISING THE UNINTENDED NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CHILDCARE OVERSUPPLY

Ever since the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW declared in early 2017 that there was an oversupply of childcare services, the media (in particular the Australian Financial Review) began pointing out the unintended negative impacts, including the upward pressure on childcare fees as a direct result of a declining income to cover fixed costs.

In August 2017, the NSW Government introduced its State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017 (the SEPP). This SEPP effectively removed all powers from local councils in relation to the assessment of new childcare services other than local parking requirements. In other words, local councils have been bypassed by the NSW Government because of the belief that local councils were creating too many restrictions that were effectively stopping adequate supply to meet demand.

Ironically, a number of local councils have now publicly stated that they are seeing too many new childcare centres approved in inappropriate locations. This includes Hornsby Shire Council, The Hills Shire Council, North Sydney Council, Cumberland Council and City of Parramatta Council.

In late December 2018, Cumberland's Mayor and Councillors unanimously resolved that they were concerned about their apparent loss of powers to properly regulate what kind of childcare centres should be approved and where

they should be allowed. Cumberland Council has been conducting a public consultation process with their existing local childcare services and the general public about their local supply of places. In April 2019, they are anticipating that they will engage the NSW Government with a view of asking for certain powers to be returned to them in order to achieve a better outcome than what they have currently.

In March 2019, the City of Parramatta's Councillors will also be debating about its concerns over their perceived loss of powers to properly regulate what kind of childcare centres should be approved and where they should be allowed, especially in low density residential areas. They too anticipate that pending their decision, they will also engage the NSW Government with a view of asking for greater powers to be returned to them.

ACA NSW President Lyn Connolly and CEO Chiang Lim have had discussions with the NSW Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, and the NSW Minister for Education, the Hon Rob Stokes MP, about the SEPP and childcare oversupply. Minister Stokes was previously the NSW Minister for Planning who introduced the SEPP in draft form in early 2017.

Ironically, both Premier Berejiklian and Minister Stokes confirmed that they had heard of this problem not just from ACA NSW but also from others. They both gave undertakings to look into this issue more closely.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Casual Conversion- Children Services Award 2010 : Are casual employees now considered permanent?

The simple answer is yes, but under the right circumstances.

On 16 August 2018, the Full Federal Court delivered judgment upon an employee's casual status.

Regardless of the provisions that apply to a workforce under its award or enterprise agreement, if an employee has a regular and predictable pattern of work with an expectation of ongoing engagements, they are likely to be permanent as opposed to casual.

In addition, when an employee commences employment with irregular hours under a casual contract, their position could morph into that of permanent employment.

Under these new provisions, employees currently hired by employers as casual could in fact be permanent.

The Full Court held that the determination of whether an employee is a casual must be conducted by assessing "the real substance, practical reality and true nature of the relationship" as opposed to adopting the description the parties have given to the relationship.

The Full Court endorsed the notion that, in order for an engagement to be considered casual:

- there should be no certainty about the period over which the employment is offered; and
- there should be an informality, uncertainty and irregularity about the engagement.

So, if an employment relationship has a level of certainty, regularity and predictability about the hours to be worked, then it is inconsistent with being a casual engagement.

Are your casual employees in actual fact considered permanent?

Under the Children Services Award 2010, clause 10.6 "Right to request casual conversion", an employee may request that their employment be converted to full-time or part-time employment if they are a regular employee. There are certain conditions that must be met.

They must:

- have been employed by the employer for 12 months.
- in the preceding 12 months worked a predictable or regular pattern of hours on an ongoing basis; and
- request their employment be converted in writing and provide this to the employer.

A regular casual employee who has worked less than equivalent full-time hours over the preceding period of 12 months' casual employment may request to have their employment converted to part-time employment consistent with the pattern of hours previously worked.

A regular casual employee is not obliged to convert their employment.

What are employers' obligations?

Employers who employ regular or long-standing casuals that meet the criteria for permanency need to:

- provide every casual employee with a copy of the provisions set out in subclause 10.6 of the Children Services Award 2010, within the first 12 months of the employee's employment.

Note: In respect of casual employees already employed as at 1 October 2018, an employer should have provided such employees with a copy of the provisions of this subclause (above) by 1 January 2019.

- must not engage and re-engage a casual employee (which includes a refusal to re-engage) or have their

hours reduced or varied, in order to avoid any right or obligation under clause 10.6.

- an employer must not require a regular casual employee to convert to permanency.
- when an agreement of employment conversion occurs, both employer and employee must discuss and record in writing:
- the form of employment to which the employee will convert, that is, full-time or part-time employment; and
- if it is agreed that the employee will become a part-time employee, the matters referred to in clause 10.4(c) Children Services Award 2010; An employee (full-time or part-time) who requests to work above 90% of full-time hours, but less than full-time, will not be considered to be full-time and will be remunerated for the actual hours worked.

As an employer you can notify a casual employee of the conversion clause in the award at the beginning of their employment. You are obligated (as mention above) to notify within 12 months of employment commencing.

Advise your employee that converting from casual to full/part-time employment would also change their hourly rate of pay. You may choose to provide any regular casual employee with notice and the option of employment conversion, at the end of their first 12 months. Should they either accept or decline, record of the notice should be kept in their staff file in the event of a future dispute regarding notification, this notice can be used as evidence.

A downloadable version of the casual conversion notification pack is available via the ACA NSW website, nsw.childcarealliance.org.au

ALL FAQs CAN BE FOUND AT THE ACA NSW WEBSITE

An Immunisation Loophole

Under Public Health Regulation 2012

Members of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW would be aware of the NSW requirement to ensure all children in their care must be immunised or are on a 12-week catch-up plan. That said, those who were already enrolled prior to 1 January 2018 are exempt of this requirement. And the Commonwealth Government's "No Jab No Pay" still applies.

According to the Federal Government, the Australian Immunisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in New South Wales are 94.29% for one year olds, 91.01% for two year olds, and 97.34% for five year olds. And for all New South Wales children, the immunisation rate

is 93.94% for one year olds, 90.23% for two year olds, and 94.56% for five year olds.

Nevertheless, thanks to one of ACA NSW's members and ACA NSW's lawyers, we can now confirm that the regulatory irregularity stems from s44A(1)(e) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 where it states that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are exempted from the immunisation requirements. Yet this is opposite to the Public Health Act 2010's s87(1) and the NSW Health's Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit where on page 4's section 1.3, it states Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are allowed temporary exemptions to the immunisation enrolments up to a 12-week period.

ACA NSW has requested the assistance of the NSW Minister for Health (the Hon Brad Hazzard MP), the NSW Minister for Early Childhood Education and Aboriginal Affairs (the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC), the NSW Department of Health and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW.

As members can appreciate, this regulatory irregularity puts NSW-based early childhood education and care services in a conflicted position. And should any NSW-based early childhood education and care service refuse to enrol an unimmunised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, that service

could be the subject of a racial discrimination complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

That said, the NSW requirements do exempt children previously enrolled before 1 January 2018 who are not immunised.

NSW Health has formally advised ACA NSW that they are "... aware of this inconsistency and will be reviewing it in 2019. In the interim, providers should continue to request approved forms for Aboriginal children in the 12 weeks after enrolment, noting that in practice there is no mechanism to de-enrol children in the event that approved documentation is not provided."

ACA NSW urges its members to review your immunisation policy and procedures given the above information. Please feel free to contact ACA NSW on 1300 556 330 or nsw@childcarealliance.org.au should you require any further information.

ACA NSW will of course update members of new information or advice from the NSW Government.

The NSW Health Minister, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, has ordered his department to 'hit urgency button' to "ram through" regulatory changes before the NSW state election to close a vaccination to close a "loophole" allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to attend childcare without being vaccinated that was identified by the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

Originally, the NSW Health previously said the department would move to fix the issue after next month's state election, but Minister Hazzard said that was not acceptable.

"I have asked NSW Health lawyers to hit the urgency button and prepare the necessary regulatory changes this week for sign off by the Governor, which would close any remaining loophole around vaccination requirements for Aboriginal children in childcare," the Minister said.

"NSW already has the highest vaccination rates in Australia for Aboriginal children of preschool age but we cannot be complacent."

It comes after The Daily Telegraph revealed the Australian Childcare Alliance NSW had flagged concerns with the state government regarding an

"inconsistency" in the law concerning vaccination requirements.

Under the Public Health Regulation 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are exempt from providing certificates of immunisation



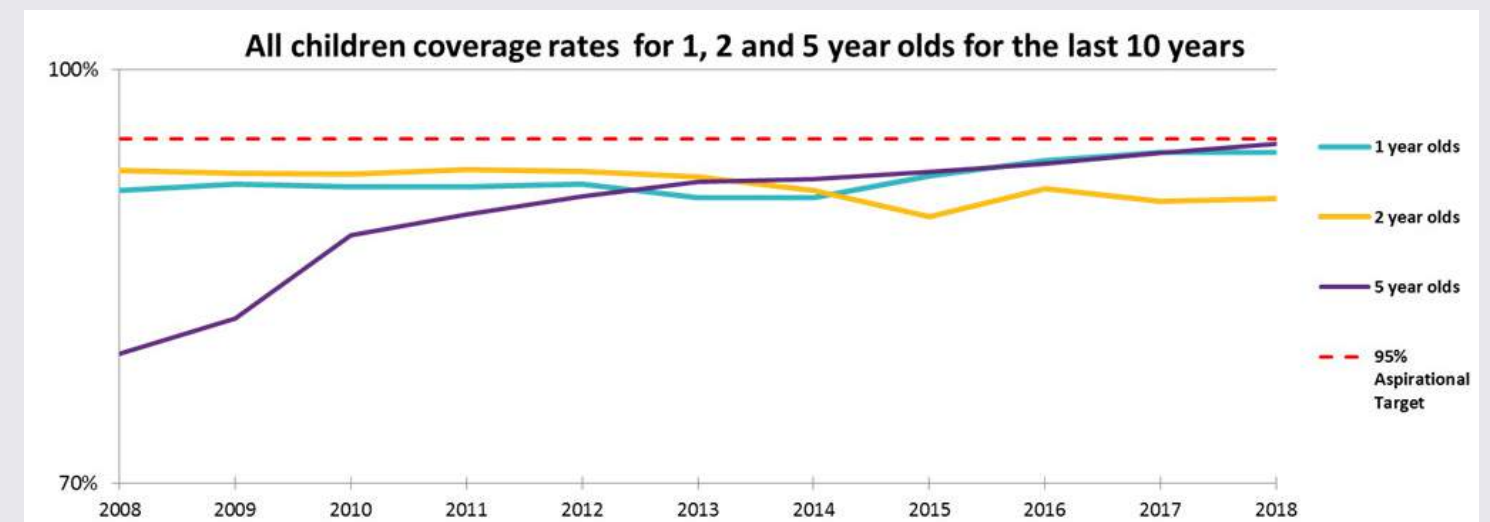
(Source: The Hunter Independent)

before enrolment at childcare facilities. However, NSW Health's position

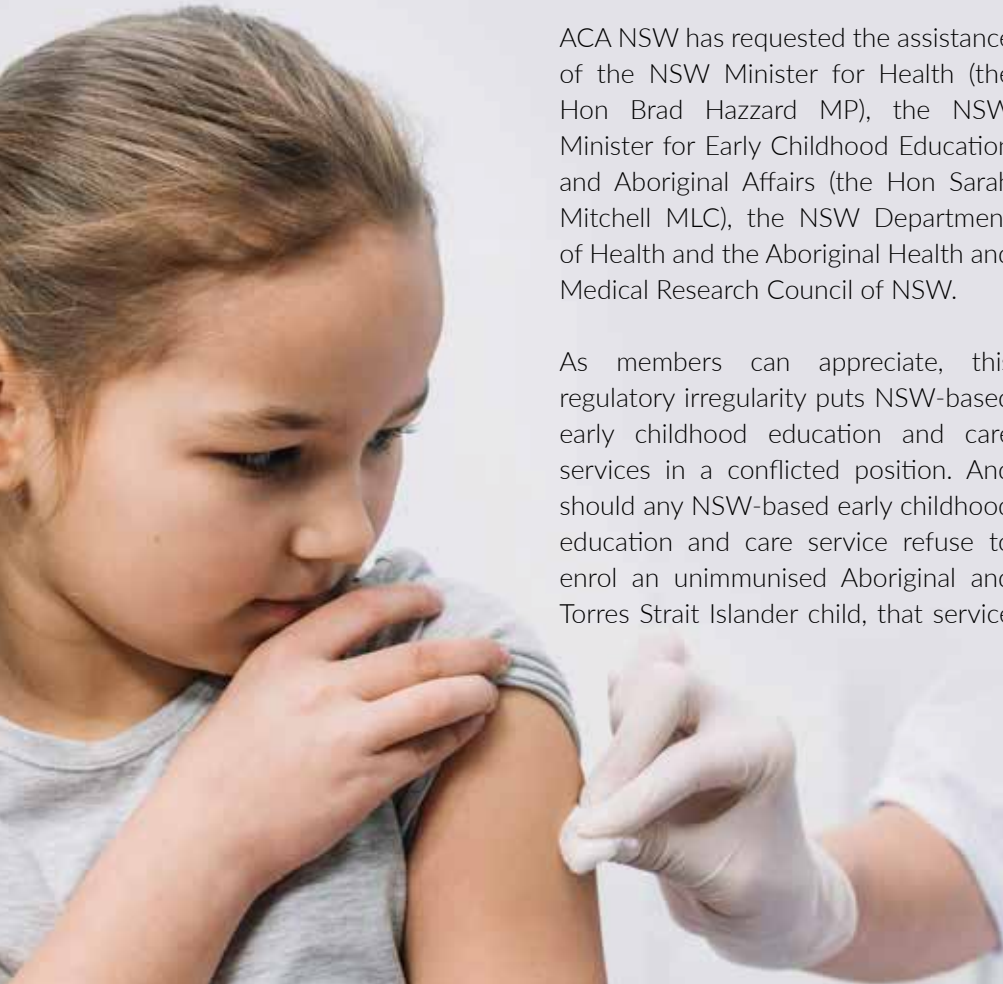
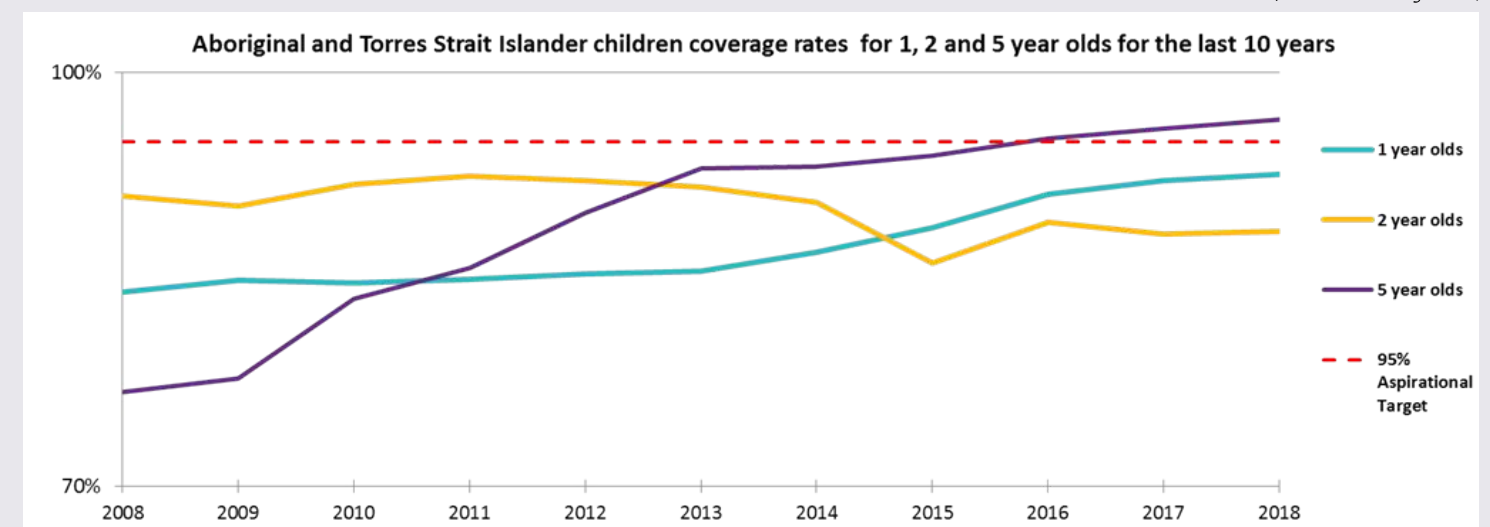
states that indigenous children only be allowed a "temporary" exemption of up to 12 weeks for immunisation enrolment requirements.

Under the current system, childcare facilities must take "reasonable steps" to obtain vaccination records from parents of these children within that time but it is not compulsory.

However, Minister Hazzard said that would change moving ahead. "We recognise some parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and guardians of children in out-of-home care might have a bit of difficulty producing records upon enrolment but going forward, childcare facilities will need to seek the vaccination documentation within 12 weeks of enrolment," he said.



(Source: health.gov.au.)



MEMBER BENEFITS

1. ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW is the leading peak body representing privately-owned childcare services who regularly engages the Federal Government, NSW Government, their Parliaments as well as the Fair Work Commission.

2. INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION

The ACA NSW is usually the only organisation that represents the privately-owned childcare services at the Fair Work Commission primarily dealing with Awards and unions' Wage Claims.

3. MEMBER SUPPORT

All ACA NSW members receive free regulatory or legislative interpretation/advice, government programme information/clarification, staff issues, policy development, assessment & rating, general business advice and dispute resolution advice.

4. MODERN AWARD & WAGE RATE ADVICE

All ACA NSW members receive the sector's Modern Awards and any information determined by the Fair Work Commission.

5. FREE LEGAL & INDUSTRIAL ADVICE

If specialist advice is needed, members can access up to 15 minutes free legal advice and up to 45 minutes free industrial relations advice, with discounted rates applying thereafter.

6. INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS

All ACA NSW members receive the Nurture Nook and Belonging magazines in hardcopy.

7. POLICY TEMPLATES

All ACA NSW members receive free and continually updated templates of Regulation 168 policies. Those with Member Plus memberships will have access to over 150 additional template policies, agreements, forms, checklists and other helpful documents.

8. MEMBERS ONLY-ACCESS

Only ACA NSW members have unique usernames and passwords to that they can access Members-Only information on the ACA NSW website.

9. E-MAIL & SMS BROADCASTS

ACA NSW Members stay informed by receiving broadcasts including The Weekly Update, From the President, Member Alerts and Red Alerts.

10. NETWORK MEETINGS

ACA NSW conducts a minimum of 16 (and up to 26) Network Meetings per year where members are briefed on pressing issues as well as new opportunities.

11. DISCOUNTED TRAINING & EVENTS

All ACA NSW members receive discounts on all its training and events including its conferences, awards night, Wheels on the Bus Tours and its Early Education and Care College.

12. VOTING RIGHTS

ACA NSW (Classic & Member Plus) members have voting rights at their Annual General Meetings, Special General Meetings and General Meetings.

EXTRA BENEFITS

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UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

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Social media is an ever-increasing form of communication for many people in both their personal and professional lives.

It presents people with many benefits in allowing them to communicate a variety of messages to many people with great speed and efficiency. However, those benefits need to be balanced with the many risks social media presents.

Social media is a very broad term which includes any websites and applications which allow users to interact with other people as well as create or share information (text, photos, videos etc.).

There are endless examples where people appear to have not stopped and thought before they've posted on social media.

Poorly considered social media posts can and do affect the personal and professional reputation and image of individuals as well as a businesses; even if the post isn't directly related to a business.

The following tips will assist individuals and businesses manage their risks when using social media:

Have a business plan for how and why social media is to be used

When deciding whether or not to create a business social media presence, it's very easy to think 'if everyone else is doing it, so should I'. However there needs to be greater thought put into this decision. The decision to use social media should be well thought out and based on a company's needs and business plans; the benefits and risks need to be considered.

Business social media should be based on business requirements, not personal views

Business owners and managers need to be sure that when they make a decision on whether to use social media for their business, this decision is based on the needs of the organisation, not the owner's/manager's personal views of social media. For example, a person who chooses to not use Twitter for personal use may still decide it's a great tool for them professionally. Business decisions and personal decisions regarding social media use should be separated.

Create clear business guidelines and processes regarding who is able to post on social media and how this is to be done

Due to the risks associated with social media interactions, it's very important that businesses have a clear process for those responsible for posting on social media. The person undertaking this role needs to understand when social media is an appropriate form of communication and what sort of

messages are to be shared using social media. This process should also provide guidance on how often social media is monitored and responded to and how to respond to negative comments.

Consider training for those staff responsible for social media

It's often assumed that young people are well versed in social media use however this isn't always the case. Also, not all users of social media understand appropriate business use and its associated risks. Therefore it's worth considering training in social media communications and its risks for the responsible staff members.

Understand the social media site you're using

There's a wide variety of social media sites available to businesses, all providing similar yet different benefits. When a business is using any of these sites, it's very important they understand the various functions within that site. Not fully understanding how a site works is going to increase the risks of using it.

Consider what messages should be shared using social media

All businesses have various ways in which they communicate with their customers and clients. Social media is generally designed for short sharp messages, yet not all information suits this style of communication. When businesses are communicating with their customers, they need to carefully consider how that particular message should be shared.

Carefully consider the implications of engaging with clients on social media

Professionals and businesses should consider if social media is an appropriate forum for

them to be communicating with clients, both through business or personal accounts. Engagement through personal accounts can blur professional boundaries. When using business accounts, some conversations may not suit social media, especially if the conversation appears in a public setting. It's important to consider what conversations are best had away from social media and when to take a discussion off line.

"When businesses are communicating with their customers, they need to carefully consider how that particular message should be shared"

Understand that you can no longer separate personal and professional use

Unfortunately many people hold a view that what they write within a personal social media account in their own time will have no bearing or impact on them professionally. However this is not the case. Whether fair or not, professionals are always representing their profession and professional self; personal social media posts can be considered to be representing a professional view. Therefore the

professional impact needs to be considered before any personal post is made.

Don't believe that any post is ever private

Too often people post information on social media which they intended to remain private and not be seen widely. However social media can never truly be private. Many online groups claim to be private and state that members require approval. However non-approved users don't need to be particularly savvy to access these groups and then share or copy information being posted. Professionals need to remember that if they don't want their colleagues, clients or competitors seeing a social media post, it should never be posted on either personal or business accounts.

Never post in haste, all posts need to be carefully considered

As mentioned earlier, social media is designed for quick short messages to be shared widely. This means social media can encourage messages to be shared with little thought or planning which on occasions leads to poorly worded messages which are easily misinterpreted. It's important to pause and think through a message before it's shared.



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EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Kylie O'Connell



Kylie has been nominated by her colleague, Kylie Turner (room leader at Umina Kids Club).

I have nominated Kylie for the following reasons: Kylie's strengths lay in the relationships that she has established within our service and beyond in the local community. She strongly believes that it takes a community to raise a child and the children and families of our centre experience a sense of belonging. Kylie understands the demographics of our local community and invites families to Weekend Adventures in the local community and to Family Dinner Nights within our service, after hours.

Kylie and her team happily volunteer their time on weekends and evenings. Having such a dedicated team has greatly improved the quality of education and care that our service offers. Our team, led by Kylie, won the 'Outstanding Contribution by a Team' Award at the 2018 Early Childhood Education Week and Gala Awards Night.

As the leader of our team, Kylie identifies the individual strengths of her team members and cultivates those strengths by encouraging everyone to share their ideas, strengths, passions and skills and to actively contribute to the centre's educational program. Her democratic leadership style has not only built a strong team spirit but has improved outcomes for children and families. Kylie is an empathetic leader who is very approachable. She always has the time to listen to staff and families and offer her support. She is flexible and open to change. She critically reflects on her practices and encourages her team to do so too, continually striving to improve practice and outcomes for children and their families.

She also encourages and assists team members to engage in professional development to keep abreast of current theory and practice in the early childhood sector and to improve the quality of the service we deliver. Hence, the majority of the Umina Kids Club team are currently studying to improve their qualifications which again improves practice and outcomes for children and families.

In the first two years of being at Umina Kids Club as Nominated Supervisor, Kylie increased our service's National Quality Rating from 'Working Towards' to

'Exceeding'. Kylie is also the Educational Leader of our centre and strongly believes that early childhood services should work together rather than in competition with each other. She has recently established an Educational Leader Group with other local services in our region and they come together monthly to share ideas and offer support to one another, focusing on ways to improve delivery of service and practice in the best interests of children and their families. In sum, Kylie's strength in establishing positive, supportive relationships with all stakeholders at our service and her strong, inspirational leadership style have vastly improved the quality of our service and outcomes for the children and families who utilise our service.

Kylie Turner- Umina Kids Club

1. What drew you towards working in early childhood education and care?

K O'C: I was drawn to early childhood education after completing work experience twenty-four years ago in a preschool setting. I loved the children's sense of wonder, their thirst for knowledge, their sense of humour and their pure enjoyment when they achieved a new skill or made new friends. I enrolled in my Diploma not long after this placement and have never looked back. I went on to complete my Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood). I am now passionate in supporting educators, students, trainees and volunteers by offering them an enjoyable, enthusiastic workplace to ignite their passion for a career in Early Childhood and to be inspired to continue to work in the Early Childhood sector.

2. What is your fondest story that makes you proud to be in your chosen vocation?

Our intergenerational program with Peninsula Retirement Village aims at bridging the gap between the young and the elderly and to enrich the lives of all involved. The children have a reciprocal relationship with the residents both at the centre and the retirement village. This programme involves the storytelling project which is a valuable intergenerational learning experience that is inclusive, authentic and empowers both age groups as they collaborate to share their perspectives, knowledge and skills. One of my favourite moments was to observe one resident, Noeleen, who told the children a story from her life experiences. After Noeleen shared her story, the children

asked questions and engaged in discussion about her life story. The children then proceeded to draw illustrations for a book that was created from her story. The book captures Noeleen's oral history and remains at our centre for the children to revisit their learning and to re-read with the seniors on future visits.

3. What is the biggest challenge you face as a Nominated Supervisor?

Being a Nominated Supervisor is so rewarding. It gives me the opportunity to engage with the wider community to support and encourage educators in their roles and beyond. It also engages families both past and present and establishes wonderful relationships that are long lasting even when families leave the service. I think my biggest challenge being a Nominated Supervisor is to remember to look after myself and prioritize my own duties as well as supporting families and educators. I often get to the end of the day and haven't completed my own tasks.

4. What do you (really) think of your approved provider? Or what makes you stay on with your approved provider?

My Approved Providers are Glenn and Mira Hale. Our seventy-two place centre is privately run and is situated on Glenn's mother's property. After Glenn's mother passed away, he wanted to give her something back to remember her. Glenn's mother's door was always open to the children in her street, so what better way to give back to her than



build a childcare centre in her memory. Glenn and Mira are the most wonderful people to work for and are dedicated to both their staff, families and the local community. Glenn and Mira are so supportive, appreciative and encourage my ideas and projects. We are extremely lucky to have Mira that has a talent for aesthetically pleasing environments and supports us behind the scenes on bringing our visions to life. To be appreciated and supported in my role makes me stay at Umina Kids Club.

5. If you could change anything in the early childhood education and care sector that would bring enormous benefits for children and their parents, what would that be?

Advocating to the wider community the importance of Early Childhood education and changing community views that we are not 'baby sitters' and that we are professionals. Early Childhood educators are extremely important in early childhood settings and the training and qualifications of the educators within our industry have risen immensely in recent years. The first five years of a child's life are the fundamental years of development. We have an extremely important job of providing all children a place to learn and grow in a stimulating educational service, I am an advocate for continuing to study and learn, and have a team where the majority are enrolled in further study to improve their qualifications.



The team at Umina Kids Club



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It's all about... **TRUST!**



As many reading this edition of Nurture Nook will know, the ACA NSW and Kool Kids Training College (RTO 40636) are busy educating ACA NSW members about the delivery of a better solution for their staff in undertaking either the CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care qualification.

Sam Hendry, College Manager noted this week "we have travelled far and wide in the pursuit of raising the profile of the training college and how it can benefit ACA NSW members by delivering what we believe is the best training model on the training market..."

"We certainly have travelled a lot in recent months. The Coffs Harbour networking meeting stands out not only because it was a great turn out of members (and subsequently we have started training in Coffs Harbour), but it is memorable for the fact that Lyn Connolly President, Chiang Lim CEO and myself nearly got lost searching for our accommodation in the surrounding hills of Coffs Harbour. I really felt at one stage it was going to be a swag under the stars!"

Aside from travel mishaps the

member network meetings are a great opportunity to meet members, discuss sector issues and also highlight that training is a critical issue for members to get right.

"Really, everything starts with training...doesn't it?" Sam said. "If you get it right it can be very powerful in terms of quality educators delivering quality service. On the flip side, if you get it wrong, it can have serious consequences," Sam said.

"For our college it all starts with Trainer & Assessor and Student relationship. If we get that right from day one then the journey to a quality training outcome is pretty seamless. But that requires great Trainers & Assessors with a 100% commitment to their students and also students who commit to the training plan and timelines set by their Trainer & Assessor.

"It really is a trusted relationship. One that sees both parties coming together and working for each other." The key elements of what makes a great relationship between the parties is outlined below:

Establishing Trust

* Trainers & Assessors are tasked with communicating with students as soon as the student is enrolled and they are required to organise to meet whilst providing contact details to enable the student to seek support as they need it (3 weekly

visits and same day phone and email actioning = high levels of contact and mentoring)

* The initial visit sets the tone for the Trainer & Assessor / Student relationship into the future (once trust is broken is hard to re-establish)

* Trainer & Assessors must be punctual and organised to help the student feel they are valued, respected and supported

* It is important that students feel a sense of welcome and enthusiasm from their Trainers & Assessors in order to take the leap of faith into the unknown (as many students may not have had positive experiences in their past schooling or training environments)

* Trainers & Assessors support students in this by smiling, use of intonation when talking, active listening and use of positive non-verbal expressions and body language

* If Trainers & Assessors organise to meet with a student, it is vital that they advise the student if they are unable to attend (and same applies to the student)

* Trainers & Assessors go through the unit in sufficient detail to help the student feel comfortable to attempt it.

* Trainers & Assessors remind students that they are only a phone call, email or text away if they need help

* Trainers & Assessors provide students with the due dates and discuss how to go about completing assessments in a timely manner

The Relationship Must Go Both Ways

With the training college having quality systems to monitor activity and progress, it is very important that students recognise their responsibilities in this relationship and don't let their Trainers & Assessors down by failing to meet timelines.

* Students need to maintain open communication with their trainer to experience the best possible training support

* Students need to have realistic expectations of their Trainers & Assessors

* Students need to work closely with their Trainers & Assessors and their supervisor to complete all their

assessments

* Students need to advise their Trainers & Assessors if they are unable to meet (if sick or away) demonstrating respect for their trainer. The strength of the training relationship can impact significantly on a student's success or failure to complete their training.

"It really is about trust and a positive relationship between Trainers & Assessors and the student. For many students it is a big step to upskill – it requires time and effort and a commitment to see it through," Sam said.

"Our college completion rates are very good as we build trust from day one in the training relationship. Once you have trust, you have 'buy in' from all the parties and that is when the magic happens!" by creating an awareness in the children and encouraging inclusion and equity.'

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Top Causes and Fixes for Commercial Blocked Drains

Many people don't know this but **World Plumbing Day is on the 11th of March** and because plumbing is a large part of our business, we thought we would help you. We wanted to help solve a couple of the plumbing mysteries to clear blocked drains and ways to prevent toilet blockages, which is one of the most common call outs we get on a regular basis, all year round.

Blocked drains can be very messy, and very expensive when not maintained.

A blocked sink or clogged toilet is highly unpleasant and inconvenient, but it can also cause a serious health hazard and can shut facilities down.

Below are some common causes of blocked drains in commercial kitchen and bathrooms, and how to fix and prevent them in the future.

What Are the Signs of a Blocked Drain?

Some early warning signs that you might have a blocked drain include:

- Foul-odour - when a clog is present it's accumulated over time, causing stoppage. You may smell a sulfar-like pungent odour from decomposing solids, bacteria build up and stagnant water.
- Gurgling sounds- if the drain blocked on a main sewer drain you will generally hear gurgling in your basin or tubs when you drain another at the same time.
- Change in flush - A drain clog can make the toilet water levels rise higher or drain it of water.
- Drips, puddles and wet floors- these often occur because of an overflow or pressure built in one spot, although in some cases it could be a leak.
- Slow-draining basins/toilet bowls
- Changes to water pressure

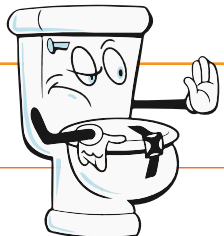
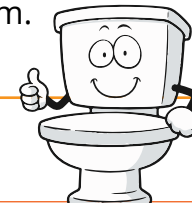
What Problems Does a Blocked Drain Cause?

Blocked outdoor, kitchen and bathroom drains are not only disruptive, they can lead to continual and costly problems. Some of these include:

- Foul odours
- Stagnant water, which attracts insects, pests and cause foul odours
- Water stains on your walls and ceilings
- Increased water bills caused by leaks
- Sewage discharge on your property
- Broken or burst pipes
- Flooding
- Overflow of water from mains if pipes are connected

How Can I Prevent A Blocked Drain?

Many drainage problems can be avoided with regular preventative maintenance. Here we take a look at three of the top causes of blocked drains and the best ways to prevent them.

 Problem		 Solution and prevention
Toilet Paper or baby wipes	An over use of toilet paper or a thicker material like wipes in a toilet bowl can bunch up and clog the system	Limit the use of toilet paper especially in the children's toilets by adding a string to the toilet dispenser to show kids how much they use. As for baby wipes these should always be put in a rubbish bin as the thicker material clogs the drains
Toys and objects	We all know kids are curious by nature and love to put their toys in everything! The problem is drains, sinks or toilet bowls can't necessarily handle it, add toilet paper on top and you have a recipe for an expensive clog.	If you can stop them from bringing them into the bathroom then that would be the first solution however if it's past that point try using the plunger or using a hook.
Oil	We know it's tempting and oil might be a liquid, but it shouldn't be poured down a sink. The build-up of grease from cooking oils is a common cause of clogged pipes, slow drains and water backup. The grease and lard in oil solidify as they cool, building up inside the drain and attracting more grime, often causing foul smells.	Avoid pouring oil down the drain. Place oil into a container and throw it away in the bin. Pour 2-3 litres of boiling water at least once a week to prevent build-up. If you have a grease trap, make sure you clean it every 4-6 weeks.

How to Fix a Blocked Drain?

For a sink/basin blockage - To start, pour several litres of boiling water down the sink. Use a plunger and then pour through more boiling water.
To correctly use a plunger, place the cup over the entire drain opening and cover the lipped rim with water. Push the plunger up and down to create suction and push the clog down the drain. If the drain is still blocked, use a chemical drain cleaner or, for a more environmentally friendly option, a mixture of baking soda and vinegar.

For a blocked toilet - Use a plunger and if persistant, limit water use and call a plumber.



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DIFFERENT PAYROLL TAXES BY NSW Coalition vs NSW Labor

Since November 2016, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW had been agitating the NSW Coalition Government as well as the NSW Labor Opposition for help with payroll tax relief.

Given the majority of childcare providers in NSW are family-owned small businesses, such payroll tax relief can significantly help with operational viability (especially for those in childcare oversupply affected areas) as well as provide downward pressures on childcare fees.

A fair reduction or removal of payroll tax for those childcare providers whose payroll is up to \$2m would also create a more level-playing field with other childcare providers who do not pay any payroll taxes at all.

NSW Coalition decides to reduce payroll tax

Back in June 2018, the NSW Coalition Government announced that it would raise the payroll tax threshold from \$750,000 to \$850,000 beginning 1 July 2018 to one million dollars by 30 June 2022. It is estimated that this change could potentially help up to 900 childcare services (or 16.7% of all services) across New South Wales.

But NSW Labor has another plan for payroll tax

In anticipation of the NSW state election on 23 March 2019, NSW Labor announced in December 2018 that if elected, it will discontinue the Liberal/National Government's increases in payroll tax threshold beyond \$850,000.

Its rationale is that NSW Labor does not believe a future NSW Labor Government can afford those reductions in revenue. And so it intends to hold onto the recently revised payroll tax threshold of \$850,000 and promised to reconsider increasing the threshold at a later date.

What does that mean for the family-owned small business approved providers?

ACA NSW estimates that there are 1,727 not-for-profit ECEC services that are exempt from contributing payroll taxes estimated to be \$52,478,363 annually to the NSW Government. Yet 2,240 family-owned small business childcare operators pay an estimated \$69,161,440 each year in NSW payroll taxes.

With this uneven playing field, ACA NSW has always been concerned that such NSW Government impost on these family-owned small business childcare services are also in effect adding costs that ultimately parents must pay.

What could a future NSW Government do to help?

As all childcare service providers are recognised as educational services, they do not attract the Goods and Services Tax nor land tax. So why is the NSW Payroll Tax applied on some and not on all?

ACA NSW has been asking the NSW Government and the NSW Opposition to consider applying an exemption of the NSW Payroll Tax for all entities with a payroll of up to \$2m. However, as this ask is unlikely to come to fruition in the neighbouring future, what could we ask for?

One suggestion is for ACA NSW to ask the NSW Coalition and NSW Opposition for their consideration of using the \$69m in NSW Payroll Taxes collected per year to pay for the difference of the cost of a degree qualified teacher and a diploma qualified teacher/educator.

ACA NSW welcomes your feedback/suggestions/comments about how else can a future NSW Government assist all early childhood education and care providers.

PRESCHOOL FUNDING FOR NSW's 3 and 4 year olds

For over two years now, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW has been calling for urgent reconsideration of proper government funding for four-year-old children in long daycare, especially when NSW has the lowest participation rate and arguably the lowest preschool funding arrangements in the country.

For over two years now, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW has been calling for urgent reconsideration of proper government funding for four-year-old children in long daycare, especially when NSW has the lowest participation rate and arguably the lowest preschool funding arrangements in the country.

NSW, just like the rest of Australia, provides a world-class early childhood education and care service to children aged 0-5 years old. In NSW, four-year-old children in long daycare receive NSW Government assistance of up to \$450 per child per year. Yet for example a Victorian four-year-old child in the same setting can receive \$3,695 per year. So why do NSW four-year-old children in long daycare in NSW get less?

Federal Labor first to offer funding for 3 and 4-year-old preschool children regardless of settings

And ever since the Lifting Our Game report was released in 2018, Federal Labor was first in announcing that a future Federal Labor Government would provide preschool funding for 3-year-old children who attend early childhood education and care for 600 hours per year.

They have also insisted that such Commonwealth funds to be distributed through State and Territory Governments must only be on the basis that State and Territory

Governments must treat all early childhood education and care settings equitably. And if Commonwealth funds received from a future Federal Labor Government are not distributed equitably across all settings, then it is likely that the State/Territory Government will not be allowed to distribute Commonwealth funding at all.

Consequently, ACA NSW has been calling on the NSW Coalition and NSW Labor for proper government funding of all three-year-old children regardless of early childhood education and care settings, in anticipation of probable future Federal-State funding after the upcoming Federal election.

Value of preschool programs at Early Childhood Education and Care services

It is important to note that Australia's childcare is more than a place for children to be cared for while their parents work. Early childhood education and care provides opportunities for children to learn and have lasting, positive impacts on their future educational, health, social and economic outcomes.

Hence, we should be taking advantage of the existing preschool education infrastructure that already exists across all long daycare services where the majority of NSW families already enrol their children. Providing greater government

support will make access easier for this cohort of children by assisting services with the cost of delivering their preschool programs. This will lift NSW up and may even exceed national preschool participation levels.

While there are over 189,000 children in NSW who do not access any type of formal early learning, this subsequently puts pressure on primary schools to support them later instead. It is therefore alarming that far too many NSW parents cannot afford to enrol their children in any type of early learning environment either at all or for additional day or days.

NSW Labor offers significant solutions to legacy and future early learning challenges

ACA NSW is very appreciative of NSW Labor's promises announced on 4 March 2019 offering to solve a range of legacy and future challenges facing children aged 0-5 years old.

NSW Labor provided a solution to finally and more fairly fund 4-year-old children in long daycare, as well as offering new preschool funding for 3-year-old children in long daycare for the first time ever.

In addition to NSW Labor's promises of funding all 3 and 4-year-old children regardless of settings, their proposal also encompasses a Little Kids Big Futures fund, Specialist Early Interventions, and improving the Assessment and Rating of services by boosting funding.

Previously with 4-year-old children in long daycare services receiving NSW Government assistance of up to \$456 per child per year, under NSW Labor's proposal, they will instead

receive \$1,000 per child per year, and 3-year-old children in long daycare will also receive \$1,000 per child per year of new funding.

NSW Labor's proposed Little Kids Big Futures fund, amongst many things, will also be used to conduct Australian-based research so that the benefits of Australian early childhood education and care can be further developed, refined and enhanced in a manner that balances quality, affordability and operational viability.

ACA NSW President Lyn Connolly is particularly grateful to NSW Labor for proposing their Specialist Early Intervention trial as there has long been a very great need to help identify and assist with young children's developmental challenges well before they go to school. This can only do wonders for them in later life.

Need for proper consultation with the sector by a future NSW Minister

NSW Labor has also agreed to ACA NSW's request in establishing a Ministerial Advisory Panel that will meet with the Minister at least four times a year, and will receive input not only from peak bodies but also from service providers, parents, teachers and staff, along with academics and experts in the field of early childhood education.

ACA NSW is very pleased that NSW Labor has recognised the importance of getting feedback and input directly from the sector and parents. This is a really positive outcome which we hope will help to foster and strengthen Australia's already world-class early learning sector, while making it more affordable for parents and accessible for all children.

And what is the NSW Coalition's proposal and vision of the future of Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW?

ACA NSW, the sector and young families now await the NSW Coalition's announcement of their future plans and vision for early childhood education and care before 23 March 2019.





A LETTER FROM *Sarah Mitchell*

NSW Minister for Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education can be a complex policy space, but one part of it is very simple – the benefits of a quality early childhood education and how important it is for our children.

Like you, I am passionate about providing opportunities for our children to succeed but I know the success of the early childhood sector is only possible because of the incredible workforce. I thank all ACA NSW members for the role you play in building a better tomorrow by educating the children of our state.

I am proud to be the second Minister for Early Childhood Education in this state's history. This government created this stand-alone ministry because we know how important it is. I am also proud of what we have achieved so far. There is plenty of work to do but together we can get it done.

Since the Liberals & Nationals came into government, we have invested more into early childhood education than ever before. In 2010-11 the budget under Labor was \$212 million. In the 2018-19 Budget, the Liberals & Nationals invested \$474 million.

The sector is aware that this government's signature policy Start Strong was announced in 2016 and the NSW Government remains committed to linking needs-based funding to 600 hours of enrolment in the year before school to increase levels of participation. Through Start Strong we made the single biggest investment in the State's history in early childhood education.

As a mother, I have seen first-hand how much my daughters have benefited from Long Day Care (LDC) and Community Preschool services. I am grateful for the service options that are available to parents in NSW. In 2017 and 2018 tens of millions in payments have been distributed to eligible LDC services across the state through the Start Strong

Long Day Care program as a result of the Universal Access National Partnership arrangements.

LDC services receive between \$300 - \$1300 per child, depending on circumstances, to improve education outcomes and support children in the year before school. The Commonwealth Government has recently confirmed a one year extension of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for 2019 and the NSW Government will continue to support children accessing a quality early childhood education in a LDC setting in the year before school.

We've worked hard to ensure there is equitable support across the board. Each year the Commonwealth subsidises NSW childcare around \$2.5 billion through Child Care Subsidies.

The Australian Government recurrent expenditure on child care services in NSW was on average \$5,693 in 2017/18. Under Start Strong per child funding for community preschools over the same period was on average \$5,540. We know there is more we can do for both LDC and community preschools and a Liberals & Nationals government will work with the sector to keep delivering.

Our children aren't going to make the most of all the opportunities we've helped to create in early childhood education unless they participate. Over our time in Government, we have seen participation rates in the year before school increase from 56% to over 80%. When it comes to participation in 600hrs for the year before school, according to the most recent Report on Government Services, 93.2 per cent of NSW enrolments were for 15 hrs a week in a preschool program. This is an 8.3 percentage point increase from the 2016 rate. This represented the greatest increase of any Australian state or territory.

The Liberals & Nationals understand how important a well-supported workforce is. That is why we

have invested more than \$4.5 million in a range of professional development opportunities to strengthen and support early childhood educators.

Last year we announced our Early Childhood Education Workforce strategy. This strategy includes the development of a sector-wide online, professional development portal, online study options, and redeveloping diploma modules to transition more smoothly to bachelor level as well as review of scholarships programs. We have allocated a further \$6 million dollars to ensure that our state's educators are equipped to teach our children in our rapidly changing world.

Children with disability and additional learning needs deserve to participate in quality early childhood education programs on the same basis as their peers. In 2017-2018 the government announced \$30m in continued funding to enhance participation and education outcomes for children with disability and additional learning needs in early childhood education. Additional training and professional development opportunities have also been provided to educators to continue to build workforce capability to support children with disability and additional needs.

As a working mother, I understand the pressures placed on families. We're determined to further support families by providing more places in before and after school care centres right across the state. The \$20 million Before and After School Care Fund supported working families by establishing new out of school hours care services in government and non-government primary school communities. We have increased the net number of approved Before and After School Care places by more than 62,000 since March 2015. The NSW Liberals & Nationals will continue to look at ways we can improve the convenience for parents and work with services to offer greater flexibility so parents can utilise OSHC services where they wish to do so.

We have improved the overall quality of the services we provide in NSW. We have both the highest proportion of all services (34%) and the highest proportion of services with a quality rating (96%). I'd like to thank the hard work and tireless efforts of the whole workforce, because boosting quality matters and improvements require effort. The Quality Support Program in partnership with ACECQA is

assisting 150 services in Long Day Care and Family Day Care and I'm happy to let you know that a further \$2.5 million will enable even more services to access the assistance and guidance they need to increase their quality and rating under the National Quality Standard over the next financial year.

Looking forward, securing longer-term certainty from the Commonwealth around the next UANP continues to be a priority for me and this Government. NSW has lead the country in funding early childhood education for two years and we want to bring the Commonwealth with us. I will keep up that fight.

Under our government:

- Participation is up
- The number of children receiving 600 hours preschool is up
- There has never been more investment in early childhood education
- NSW is leading the Nation on two years of quality childhood education
- The quality of services is up

We have come a long way, and there's more to be done should we be given the opportunity. I look forward to working with you to achieve the very best for our children.

Thank you,

Sarah Mitchell

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC





A LETTER FROM *Kate Washington*

NSW Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education

Dear ACA NSW Members,

Since becoming the Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education in 2016, I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet with many early childhood education service providers, owners, teachers, educators, advocates and students.

Everyone I've spoken with knows the transformative nature of early education. Two years of preschool, in particular, is not just an investment in the future of our children, but a prudent investment in our communities – supporting parents, improving outcomes in later life, and underpinning healthy communities and their economies.

We have seen the Early Childhood Education and Care sector in NSW face a number of challenges in recent years, and too often these challenges have been caused or worsened by the current Government and its misplaced priorities.

If Labor is elected to government this year, we will inherit a system where NSW parents pay the highest long day care fees in the country whilst many service providers struggle to make ends meet. Something doesn't add up and too many children are missing out.

As I'm sure you would agree, the lack of genuine engagement with your sector has led to poor government decisions, and poor early learning outcomes. The NSW Auditor General found that the NSW Liberal-National Government underspent the early childhood budget by more than \$350 million – that's money that should have been invested in your services, staff and children, but wasn't.

We also know that the NSW Government forfeited another \$150 million in Commonwealth funding because they failed to improve enrolment rates.

Services in NSW are not being supported to achieve. A centre in NSW can wait more than five years between National Quality Standards inspections. This delay fails to give centres an opportunity to learn from the rating process, implement improvements and be recognised for their successes.

Because of these issues, I am confident that only a Labor Government can make the early childhood education sector fairer for parents, providers and children. I know this because Labor is committed to early education and its transformative power.

If elected to government this year, these will be my priorities:

I will start genuine consultation with the sector.

This is essential to rebuild the trust eroded by the current Government, and will guide the implementation of policies to build a fairer system.

Give the sector a voice at the highest level.

I have committed to establish a Ministerial Advisory Panel on Early Childhood Education, with representatives from across the sector. These early education leaders will have a direct voice in the decision making process and will help address emerging issues on an ongoing basis.

Closer links with schools.

Labor has committed that all new public primary schools will have a preschool, long day care,

or before and after school care centre on site. In selecting the service type, the needs of the community will be paramount.

Supporting all children.

Federal and State Labor governments will work together to support all children to gain an early education. These policies – of greater and more genuine consultation, building closer links with schools, and improving access for all children – will set NSW on the right path towards a fairer early childhood education system for all.

Kate Washington MP





CHANGES TO TRAINEESHIPS

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW has spoken with Training NSW and the NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITAB) with respect to the impracticable logistics surrounding the changes to the traineeship workplace requirements. Training NSW and the NSW ITAB have now provided clarification around their traineeship changes.

As of June 2018 the NSW Department of Industry released new information regarding Children's Services Traineeships. The changes are only applicable to school-based trainee's (eg. Under 18's but over 16 years). The Community Services and Health ITAB advise that to work in Early Childhood Education and Care, persons must be 16 years or over and meet all the legislative requirements which include the Working with Children Check.

An employee undertaking a traineeship can and will:

- Learn and implement policies, procedures and routines of the service
- Establish relationships and interact with children
- Learn basic skills required to work with children
- Basic duties including food preparation, cleaning and gardening
- Observe and learn to program an early childhood curriculum
- Learn to document children's development
- Assist educators in day to day operations of room

Trainees are paid under Schedule E of the Miscellaneous Award 2010. The Children's Service Award incorporates the employment conditions of childcare trainees.

The changes to school-based trainees are as follows:

In the workplace, the school-based trainee:

- Is not employed as primary contact staff member
- May be included in any staff to child ratio calculation, refer to "Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2012 Part 52(3)".
- Is not left alone with children at any time
- Is not left to close up the facility or be responsible for opening the service
- Is not to undertake duties outside those directly related to working with children. For example, the trainee is not to undertake other kitchen hand, clerical or general cleaning duties
- Is to be supervised by an appropriate Children's Services worker at all times. The trainee must work to an appropriately qualified mentor/supervisor on site at all times they are in the workplace.
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (or earlier equivalent qualification) is the minimum mentor or supervisor qualification
- Is not to be left alone and/or unsupervised whilst caring for children.

Other requirements to consider:

The potential school-based trainee must be;

- Interviewed by school, registered training organisation and Training Services NSW personnel prior to undertaking the pathway
- Understand clearly the work involved, the time commitment required, the lack of Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) outcome and the suitability of the student to the Early Childhood Education and Care sector
- Family or guardian consent is gained after full and clear sharing of the same information
- Employment must be in a licensed environment
- The employer is made aware of their responsibilities and the special requirements of employing a school based trainee.
- The potential school-based trainee is interviewed by the potential employer to ensure all employment processes, expectations and relationships are clearly understood and met and that the trainee will work effectively with the team.
- The employer is required to have a risk management policy and procedures guideline in place for staff which includes for staff under 18 years of age.
- The school-based traineeship is to be monitored by Training Services NSW.

- Young people under the age of 18 years working in child related employment are exempt from the requirement for a Working With Children Check (WWCC). However, once they turn 18, people working with children (including trainees and students undertaking a work placement) must have a WWCC clearance number.

Individuals seeking child-related employment can apply for a WWCC online for any employee/trainee/student aged 17 years 9 months or older.

For further information go to <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/working-with-children-check>.

You can find more information about traineeships at <https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/>
https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/forms_documents/apprenticeships_traineeships/apprenticeship_traineeship_act_proclaimed_2018.pdf

Information sourced from:

Commissioner's Information Bulletin 673

Community Services – Traineeships

https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/cib_vto/cibs/cib_673.html





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