

***EARLY CHILDHOOD  
TEACHERS AND  
QUALIFIED STAFF***

FOR THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICES, OFFICE OF  
CHILDCARE

*SPRC Report 4/04*

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**University of New South Wales Research Consortium**  
Social Policy Research Centre  
Families At Work  
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## **Executive Summary**

New South Wales is experiencing a shortage of early childhood trained staff in children's services for children under school age, for which the Government is seeking solutions. The shortage of trained staff has resulted in requests to the Minister for approvals for a less qualified person to be in the position of teacher to meet the licensing requirement for early childhood qualified teachers. Other longer-term implications may include a reduction in the quality of children's services as a learning environment for children before school, child protection concerns and the legal implications if centres are unable to meet regulatory standards. Research has consistently identified the employment of qualified staff as an indicator of good quality child care.

The research investigated the extent and reasons for the apparent shortage of early childhood qualified staff. Methods include a literature review, interviews with stakeholders, secondary data analysis and a survey of qualified staff in and out of the early childhood profession. The report makes recommendations to address the problem. Some of these solutions are outside the responsibility of the NSW Government but require the communication of the findings by the Office of Childcare to ensure their implementation.

## **Recommendations**

Reasons for the shortage of staff range from education opportunities, graduates leaving the profession, work conditions to the professional support and status of the profession. These reasons are exacerbated by the fragmentation of the profession, funding restrictions, limited career opportunities, mismatch between training and job expectations, level of administrative work required and workplace stress and burnout (CCCAC, 2001a). The report describes evidence for the reasons and makes recommendations to address the shortage.

The recommendations focus on building and maintaining connection to the profession for potential students, undergraduates, staff working in the profession and people who have left the profession.

Implementation of the recommendations will require the contribution and commitment of all stakeholders in the profession. However, in order to effect the recommendations, they are framed in terms of action or communication by the Office of Childcare, the commissioner of the research and the agency responsible for the legislative requirement for qualified staff. The types of recommended actions are for the Office of Childcare to:

- strengthen licensing requirements;
- communicate findings to other stakeholders; and
- recommend action by other Government agencies.

The emphasis has been placed on the organisational and communication role of the Office of Childcare as the government agency responsible for children's services

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policy. The recommendations recognise the responsibility of other stakeholders to commit resources and time to solve the shortage of qualified staff.

### **Wages and conditions**

1. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to recommend the payment of permanent and temporary salary top-ups for rural and remote early childhood education staff similar to the General Practitioner and nursing schemes.*

Cooperative financial arrangements between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and local employers to encourage the relocation of professional staff such as GPs and nurses to rural regions are successful models for comparison. Suggestions from the profession for temporary assistance for critical shortages included Government financial support to a rural agency to provide temporary staff.

2. *That the NSW Government maintains or improves the current regulatory requirements for qualified staff and child:staff ratios in the interest of good quality care and workplace conditions.*

3. *That the NSW Government amends the regulations to improve workplace conditions, including:*

- *requirement for temporary and permanent Authorised Supervisors to undertake a minimum of 6 hours continuing education per year (Recommendations 4 and 14);*
- *monthly supervision of qualified staff by directors (similar to social worker requirements) to facilitate professional support and development (Recommendation 14); and*
- *pleasant physical environment including off-duty facilities.*

4. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to unions and employers in the profession about wages and conditions, including:*

- *improving the pay conditions to 2-year TAFE trained or equivalent staff to financially recognise the benefit of qualified staff;*
- *increasing the consistency of conditions across awards;*
- *child-free staff meeting and daily preparation time during work hours;*
- *payment by the employer of any associated cost and time following the implementation of Recommendation 3 for temporary and permanent Authorised Supervisors to undertake a minimum of 6 hours continuing education per year;*
- *financial recognition of post-graduate qualifications; and*
- *recognising the benefit of students' progressive educational experience in wage rates paid to them while they are undergraduates.*

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Students should be encouraged financially to work in the profession rather than in higher paid unrelated workplaces to increase their connection to the profession before they graduate.

5. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to employers, unions and peak organisations to improve workplace conditions, including:*

- *stable or flexible shifts to meet other responsibilities to comply with NSW anti discrimination legislation;*
- *workplace relations, teamwork and leadership opportunities;*
- *workplace resources for teaching;*
- *consistent access to entitlements such as crib and meal breaks, ability to take sick leave, to plan holidays and RDOs;*
- *priority of access for employees' children, thereby facilitating FBT-exempt salary packaging of child care fees;*
- *exit interviews for qualified staff leaving a service;*
- *sole or shared employment of business managers between services; and*
- *other workplace and industrial conditions listed in Recommendations in this report.*

6. *That the Office of Childcare, in relation to the impact of employing early childhood education teachers on the cost to employers and on the affordability of child care fees:*

- *examines options for the NSW Government to increase and reallocate the funding currently used for community long day care operational subsidies; and*
- *communicates the findings to the Commonwealth in relation to the cost to services and its implications for an adjustment to Commonwealth Childcare Benefit to cover the increasing gap-fee.*

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## General reasons for the shortage

7. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the profession about improving the value of early childhood careers by collating material supplied by educational institutions, peak bodies and employers and distributing to graduates in and out of the profession, including:*

- *6-monthly mail-out to graduates with periodical information included in this recommendation;*
- *a register of graduates who have left the profession. Employers and relief agencies should be asked to encourage graduates leaving the profession to join the register;*
- *clearinghouse of information for career paths, networks and development opportunities (such as continuing education, retraining, bridging courses and financial assistance for education);*
- *role of CSAs in supporting consistent implementation of the regulations to enhance the provision of quality care;*
- *a new edition of the Community Child Care policy handbook (or similar) to include information about priority of access for employees' children and an additional handbook on family friendly practices for child care service employees; and*
- *supportive workplace conditions in awards and examples of best practice.*

8. *That the Office of Childcare recommends to the National Children's Services Administrators that national workforce data on early childhood qualified staff be separately categorised by existing data collectors such as the Graduate Careers Council of Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.*

Australian Graduate Destination Survey includes comparative information on the number of graduates and which industries recent graduates are currently working in (Graduate Careers Council of Australia). The data do not distinguish early childhood. Similarly, no relevant ABS statistics on labour force participation and training specific to early childhood teachers is available (Directory of Education and Training Statistics, ABS).

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## Qualifications and education

9. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to stakeholders in early childhood education courses about:*

- *strategies and commitment to broadening the recruitment pool to increase geographic, gender, cultural and indigenous diversity;*
- *the relationship between courses at different campuses such as specialisation, differentiation, flexibility of delivery and collaboration to improve effective education opportunities;*
- *embedding mentoring as part of the course to establish connections to the profession before students graduate;*
- *support to workers already in the profession to enrol in and complete courses to upgrade their qualifications, such as onsite learning hours, study leave;*
- *ways to support the quality of students' practicum experiences, including mentoring, peer support, assistance for Indigenous and rural placements (transport, accommodation and lost income); and*
- *managerial skills for operating children's services.*

10. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the tertiary education sector and Commonwealth and State Government Departments about considering methods of offering scholarships funded by Commonwealth, State or private sources to address the imperatives of:*

- *increasing recruitment from rural areas;*
- *retraining of mature graduates who have left the profession; and*
- *increasing gender, cultural and indigenous diversity.*

*Relevant agencies include Commonwealth Departments of Education, Science and Technology; Employment and Workplace Relations; Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission; and NSW Department of Education and Training.*

11. *That the Office of Childcare requires as a key performance indicator from the contracted provider, AECA, that it clarifies to the profession the processes of the Qualifications Committee and the precise information required to be attached to the application to minimise decision making delays and review whether additional staffing support to the Committee is required to expedite the process.*

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## Recruitment

12. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and employers about developing graduate recruitment strategies such as:

- university-based recruitment 6 months before graduation (similar to the Department of Education Targeted Graduate Scheme);
- pooling recruitment resources and strategies;
- positive practicum experiences (Recommendation 9);
- financial support for indigenous and rural placements (Recommendation 10); and
- supporting recruitment of mature workers back into the profession through scholarships to retrain and work conditions such as stable fixed shifts and family policies (Recommendations 1-5, 10).

A recruitment scheme that benefits employers that vary in size, location and graduate characteristics is required to meet the diverse needs of the profession. A combination of direct and indirect strategies is therefore needed. The *Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award* provides a 'Socio Economic Goods and Services Allowance', dependent partner and child allowances, vehicle allowance and vacation travel allowance to compensate for geographic isolation. These allowances vary depending on location throughout NSW. Offering a similar scheme or tax rebates to attract trained staff to rural regions may assist the recruitment process.

13. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the Commonwealth about:

- the restoration of early childhood education to the priority migrant career list and provides advice to the Commonwealth about acceptable documentation required to meet NSW qualification standards; and
- the inclusion of early childhood educated staff in the tax concession categories for rural and remote areas (Tax Zone A and Special Tax Zone A and B) or the provision of specific area allowances in all appropriate industrial awards.

## Professional support and status

14. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and educators in the profession about establishing local professional support networks and professional continuing education through:

- providing a small amount of seeding money to each local area;
- publicising successful examples of networking and mentoring (Recommendation 7);
- publicising career path and development opportunities such as examination markers; QIAS reviewers; part-time or guest lecturer; tutor; professional and advocacy participation (Recommendation 7);
- publicising professional continuing education and incorporating it as an annual requirement for Authorised Supervisors (Recommendation 3) through a variety of courses and formats eg in-service, on the job training, networks and courses at universities, TAFE and non-government providers.

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Peer support, mentoring and professional networks have been successful strategies both within the profession (eg Local Network Eastern Suburbs, Sydney) and externally (eg Women in Business Mentoring Program). Initiatives need to be locally driven but assisted in their establishment by the profession connecting child care services, staff within them, graduates who have left the profession, networking facilities such as distance education equipment. Undergraduates should be represented in the establishment consultations.

Professional continuing education is a requirement for some early childhood employers (eg SDN Children's Services (Inc), Early Childhood Long Day Care Centres (State) and Creche and Kindergarten Association Queensland) and in other professions (eg medical, legal, financial). A distinction from other professions is the relatively poor pay, which would probably require that employers were required to pay the cost of continuing education in work hours. Many courses and training opportunities exist in the profession and in related training areas (eg university and TAFE centres for professional education and continuing education, management skills training and courses and conferences run by peak bodies within the profession).

*15. That the Office of Childcare advocates to the NSW Department of Education and Training the implementation of the Ramsey Report recommendation on the formation of an Institute of Teachers, with the following features to benefit the early childhood profession:*

- *representation from all early childhood bodies; and*
- *associate membership for TAFE trained staff.*

The emphasis within the profession of uniting all types of early childhood care and education and employees with different qualifications should be maintained in the principles of the Institute of Teachers. Similar objectives have been advanced in the Australian Librarian Information Association.

*16. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and educators to develop publicity to enhance the status of the profession by:*

- *improving graduates' participation in professional organisations and peak bodies;*
- *publicising early childhood education as a positive career by designing information about the nature of the profession and personal and professional benefits that can be gained from this type of work;*
- *promoting the educational function of children's services;*
- *promoting early childhood in high school career days; and*
- *promoting the benefits of further education to child care professionals.*

## **1 Introduction**

New South Wales is experiencing a shortage of early childhood trained staff in children's services for children under school age, for which the Government is seeking solutions. The shortage of trained staff has resulted in requests to the Minister for approvals for a less qualified person to be in the position of teacher to meet the licensing requirement for early childhood qualified teachers. Other longer-term implications may include a reduction in the quality of children's services as a learning environment for children before school, child protection concerns and the legal implications if centres are unable to meet regulatory standards.

The primacy of the early years of life have a 'decisive impact on the architecture of the brain and on the nature of adult capacities' (CCCAC, 2001e). To enhance these early years, the quality of Australian children's services is maintained through state and territory child care regulations and national accreditation systems that recognise the employment of qualified staff as a core aspect of maintaining quality standards (Brennan, 1998). These standards also recognise the need to address the diverse and additional needs of the children and families and different parts of the profession, particularly children from indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds, children with a disability and children at risk or other disadvantage (Butterworth, 1998; CCCAC, 2001a). Research has consistently identified the employment of qualified staff as an indicator of good quality child care. Even with accreditation, high quality care will be at risk until early childhood teachers are encouraged to enter and remain in the profession (Keller, 2000).

This project investigated the extent and reasons for the apparent shortage of early childhood qualified staff. It makes recommendations to address the problem.

The report is structured in the following way. After this introduction, Section 2 explains the research design and methodology. The body of the report presents a summary and discussion of the findings: Section 3 describes the extent of the shortage of qualified staff; Section 4, the reasons for the shortage followed by recommendations to each problem. Details on the research instruments and findings are presented in the appendices.

## **2 Research Design and Methodology**

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the research were to investigate the extent of current employment, apparent shortage and reasons for this shortage of trained early childhood personnel – early childhood qualified teachers and TAFE qualified staff – in licensed early childhood centre-based services.

The project methodology was designed to address the objectives of the project. The figures after each objective refer to the tasks in the methodology that address the objective and are described further in the remainder of this section.

The objectives of the research were to investigate:

1. The extent of the current employment of early childhood qualified teachers in licensed early childhood centres in NSW, including the level of employment of early childhood qualified teachers per service comparing with the regulatory requirement per service.
2. The extent to which there is a shortage of early childhood qualified teachers in NSW.
3. The reasons for this phenomenon, including:
  - why people are not entering training institutions; and
  - why early childhood students on completion of their studies, are not entering the profession.
4. The extent to which salary and conditions, the range of Awards and differences in these, may be contributing to the problem.
5. The extent to which the operational characteristics of traditional service models (long day care/preschool) may be contributing to the problem.
6. The extent to which services are experiencing difficulty in recruiting TAFE qualified staff and the reasons for this.
7. The extent to which these phenomena exist in other Australian States and Territories.
8. To make recommendations to the Minister for Community Services in relation to the findings of the research, including options that can lead to redressing this problem, with the proviso that the ways in which the problem can be addressed, may rest outside the province and responsibility of the NSW Government.

The research was conducted through the following four tasks:

- a literature review;
- an analysis of secondary data;
- interviews with key stakeholders; and
- a survey of early childhood trained teachers and child care workers currently working inside and outside the profession.

## **2.2 Literature Review**

The first task of the project was to conduct a comprehensive literature review of related research conducted in Australia and overseas. The literature review drew together the existing research on the incidence, reasons and solutions for shortages of trained early childhood personnel from a variety of sources. It involved systematic searches of:

- electronic databases;
- published material; and
- responses to letters sent by the Office of Childcare about accessing unpublished material and reports to peak children's services organisations.

The literature review included the experience of the children's services profession in NSW; comparative material on other children's services jurisdictions; the experience of other professional industries experiencing personnel shortages; and the impact of the shortage on the experience of parents and children using children's services.

## **2.3 Secondary Quantitative Data Analysis**

The second task was the identification and analysis of secondary data sources. These included the following data sources:

- Department of Community Services data bases: Annual Services Plan and Reporting Document (ASPARD) and Children's Services Information System (CSIS), data on details about demand for trained staff according to the number of licensed places, licensing breaches, exemptions and declared staffing levels;
- NSW Department of Industrial Relations, Women's Equity Bureau investigation on equal pay including the child care profession; and
- Industrial Awards and Enterprise Agreements.

The aim of this analysis was to describe the extent of the shortage of early childhood teachers and TAFE qualified staff in terms of any trends, such as location, service type, graduate type, comparison to other jurisdictions in Australia and comparison between working conditions.

An attempt was made to gather enrolment and graduation data from tertiary institutions in New South Wales that train early childhood teachers. Unfortunately, the data were not readily accessible within the existing research resources. It was decided that this component of the project would cease.

The data analysis is summarised in Section 3, with the Award analysis in Appendix A.

## **2.4 Stakeholder Interviews**

The third task of the project was to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. They included:

- course organisers at universities and TAFE that provide early childhood training;

- children's services organisers with the relevant unions including the Independent Education Union, Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union and Municipal Employees Union;
- children's services peak groups including NSW Children's Services Forum members and constituents, Country Children's Services Association, NSW Occasional Child Care Association, NSW NACBCS, Quality Childcare Association and the Association of Child Care Centres of NSW;
- large employer groups such as KU Children's Services, SDN Children's Services, local councils and NSW Department of Education and Training;
- government agencies involved in licensing and quality control of licensed early childhood centres – Department of Community Services Children's Services Advisers and the National Childcare Accreditation Council;
- parents recruited through other stakeholders; and
- directors and employers in children's services.

Children were not interviewed or observed because of the short time frame that prevented an accessible focus on the child's experience of different levels of training of carers. The project relied on the literature review to reveal children's experience of the issue.

Stakeholders were selected in consultation with the Department. A snowballing method was employed to recruit stakeholders, having first established initial representatives in each of the major groups listed above.

The semi-structured interviews addressed issues relating to:

- perceptions of extent of problem;
- graduates understanding of work demands;
- impact of wages and conditions;
- operational and systemic characteristics that may impact;
- career options and career paths; and
- ideas for solutions – short and long term.

The stakeholder interview are analysed in Appendix B. Detailed findings are available on request.

Additional interviews were held with student graduates. A random sample of 20 students who were about to graduate from an early childhood program at a metropolitan university were interviewed by telephone. They were asked about:

- their immediate employment plans;
- reasons for these plans;
- their longer term career plans; and
- suggestions for how the apparent staff shortage in the 0-5 sector might be addressed.

The student interview findings are summarised in Appendix C. Research conducted by Alison Elliott, University of Western Sydney from 1998 to 2001 on early childhood students' employment expectations and preferred destinations in the short and long-term is summarised in Appendix C. Administrative data on reasons for student extensions and retention were also analysed.

## **2.5 Early Childhood Qualified Staff Survey**

Informed by the issues that emerged from the literature review and interviews with key stakeholders a survey instrument was developed to explore these issues in relation to the employment of trained early childhood personnel in licensed early childhood centres in NSW.

This component of the project surveyed early childhood teachers and TAFE qualified staff currently working both inside and outside the profession.

Given the limited time for the project investigation and deadline, a purposive sampling model surveying early childhood qualified teachers and TAFE qualified personnel currently working in licensed early childhood centre in NSW was employed. This sample of personnel working in the profession was used to identify and survey early childhood trained people who did not currently work in the early childhood profession.

The sample was selected from three areas in NSW: metropolitan, regional and a rural area to account for geographic supply and demand and demographic differences. The selection of the research areas was a joint decision between the Department and the Consortium based on a number of socio-economic factors. These factors include the availability of children's services, the characteristics of families such as indigenous and economic and cultural background and levels of disability. The research locations and the Departmental areas in which they fall have not been identified in this report. As licensing issues are sensitive, a decision was made to keep the locations confidential.

All long day care centres (private and other) in each research area were selected: inner metropolitan (81), regional (39) and rural (23). Each service was sent at least one survey for a current staff member and one survey for someone no longer employed in the profession. In some cases surveys were also sent to the service management group to enhance the distribution process. Staff in the services were asked to pass the survey to people they knew who held early childhood qualifications but do not work in the early childhood profession. To encourage survey return, respondents were paid \$10 on return of a completed survey.

Due to the limited research period, the survey was sent in early December. This is a busy time for many licensed early childhood centres with end of year and holiday activities. All services sent the survey received a follow up phone call in the week beginning 21 December 2001 to encourage survey response. Many centre directors had not had time to distribute the survey, not did they anticipate responding to the survey due to end of year pressures.

The survey included questions relating to:

- demographic information such as gender, age, qualification and year of graduation, employment history;
- perceptions of extent of problem;
- impact on co-workers, children and families;
- reasons why respondents continue working or have left the profession;
- impact of wages and conditions;
- operational and systemic characteristics that may impact;
- career options and career paths;
- ideas for solutions – short and long term; and
- a section in the survey for qualified staff who are also the person responsible for employing staff.

The survey findings are attached in Appendix E. Survey comments are available on request.

Survey results are included in the body of the report where appropriate. Some survey questions were optional. Survey respondents did not have to respond to every question. Where survey responses were optional the total number of respondents to that particular question has been included.

### 3 Current Situation

Children's services in Australia are under pressure due the cumulative effect of the increase in both the demand and supply of children's services and the apparent shortage of qualified staff. This section summarises the changes in demand for children's services, the demand for qualified staff and the extent of the shortage in NSW, nationally and internationally.

#### 3.1 Demand for Children's Services

Demand for children's services continues to grow. In Australia, 23 per cent of children aged 0-4 years used formal child care only in 1999, an increase of nine per cent since 1990, with 17 per cent of children aged 0 to 4 years used a combination of formal and informal care in 1999, an increase of five percent since 1990 (ABS, 1999).

This increase in demand is explained by changing demographics such as family mobility, the proportion of working parents (46 per cent of women whose youngest child was aged 0-4 years were in the workforce), the perception of the value of under school age group activities, school preparation and respite care needs (ABS, 1999; Brennan, 1998).

The majority of families use long day care on a part-time basis. Table 1 shows the weekly hours of child attendance in long day care. Most recently child hours of attendance have remained fairly stable. There is a direct link between labour force participation and the age of the youngest child. The younger the child the less hours of labour force participation by one parent, usually the mother (ABS, 1999). The demand for appropriate care is complex to meet the needs of families such as rural populations, shift workers, culturally diverse and indigenous communities and children or parents with disabilities (Butterworth, 1998; CCCAC, 2001b; CCCAC, 2001e). Employment of staff with diverse backgrounds is one method of meeting these community needs.

**Table 1: Average Weekly Hours Children Attend Long Day Care, 1997 and 1999**

Child hours per week	Long day care				
	1997	Private	1999	%	Community based
<10	25		28		26
10 – 19	33		33		30
20 – 29	19		18		19
30 – 39	10		9		11
40 – 49	9		8		10
50+	5		4		3
Total	96		96		96

Source: Department of Family and Community Services, *1999 Census of Child Care Services*, 2000 and *1997 Census of Child Care Services and 1996 Census of Child Care Services*, 1999. Canberra, Department of Family and Community Services.

In Australia there was a 50 per cent increase of women in the labour force (from 43 per cent to 63 per cent) between 1973 and 1993. This increase in women's participation is expected to continue until at least 2005 (Community, 1996).

### 3.2 Demand for Qualified Staff

The supply of child care places has increased significantly since 1991 (FaCS, 1999: 6). Yet there is a reported shortage of qualified staff necessary to match this supply.

Staff ratios in NSW are listed in Table 2. The maximum number of children that can be cared for in a long day care centre in NSW is 90, only 30 of these children can be aged under 2 years.

**Table 2: Staff Ratios in New South Wales, 2001**

Child age	Staff:child ratio	Group size	Number of trained staff
0-2 years	1:5	up to 10 children	30 to <40 children 1
2-3 years	1:8	up to 16 children	40 to <60 children 2
3-6 years	1:10	up to 25 children	60 to <80 children 3
			80 to 90 children 4

According to NSW DoCS data, as at December 2001, there were 1452 licensed services, requiring up to 1326 teachers if all licensed places were operational (Table 3). In contrast, 1555 teachers were employed, initially indicating a surplus of teachers employed above requirements. However, when these numbers were analysed by location and service type, there appears to be a shortage of teachers in long day care in the metropolitan areas (statistically significant). When controlling for the size of the long day care centre (number of teachers required), this difference between metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas no longer existed. So it appears that the apparent shortage of teachers in long day care in metropolitan areas is explained by the higher proportion of larger centres.

**Table 3: Staff Requirements in New South Wales, 2001**

Service type	Number of services	Teachers required for licences	Teachers employed	Total excess (shortage) of teachers	Metro excess (shortage) of teachers	Non-metro excess (shortage) of teachers
Long day care	908	992	1004.0	12	(27.5)	39.5
Pre-school	437	311	478.5	167.5	43	124.5
Other					36	13.5
Mobile services	33	1	22.0	21		
Multi-purpose	12	19	11.0	(8)		
Occasional care	62	3	39.5	36.5		
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>177.5</b>

Source: NSW Department of Community Services, Community Services Information System (CSIS), December 2001

Notes: Part-time staff are assumed to equal 0.5 full-time

### **3.3 Shortage of Trained Personnel**

New South Wales, like other jurisdictions, is experiencing a shortage of early childhood trained staff in children's services for children under school age (Press, 1999; Grey, 1999). The high annual losses of teaching staff from the child care field are quoted as 33 per cent to 40 per cent (Tepperman, 1997; CCCAC, 2001c). This shortage is with both early childhood trained teachers and TAFE qualified staff. Stakeholders and survey respondents found it difficult to recruit staff with both qualifications.

#### **Extent of the shortage**

The Australian Council of Deans of Education survey of projected teacher education graduates in 2000 showed that there would be 6000 primary school teachers graduating but only 1760 early childhood teacher education graduates or a ratio of 3.4 to 1.0. A calculation of needs demonstrates that this implies a shortfall of early childhood teachers, and that an appropriate ratio is around 1.21 to 1.0 (Preston, 2001c).

Existing educational programs, such as those administered by TAFE, has been reported as perhaps being curtailed in the current climate of funding reduction further exacerbating the shortfall in child care worker enrolment (TAFE, 2000).

Information provided by Community Services, Health, Tourism and Hospitality Division, TAFE NSW, 2002 (Foonghar, Sabin) indicates that:

- employment in the Health and Community Services sector (of which children's services are a part of) will grow from 280 000 in 2000 to 325 000 in 2005;
- TAFE predictions indicate there will be projected openings of 550 child care co-ordinators and 22 862 child care worker positions in NSW by 2005;
- total TAFE enrolments in 2001 were 8960, an increase of around 3 per cent from the previous year;
- average TAFE enrolment for 1998 to 2000 were 9103;
- there were 530 course withdrawals in 2000, an attrition rate of 6 per cent; and
- average attrition rate from 1998 to 2000 was 6.3 per cent.

Table 4 extracted from National Institute of Economic Industry and Research data, shows employment predictions from 2000 to 2005 for intermediate services workers (provided by TAFE, NSW).

**Table 4: Predictions from 2000 to 2005 for Intermediate Services Workers**

	Employment 2005	Growth 2000- 2005	Share of employment		Share of total openings		Aggregate openings 2000-2005			Turnover share %
			2000	2005	Growth	All	Growth	Turnover	All	
			%	%	%	%				
Intermediate service workers	178 561	26 601	5.16	5.78	10.72	9.48	28 205	136 646	164 851	83
Carers and aides	74 497	13 671	2.06	2.41	5.2	2.93	13 671	37 180	50 851	73
Education aides	12 892	1476	0.39	0.42	0.56	0.38	1,476	5107	6 583	78
Children's care workers	29 751	7178	0.77	0.96	2.73	1.32	7178	15 684	22 862	69
Special care workers	16 117	1841	0.48	0.52	0.7	0.63	1841	9155	10 996	83
Personal services & nursing assistants	15 738	3176	0.43	0.51	1.21	0.6	3176	7233	10 410	69
Miscellaneous specialist managers	21 973	2423	0.66	0.71	0.98	0.48	2582	5769	8351	69
Policy & planning managers	1666	88	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03	98	403	500	80
Health services managers	2288	295	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.06	295	698	993	70
Education managers	3733	434	0.11	0.12	0.19	0.08	512	791	1304	61
Commissioned officers (management)	555	50	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	50	132	183	73
Child care co- ordinators	1488	242	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.03	242	308	550	56
Media producers & artistic directors	2493	475	0.07	0.08	0.18	0.07	475	667	1142	58
Other specialist managers	9750	840	0.3	0.32	0.35	0.21	911	2769	3679	75

Source: National Institute of Economic Industry and Research, 2001 (provided by TAFE, NSW).

In July 2001, the Office of Childcare asked Children's Services Advisers (CSAs) to describe the extent of the shortage of qualified staff. A summary of the findings is presented in Appendix F.

**Table 5: Main Staffing Difficulties Experienced in Long Day Care Centres, by Area**

Staffing difficulty	Number of areas	
	Rural (14)	Metropolitan (4)
Difficulty attracting staff	8	3
Current vacancies	7	1
Positions filled with staff with other qualifications	5	1
Difficulty attracting relief staff	3	0
Reduction of licensed number of child care places as a result of staffing issues	4	1

Source: Office of Childcare, July 2001

CSAs from eleven areas reported difficulties in attracting staff, either currently or in the past and with vacancies remaining vacant for extended periods of time despite extensive advertising (up to seven months in one service) (Table 5). The cost to the centres of placing numerous advertisements represents an added financial burden. The centre that has advertised interstate was reported as running advertisements for the same vacant position since 1990.

Eight areas had multiple vacancies at the time of reporting. There appears to be more vacancies in rural areas than in town. However, one metropolitan Adviser noted that the situation is worse than in the previous year. The problem exists for both community-based and private centres, but is more pronounced for private operators. It was also noted that a number of highly regarded centres were having these problems, suggesting that the difficulty in filling these positions is not reflective of the working conditions of these centres over other centres.

The most common solution (albeit temporary) to the lack of an EC teacher was to fill the vacancy with staff holding other qualifications. A number of centres employ staff who are currently upgrading their qualifications. One area benefited from a long-serving, highly experienced Director of a pre-school to supervise unqualified staff. The appointment of teachers had overseas qualifications and people approved prior to the 1996 introduction of the regulations was also reported. One service used two relief teachers to fill one position whilst the Authorise Supervisor completed her degree, as a way of remedying the problem without compromising quality and continuity for the children. As this arrangement is not permissible for more than one year, it was not a sustainable option, particularly for rural centres and small centres for which the cost of advertising was high.

Employing relief staff was not an option for a number of centres. One area that was experiencing no other difficulties stated that the shortage of casual EC teachers made administrative duties (such as attending meetings), professional development and other activities that requires the presence of all centre staff extremely difficult. This was particularly prevalent among rural services. The use of casual relief staff to combat the shortage of EC Teachers was not popular, as temporary staff members who were unknown to the children and other staff.

Most CSAs regarded reduced utilisation rates to avoid the requirement for an EC teacher as a highly undesirable alternative. One metro-based CSA commented that all centres in the area were full and that most also have waiting lists. Nonetheless, this occurred in a number of services, reducing licensed numbers to 29 or 39. Three centres in one rural area have capped numbers at 39 because of the difficulty attracting appropriately qualified staff. For at least some centres, this reduction is expected to be temporary, and a return to full quota is anticipated upon the appointment of an EC teacher.

Some services offered above award conditions and pay as a way of attracting and recruiting trained staff. One stakeholder commented:

Some centres are still meeting legal standards at the top end of the scale as they work with their employees to develop job satisfaction and use staff input for productivity. (LHMU)

Another stakeholder believed that good business operators, regardless of private or community-based status offer above award conditions and pay to staff, which has a positive impact on child utilisation (Appendix B).

### **Ministerial approval process**

If a service is unable to find suitably qualified staff, they are able to make a request to the Minister for an approval for a less qualified person to be in the position of teacher

to meet the licensing requirement for the employment of early childhood qualified teachers Appendix F).

Table 6 summarises data on the 25 approvals made by the Minister from June to December 2001 by DoCS Area and characteristics of the child care centre. Most persons approved held an Associate Diploma (19), with the addition of five infants/primary teachers and one person with no qualification. Most approvals were outside the metropolitan region (18) and were for community centres (17). There was not pattern as to the size of the services. No data were available on applications that were refused.

**Table 6: Number of Approvals by Characteristics and Reasons, June to December 2001**

Area	Centre size				Sponsor		Reason for approval		Total
	20-30	35-39	40-48	60-65	Private	Community	Experienced	No alternatives	
West	3	5	2	1	5	6	10	1	11
North	-	1	1	2	1	3	2	2	4
Metro North	-	2	2	-	-	4	3	1	4
South	-	-	2	1	2	1	1	2	3
Metro West	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	-	2
Metro South	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	1
West									
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>

Source: Office of Childcare, January 2002

According to the Office of Childcare, all requests were from long day care (no preschools or occasional care). Most approvals were for rural areas. Most requests are from private services. Some approvals have been refused on grounds that the operator has not advertised or has not advertised adequately (eg only in the local paper and internet). Stakeholders views in rural areas reinforced the Office of Childcare experience:

In the Tamworth region, early childhood teachers are desperately needed – however sometimes only on a casual basis which makes hiring difficult. TAFE qualified staff are easier to come by. Replacing 1 teacher in 2-3 year old room took 8 months of advertising to fill position. TAFE experience not too much of a concern. Replacing maternity leave at beginning of year took a month or two. Just replaced two 3-5 year old teachers for new year. This took two months of advertising.

Only two approvals in 2001 were for staff without any qualifications but they were studying. Approvals for primary trained teachers were only made in rural areas, where an ECE teacher can oversee them and assessment can be made for further training requirements. Most approvals were for a 12-month period, until a teacher was employed or until the approved person completed their training.

Some city licences were refused on the grounds that the operator had not advertised. No rural licences had been refused yet because they had advertised widely: locally, statewide, interstate, with creative advertisements. It seems that only a change in pay and conditions would improve recruitment in these areas. Stakeholders similarly reported difficulty recruiting even after extensive advertising:

We get many requests for staff direct to us for directors and other staff from indigenous services in both metro and non-metro areas. Some indigenous services have been trying for years to get a graduate. (Stakeholder interview – Ross Hughes, Macquarie University, Bachelor of Teaching – Indigenous program)

We are unable to get teachers to fill any positions - relief or permanent.

Several survey responses indicated that they had been expected to continue to advertise, even though the respondents believed they had advertised extensively and repeatedly. Concern was expressed by stakeholders that Children's Services Advisers did not seem to consider the negative financial impact that recruitment advertising has on a centre budget. Advertising costs can vary from approximately \$200 in a regional paper to more than \$1000 in a state or national paper.

It took 12 months to find a teacher and a lot of money in advertising that would have been better spent on the children.

We have been unable to fill a positions after 18 months.

Triple advertising was needed to find successful applicants.

From the requests made to the Office of Childcare in the last two years, it appears that some of the reasons that rural recruitment by private services might be difficult include the following: most rural community services are preschools, which have more attractive hours; similarly, most community long day care services tend to be run by Councils which offers greater employment stability; rural community services with a management committee probably provide greater personal contact, support and relationship building.

Services, both private and community based had considered or had applied for exemptions to cover smaller centres when trained staff went on leave. This was of particular concern for rural services. Survey respondents commented on the difficulties finding relief staff and the impact this had on their centres. Concern was also expressed when trying to find parental leave replacements.

Impossible to get teacher relief for holiday and sick leave.

Replacing 1 teacher [maternity leave position] took 8 months of advertising to fill position.

One stakeholder noted the high cost associated with recruiting staff for rural and remote areas, and particularly emphasised the impact of recruiting short and long term relief staff.

In rural and remote areas there are also difficulties and higher costs involved in recruiting qualified relief workers when primary contact staff are unavailable. Owing to the lack of qualified people in some rural and remote regions, relief staff may be required to travel long distances and may need accommodation for the relief employment period. (Contact Inc)

### 3.4 Award Conditions

Trained early childhood staff are employed under a number of awards. Coverage for employees is provided by a number of unions, depending on the employer. The following shows the union and range of trained staff covered by each.

- Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employees' Union of Australia, NSW Division - early childhood teachers and 2 year TAFE qualified staff.
- NSW/ACT Independent Education Union (IEU) – early childhood trained teachers only.
- Australian Liquor, Hospitality & Miscellaneous Worker Union (LHMU) - covers 2 year TAFE qualified and untrained staff only.

Each award prescribes the rates of pay and conditions for various children's services staff. NSW is unique to other states and territories as early childhood trained teachers working in long day care centres are covered by a separate union and award that provides significantly higher rates of pay and conditions compared to other trained staff. The rates of pay and conditions are included in Appendix A. Several employer groups have enterprise agreements that cover all staff employed. Some of these variations in agreements are also included in the Appendix.

Generally most of the teaching awards provide very similar conditions and rates of pay. Teachers employed in both private and public infants and primary schools receive higher pay than early childhood teachers in children's services, with between a \$2000 to \$4000 difference in entry point and final step. A three year trained teacher in a long day care centre could receive approximately \$32 000 to \$48 500 over an 11 year period, while in a school the range would be approximately \$34 000 to \$53 500. Many survey respondents commented that the more attractive rates of pay was one of the reasons early childhood teachers moved to the school system.

I would prefer to be working in a school with ... better money for less supervisory responsibilities.

May go into school system – less hours, more money and holidays.

There is no equality between EC teachers and other teachers in the community.

The hardest thing is that people do not consider I am a teacher even though I am higher qualified than many primary/secondary school teachers.

Child care services directors received a similar annual salary as school teachers, but had to carry all the responsibilities of management a child care services to do so.

Many survey respondents commented that an adequate salary did not compensate the level of responsibility working as a director.

Currently I feel I do not get paid enough for the amount of responsibilities I undertake as director.

more money for the amount of stress

The wages and recognition do not reflect the responsibility that we undertake.

All awards offered the options of part-time work with pro rata conditions, but other family friendly work practices such as the ability to job share were not universal and were reliant on the discretion of the employer. When compared to other areas of employment such as the finance sector the children's services conditions are basic particularly in areas such as family friendly work practices and access to workplace flexibility.

*Local Government (State) Award 2001 and Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2000* both acknowledged employees working in remote locations with area specific allowances. Using the area divisions and allowance specified in the Crown Award in the IEU and LHMU awards may be one way to create a more even playing field for trained early childhood staff.

Some early childhood teaching awards and all school awards provided paid maternity leave. Paid leave varied between six to nine week. This is a best practice condition that is now part of many Federal and State Awards.

Several award also specified access to paid leave for attendance at work-related inservice courses and child free preparation time. Several included statements such as – preparation time to average 1 hour per week, but were not detailed in how this may be achieved. One award made specific reference to providing a half day per week for preschool teachers only to program and plan.

Two year TAFE qualified staff did not fare as well as their teaching counterparts. These staff receive:

- significantly lower pay, with only 3 increment steps that vary from \$28 210 to \$29 162 (a difference of around \$500 per annum). Two year trained early childhood teachers (the closest equivalent) receive between approximately \$27 000 to \$41 000 over an 8 year period;
- minimal differences between 2 years TAFE qualified staff and untrained staff – trained staff receive between \$28 210 to \$29 162 over a three year period and untrained staff receive \$24 872 to \$26 062 over a three year period;
- no paid maternity leave;
- half the number of sick leave days per annum;
- less than 50 per cent equivalence of the director's allowances;
- no travel allowance; and

- no inservice requirement if in long day care (only specified for outside school hours and preschools).

As one survey respondent commented 'there is not much difference [in] the wages between trained and untrained staff. I don't think 4 years of my effort ... and time is worth what I'm getting now.' This opinion was reinforced by many 2 year TAFE qualified staff.

I find that staff with Associate Diplomas (or equivalent) do as much work as early childhood trained teachers but get far less pay or incentives especially when they also the authorised supervisor.

In 8.5 years wages have not increased very much and conditions for child care workers have worsened.

Some survey respondents felt that the only way to improve their conditions and pay was to upgrade their qualifications to that of a teacher. Several cited this as the reason they were leaving the profession.

... anticipate that I may further my qualifications to a Bachelor of Education (early childhood).

One survey respondent summed up many of the frustration trained staff feel with their conditions of work as follows.

Reasons for the shortage is mainly due to the workload, responsibilities and the low wages associated with it. The workers are last on the list of priorities with the basic benefits – every other industry offers so much more to their staff. We are undervalued and under privileged class of workers.

### **3.5 National and International Perspectives**

The shortage of qualified staff is not a problem unique to NSW eg New Zealand (Scoop, 2001); and Victoria (Auditor-General's Office, 2000). This section discusses evidence of the shortage in other jurisdictions and responses to it.

#### **National**

The National Community Services Administrators are conducting research into the shortage of qualified children's services staff (Appendix H). The process began in 2001 when Victoria prepared a paper on the shortage of qualified child care staff to the Community Services Administrators, which referred it to the Children's Services Administrators (Children's Services Administrators Meeting, 2001b). Victoria and Queensland took the lead on the project, using a two-stage approach.

1. A survey collated by Victoria summarised information on the availability of child care workforce planning data in each state (except NSW and Commonwealth; Children's Services Administrators Meeting, 2001a). In addition, the Annual Child Care Census has some workforce data (FaCS, 2000).
2. Address issues arising from data and findings from other sectors eg morale, image of the sector. This stage does not yet have approval from the Administrators.

Findings from the survey relating to evidence of the shortage of qualified staff are summarised below.

- Tasmania: Shortage in rural or isolated areas. It is a management practice to have a flexible workforce by employing qualified staff on call or a casual basis. Other managers employ minimum qualified required and use casual relief for sickness - these services no difficulty recruiting. The shortage is 150 qualified for OSHC. There is a fair degree of information suggesting under supply in some places and not all. A worry is the number of small services with no relief staff or successors.
- Western Australia: No shortage is evident from the anecdotal information from service providers requesting exemptions from regulations. The Department of Training and Universities advise sufficient students are graduating, but the students do not want to work in child care.
- Queensland: A shortage is evident from anecdotal information, particularly in rural and remote areas having difficulty attracting qualified staff. Current research and data analysis is underway (see below). In August 2000, 63 per cent LDC directors had approved qualifications. Additional staff required are: Assistants 1000, Group Leaders 900, Directors 450, based on the new legislation to be introduced 2002 which will require assistants have minimum qualifications.
- Victoria: The shortage has resulted in two exemptions from the regulations. Breaches of regulations in 2001 were 174. There is anecdotal evidence of widespread breaches. Relief agencies have difficulties finding qualified staff.
- South Australia: The shortage has resulted in 80 exemptions shown in the licensing data base. This has been consistent in the last 12 months, with 50 per cent in country locations. For FDC the issue is lack of suitable self-employed contractors, high turnover. Although 320 new FDC carers were recruited in 2000, this did not increase the overall number of carers. There is no lack qualified staff for FDC co-ordination units. Additional staff required are 80 minimum CBLDC, 350 new FDC carers. Incentives are needed in country locations.
- ACT: Additional qualified staff centre based care are required (approximately 30).
- Northern Territory: There is a shortage, that can be estimated from data from child care centre licensing process and specifically commissioned report which is based on a 52 per cent response rate (Territory Health Services, 2001).

Queensland Department of Families Office of Child Care contracted the National Research Centre for Training and Development to complete Research into Training and Employment Patterns and Trends in the Queensland Child Care Industry. The Results should be available early 2002. The Department summarised the anecdotal evidence on the child care workforce as follows:

- Staff turnover in child care services is high and morale and status low.
- Many staff are leaving the child care industry.
- Service providers are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and keep qualified staff, particularly in rural and remote areas. Finding relief staff is also difficult.

- Recent changes to child care funding arrangements have resulted in job losses and reduced working hours, wages, conditions of service and career development opportunities for child care staff.
- There is an increased casualisation of the child care workforce.
- Students completing child care training are choosing other employment options.
- Child care services query whether enough students are being trained, while training institutions indicate that the number of students in training should provide an adequate supply of qualified staff to fill vacancies and relief positions.
- The service providers' needs and expectations of new graduates entering the child care workforce are not being adequately met through current training programs.
- Remote area Indigenous workers have difficulty participating in training schemes, particularly when this requires them to be away from work, home and family.
- There is a lack of incentive to take up work in child care services once training is completed, particularly in Indigenous communities.

The first review of the Community Services and Health Industry Training Package has occurred ([www.cshta.com.au](http://www.cshta.com.au)). The Queensland Department will put a paper to the second stage of that review.

The Victorian Government reported that it had only approved two exceptions (Interview December, 2001). Similar to NSW, it appears to be a rural problem. They are using strategies such as paying car allowances to travel. Winter is worst. Age of the workforce seems to be a problem and slippage from children's services into primary teaching. Victoria does not intend to contract separate research, although they may consider working with their regions to define the extent of the problem eg information through the relief agencies.

### **International**

Parallel situations are recorded in the United States, New Zealand and Great Britain, to name a few English-speaking examples. The literature shows that each of these countries is suffering increased demand for qualified early childhood staff, exacerbated by significant turnover and attrition in the existing early childhood education work force (Boyd et al, 1997; Tepperman, 1997; CCCAC, 2001b; SCOOP, 2001).

OECD figures released in 2001 demonstrate Australia's low commitment to quality pre-school education, compared with other OECD countries. Australian children four years old and younger participate at around half the OECD average. Only about 33 per cent of children in this age group participate, compared with virtually 100 per cent in countries like France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and New Zealand (Preston, 2001a). Even with this comparatively low level of participation Australia is finding it hard to fill the necessary teaching positions and even harder to retain child care workers, for a variety of reasons.

In the United States 25 per cent of children under five were in child care in 1987 (Manlove, 1994) and subsequent years have seen a dramatic expansion of demand for child care services (Deery-Schmitt, 1995).

### **3.6 Comparison to Other Feminised Industries**

Some of the reasons for the shortage of early childhood qualified staff could be compared to other feminised industries. This section discusses responses to the experience in the primary school teacher, nursing and librarian professions.

#### **Primary school teachers**

In 2000, women made up 78 per cent of the primary teaching workforce (Preston, 2001c). The increasing proportion of women in the workforce may be due to taking less extensive periods of time out for child-rearing, as indicated by the ABS Census figures for 1961, 1981 and 1996, which show the marked dip in employment for women of child-rearing age in 1961 and 1981 virtually flattened out in 1996. With the downturn in employment forecast by Access Economics there may develop a teacher shortage, which will strengthen the view of Ramsey that there should be an Institute of Teachers to 'enhance the level of teachers and of teaching' (Ramsey, 2000) and that registration of teachers should be mandatory. This will remove some of the autonomy of schools to employ the teachers they prefer, regardless of qualifications, resulting in a tight teaching market (Preston, 2001d). The insistence on registration and qualifications contrasts with the current situation where early childhood positions can be filled, on a temporary basis, with unqualified teachers.

#### **Nurses**

In 1997 females made up 92 per cent of the employed registered and enrolled nursing force (Preston, 2001d). The Health Department Chief executive Officers of the Australian States and Territories established the Australian Health Workforce Advisory Committee (AHWAC) to examine the situation in the health workforce and this committee commenced by examining midwifery and critical care nursing. A report is expected in the first half of 2002. More recently the Health Ministers established the National Health Workforce Council to provide long-term advice (Heath, 2001).

A research study was commissioned to look at job growth and turnover from 1987 to 2001 (Shah and Burke, 2001) and found that the workforce grew at an average of 0.8 per cent, which is half the rate for all occupations. This growth was not uniform across the States, with South Australia and Tasmania contracting while Queensland grew at 2.7 per cent. It appears that Nursing Professionals are growing at the expense of Enrolled Nurses and Personal Care and Nursing Assistants. According to Shah and Burke Registered Midwives' numbers increased by 29.3 per cent between 1987 and 2001 while the employment of Enrolled Nurses declined by 20.6 per cent.

It should be noted that both teaching and nursing expanded considerably in the 1970s (Preston, 2001d) because of an expansion of the client base and increases in public funding. Those recruited in the 1970s have tended to dominate their respective professions, more noticeably in the teaching profession (Preston, 2001d). According to Access Economics, however, the workforce as a whole will contract significantly from around 2002 in South Australia and from around 2005 in NSW and Victoria.

Two factors that seem to have impacted on workforce figures are the ageing of the workforce and the increased proportion of part-time to full-time nurses (Heath, 2001).

The increase in part-time nurses means a larger number will be required in future years than has been necessary in the past.

There has been a shift to shorter working hours among Nursing Workers and this will also add to the need for an increased workforce.

At present there are shortages, or predicted shortages, in Australia, England, Canada and the United States and in Australia there does not seem to be any relief in sight. Rural areas are suffering and in the Northern Territory the situation in remote areas nursing has been described as a 'humanitarian crisis' (Heath, 2001).

### **Librarians**

Librarianship, another profession dominated by women, is not suffering the same problems as early childhood teaching and nursing. This is probably attributable to the current trend to downsizing library workforces in favour of increased use of information technology, and the fact that there are no mandated user/staff ratios that can be enforced. The library schools continue to graduate librarians and library technicians, regardless of the job market and major educational institutions continue to target their library staff in a bid to reduce recurrent costs.

## **4 Reasons and Recommendations**

Reasons for the shortage of staff range from education opportunities, graduates leaving the profession, work conditions to the professional support and status of the profession. These reasons are exacerbated by the fragmentation of the profession, funding restrictions, limited career opportunities, mismatch between training and job expectations, level of administrative work required and workplace stress and burnout (CCCAC, 2001a). This section describes evidence for the reasons and makes recommendations to address the shortage.

The recommendations focus on building and maintaining connection to the profession for potential students, undergraduates, staff working in the profession and people who have left the profession.

Implementation of the recommendations will require the contribution and commitment of all stakeholders in the profession. However, in order to effect the recommendations, they are framed in terms of action by the Office of Childcare, the commissioner of the research and the agency responsible for the legislative requirement for qualified staff. The recommended actions are for the Office of Childcare to:

- strengthen licensing requirements;
- facilitate communication, discussion or action by other stakeholders; or
- recommend, advocate or prepare a submission to request action by other Government agencies.

The emphasis has been placed on the organisational and facilitation role of the Office of Childcare as the central government agency. The recommendations recognise the responsibility of other stakeholders to commit resources and time to solve the shortage of qualified staff.

### **4.1 Wages and Conditions**

#### **Wages**

The shortage of trained staff relates in part to the low status accorded to the profession which, in turn, is reflected in salary levels (CCCAC, 2001e; Keller, 2001; Early, 2001; Mahmood, 2000). High quality care will be at risk until child care teachers are paid well enough to stem the annual loss to higher paid areas (Keller, 2000; Manlove, 1993; Penn, 2000). Stephenson (1997) says that ‘earnings of most child care workers, according to the National Center for Early Childhood Work Force, are poverty level or lower.

The New South Wales Pay Equity Enquiry, whose Executive Summary was published jointly in 2000 by the New South Wales Department of Industrial Relations and the Women’s Equity Bureau may, if its recommendations are heeded, go some way to improving conditions of child care workers. The Inquiry found that while competency standards are important in achieving pay equity, they are not necessarily related to educational outcomes. ‘Despite this, the Inquiry found that there has been undervaluation of qualified care workers over time.’ (Pay Equity, 2000)

However, in some cases low pay is seen as being compensated for by ‘comfortable’ working conditions and a commitment to the child care sector of the profession (Ceglowski, 1994; Stremmel, 1993; Weiss, 1999).

All stakeholders, 87 per cent (148 respondents) of survey respondents, and 85 per cent (17) of graduating students believed that poor wages and conditions were one the significant contributors to the trained staffing shortage. Hours of work (48 per cent; 81 respondents) and inability to access flexible work practices (39 per cent; 66 respondents) were also of concern. Forty per cent (8) of the graduating students interviewed also referred to hours of work and lack of flexible work practices as disincentives to pursuing a career in the child care profession.

Many survey respondents commented on the mismatch of responsibility and management tasks with the poor remuneration. Comparisons were made to other industries and the ability of people to pay for these services.

In my experience, I run 2 centres. I can be responsible across the week for up to 14 staff, 160 children and their families. Pay rates don’t even come close to reflecting this level of responsibility and legal considerations.

People chose to work in child care because of their passion in this field, monetary and career climbing incentives do not exist.

A person working in a nursery (horticulture) receives more than we do and we have training and are responsible for lives and well being, not just plants.

I have a friend who is a used car salesperson. She would love to move into early childhood but can’t afford to.

People are willing to pay more to a mechanic for fixing a car than they are to have their most important possession (their children) well cared for.

### **Workplace issues**

In comparison to primary school responsibilities, staff in children’s services face greater emotional demands, pressure from parents, onerous tasks, longer hours, changing shifts, less peer support, less family friendly, fewer peers. These reasons were stated by new graduates as reasons for preferring to work outside the child care profession (Appendix D).

The stress of managing multiple tasks and the overly onerous legal requirements impacted on the trained staff shortage. Sixty-one percent (103) of survey respondents stated that managing multiple demands contributed to the staffing shortage. Survey respondents felt over loaded with the amount of paper work required, particularly with very limited time to complete all necessary tasks.

The most difficult aspects of my job as director are: managing staff, managing multiple demands, accountability and responsibility for regulations, financial/small business etc. I am a mature, experienced

person and I struggle. Young teachers do not want these immense responsible burdens.

High administration/accountability had reduced the amount of enjoyment/job satisfaction

Several respondents and stakeholders commented on the need to take work home and work unpaid hours of overtime to complete work.

A lot of extra work load that isn't catered for within work hours – lots to take home which leads to burn out sooner than it needs to.

Twenty-six per cent (44 respondents) felt that parental expectations contributed to the trained staffing shortage.

The relatively new child protection legislation was specifically mentioned as cause for concern with respondents and stakeholders citing the feeling of alarm this raised with mismanagement of the reporting system and 'black marks' against people's names without ever having the chance to prove that nothing happened.

Mandatory reporting to Ombudsman's Office places innocent staff in a difficult position. They are *never* proved innocent – only unsubstantiated.

The lack of coordination and the similarity of multiple reporting tasks caused frustration. Some respondents and stakeholders felt that some reporting was purely historical and had not been reviewed in line with more recent legislative requirements. For example, the inability of being able to report on line and having to fill out hard copies and the differences in licensing interpretations by Children's Services Advisers across regions.

### **Family responsibilities**

All NSW employers are now required to consider family friendly work practices if requested by the employee (*Anti-Discrimination (Carers' Responsibilities) Act 2002 (NSW)*). This legislation means that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee or an applicant for employment on the grounds of the employee's or applicant's responsibilities as a carer. The *Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)* emphasises that the Industrial Relations Commission and its parties ensure that all awards and enterprise agreements do not discriminate in the terms or effects. If carers' responsibilities are not explicitly stated in an award or agreement, this is not a defence for the employer to a complaint of discrimination.

Stakeholder interviews and survey responses identified family responsibilities as impacting on the shortage of trained early childhood qualified staff. Comments linked family responsibilities with the lack of access to flexible work practices as reasons why people did not remain in the child care profession. Thirty-nine per cent (66 respondents) stated that lack of flexible work practices was one of the reasons for the staff shortage. Forty-one per cent (70 respondents) stated that providing flexible work practices would help solve the shortage of trained child care staff.

Lack of easy access to flexible work practices was reflected in the child care awards with very little specific reference to workplace flexibility.

Survey respondents commented on how the lack or provisions of workplace flexibility and family friendly work practices impacted in their decision to remain or return to child care work.

There definitely should be more job share offered especially in the industry of child care where the majority of workers are female who are eventually going to have families themselves or in the case of older workers who may be grandparents and need to be there for their own families!

After having a baby – there is no job share in child care and the hours are very rigid ...

Lack of flexibility with shift work due to lack of trained staff who need to open and close centre places demands in family commitments.

My children are able to attend the centre with me, which makes a big difference. My baby is 8 months old.

I finally have set myself up to start my own family. I work 2 days permanently casual and pick up other work at previous centre casually.

Cheaper child care fees – I have two children under 3 years and cannot afford to pay \$95 per day fees. I would be taking home approximately \$50 per week in wages.

Stakeholders cited lack of work/life balance as impacting on the shortage, although very few commented that the provision of flexible work practices would impact on the shortage.

Early childhood services could implement relatively low or no cost options that would assist employees to have more effective work/life balance and assist in retaining trained staff in the workplace, particularly after having children. Some of these options are listed below.

- Consistent access to paid maternity leave (available in some awards and varies between 6 to 9 weeks) for all children's services staff.
- Ability to work set shifts while ensuring licensing and child requirements are being met. For example, there is no requirement that a trained staff member (or any other staff member) must work rotating rosters that may vary from a 7am or 8am start one week to a 10 am start the next. If the employee has children this constant changing of shifts could impact on their ability to organise drop off and collection of children.

- Priority of access for employee's children to use the centre the employee works at. This is particularly important for employees returning from parental leave. Without appropriate child care it may not be possible to return to work at all.
- Ability for the employee to salary package their child care fees if their child/ren are attending the centre they work at. The centre would still receive the appropriate fee for the children while the employee receives a personal tax benefit through the payment of their fees from pre-tax dollars.
- Job share at all levels of centre employment, including the director. This is an industrial and licensing issue.
- Ongoing and regular communication with staff who are on parental leave, including receipt of staff meeting minutes, accreditation reports, feedback from parents and similar.
- Offering regular part-time work to staff.
- Ability to work a compressed work year. Commonly referred to as a 48/52 work arrangement. Staff work for 48 weeks of the year, receiving their 3 weeks annual leave and 4 weeks of unpaid leave. The 48 weeks salary is annualised over 52 weeks, with the employee receiving slightly less salary per week, rather than going for 4 weeks without pay.

The impact of family responsibilities on career decision was reflected in data from early childhood students, enrolled at University of Western Sydney, surveyed in 1998 to 2001 (Appendix C). Most students did not wish to be employed in a child care centre in five year's time, and the reason for this was overwhelmingly associated with anticipated family responsibilities. Ninety-five per cent of those who indicated they did not wish to be employed in five years time cited caring for their own children as the reason. Of those who did wish to be employed, primary schools were considered preferable by approximately half of the students from each cohort. Seventy-five per cent of them wanted jobs that suited their lifestyles, which included a partner and children. Primary schools were seen as more desirable workplaces due to the 'family friendliness' of working conditions – longer holidays, shorter and regular hours, maternity leave, the opportunity to take time off work for family reasons, and the opportunity for permanent part-time work. Long day care centres were not considered desirable due to the shift work involved, four weeks of annual leave and lack of flexibility.

The importance of anticipated family responsibilities in determining employment preferences amongst early childhood student teachers was echoed in an interview based study conducted in Macquarie University (Appendix C; Sumsion, 2000).

### **Regulatory environment**

The children's services profession is regulated in a number of ways: through licensing standards at the State level, through national requirements for Child Care Benefit and through accreditation. Like other businesses, children's services also need to comply with other government reporting requirements including child protection, occupational health and safety, superannuation guarantee and GST reporting.

The intention of these multiple requirements is to improve the quality of care provided to children. However, an effect is also to increase the administrative requirements, which some staff find adds to the stress of their employment (Community, 1996).

Legal responsibilities – why I resigned full time.

As a director, the legal responsibilities are extremely demanding and some days it is these pressures that make me want to leave the profession.

Legal responsibilities - I don't see this as fixable but needs to be focussed on as a 'positive' aspect of our job.

Regulations are also becoming increasingly restrictive and paper work required detracts from the work we should be doing – interacting and teaching the children.

Survey respondents commented on the impact that child:staff ratios have on the shortage of trained staff. Thirty nine per cent (67 respondents) stated that inadequate child:staff ratios contributed to the shortage. Several stakeholders highlighted the impact that caring for a lot of children can have, with staff feeling they are not meeting individual requirements and the demands placed on staff by parents wanted and expecting individual care at all times. Improving the child:staff ratios was raised as a way to address the problem of work conditions (45 per cent, 76 respondents).

Only one stakeholder felt that the regulatory environment was overly onerous. They felt that self regulation with appropriate guidelines was to best way for the child care profession to ensure quality outcomes for children and families.

Stakeholders or survey respondents did not consider accreditation an issue.

Several survey respondents and stakeholders felt it was important to ensure that the regulations were not diminished in any way as this would be to the detriment of children and families using the services. Short and long term strategies were required to address the shortage of trained staff, but the requirement for teachers particularly should remain, with some consideration given the rural and remote services

### **Wages and conditions recommendations**

- |  |
|--|
| <p><i>1. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to recommend the payment of permanent and temporary salary top-ups for rural and remote early childhood education staff similar to the General Practitioner and nursing schemes.</i></p> |
|--|

Cooperative financial arrangements between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and local employers to encourage the relocation of professional staff such as GPs and nurses to rural regions are successful models for comparison. Suggestions from the profession for temporary assistance for critical shortages included Government financial support to a rural agency to provide temporary staff.

2. *That the NSW Government maintains or improves the current regulatory requirements for qualified staff and child:staff ratios in the interest of good quality care and workplace conditions.*

3. *That the NSW Government amends the regulations to improve workplace conditions, including:*

- *requirement for temporary and permanent Authorised Supervisors to undertake a minimum of 6 hours continuing education per year (Recommendations 4 and 14);*
- *monthly supervision of qualified staff by directors (similar to social worker requirements) to facilitate professional support and development (Recommendation 14); and*
- *pleasant physical environment including off-duty facilities.*

4. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to unions and employers in the profession about wages and conditions, including:*

- *improving the pay conditions to 2-year TAFE trained or equivalent staff to financially recognise the benefit of qualified staff;*
- *increasing the consistency of conditions across awards;*
- *child-free staff meeting and daily preparation time during work hours;*
- *payment by the employer of any associated cost and time following the implementation of Recommendation 3 for temporary and permanent Authorised Supervisors to undertake a minimum of 6 hours continuing education per year;*
- *financial recognition of post-graduate qualifications; and*
- *recognising the benefit of students' progressive educational experience in wage rates paid to them while they are undergraduates.*

Students should be encouraged financially to work in the profession rather than in higher paid unrelated workplaces to increase their connection to the profession before they graduate.

5. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to employers, unions and peak organisations to improve workplace conditions, including:*

- *stable or flexible shifts to meet other responsibilities to comply with NSW anti discrimination legislation;*
- *workplace relations, teamwork and leadership opportunities;*
- *workplace resources for teaching;*
- *consistent access to entitlements such as crib and meal breaks, ability to take sick leave, to plan holidays and RDOs;*
- *priority of access for employees' children, thereby facilitating FBT-exempt salary packaging of child care fees;*

- *exit interviews for qualified staff leaving a service;*
- *sole or shared employment of business managers between services; and*
- *other workplace and industrial conditions listed in Recommendations in this report.*

6. *That the Office of Childcare, in relation to the impact of employing early childhood education teachers on the cost to employers and on the affordability of child care fees:*

- *examines options for the NSW Government to increase and reallocate the funding currently used for community long day care operational subsidies; and*
- *communicates the findings to the Commonwealth in relation to the cost to services and its implications for an adjustment to Commonwealth Childcare Benefit to cover the increasing gap-fee.*

The balance between affordability to parents and the cost of recruiting, training and retaining teaching staff needs to be addressed in NSW.

Refer also to:

- Recommendation 7. Communication with the profession
- Recommendation 13. Tax concessions.

## **4.2 General Reasons for the Shortage**

### **Health and burnout**

A number of health factors result in further attrition from the child care profession. Perhaps the most significant of these is burnout. This is caused by emotional exhaustion resulting from overload and generalised stress. It can result in absenteeism, lethargy, gossiping and resultant low morale (Goelman, 1998). Manlove (1993) and Punch and Boyd (1997) consider burnout to be a combination of factors, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a feeling that they have failed to achieve their goals. Goelman tabulated twenty-three articles dealing with child care worker burnout, written between 1987 and 1994, and has shown that several critical factors recurred in many of the articles. Wages and working conditions topped the list, cited in 14 articles; roles and responsibilities were cited in 12; personal factors in 10, communication (i.e. social and peer group support) in eight and work experience in eight.

Another significant factor is that of self-esteem, with many child care workers observed as having low self-esteem. Goelman (1998) suggests that a strong internal locus is desirable if child care staff are not to suffer stress and burnout (and Community, 1996). It has been suggested that strategies should be investigated which encourage students with high self-esteem into the child care profession by making it more attractive in terms of conditions and remuneration to those who have the self-confidence to believe they can succeed in any field of endeavour. It may also be

possible to include courses in the early childhood training curricula to help students who are seen to have low self-esteem.

Stakeholders and survey respondents cited work place stress and managing multiple work loads as major difficulties. Many survey respondents stated that high work load expectations (75 per cent) and managing multiple demands (61 per cent) were contributors to the trained staffing shortage. Many comments related to the intensity of the workplace, the hours of work, both paid and unpaid and the out of hours work required to maintain base line work tasks.

Child care is extremely demanding – physically, emotionally, and shift work wise. Over my years [of] experience I have seen a lot of burn out and staff opting out of child care and into other professions

Another reason for lack of child care staff in burnout, not enough holiday time to take time out throughout the year ...

... the work load of child care workers is untenable and causes unnecessary stress.

In 2001 the Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employee's Union of Australia (MEU) NSW and Victorian branches conducted a workplace survey of its members to look at the occupational health and safety impacts of working in child care. In NSW there were 296 responses (it is not known how many surveys were sent out) and in Victorian there was a 60 per cent return rate, the number of respondents and surveys sent out is unknown. Table 7 shows the health impacts from these surveys.

**Table 7: Occupational Health and Safety Impact of Child Care, per cent**

My work contributes to:	Weekly		Monthly	
	NSW	Victoria	NSW	Victoria
headaches	37	52	43	33
indigestion	16	22	12	13
high blood pressure	8	9	7	12
ulcers	3	6	5	7
anxiety	26	49	33	28
depression	13	25	24	30
insomnia	27	36	28	25
Associated health issues:	yes	yes		
back injury	38	57		
muscle strain	53	62		
repetitive strain injury	27	28		

Source: Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employee's Union of Australia (MEU)

### Attrition from the profession

There is a high annual loss of trained staff from the child care profession, quoted as 33 to 40 per cent (Tepperman, 1997; CCCAC, 2001f). This is often attributed to low salary levels (CCCAC, 2001d; Keller, 2001; Early et al, 2001). Other factors cited are the shift from child-centred teaching to outcomes assessment (Grieshaber, 2000);

temporary or permanent migration outside NSW; shift to primary teaching positions; and personal reasons. Survey respondents noted similar expectations and reasons.

Out of the group of friends (10) I graduated with, only 2 are teaching in 0-5 settings. Two now in schools, 1 works in a book shop and 5 are overseas.

I would prefer to be working in a school with school hours to suit my children's attendance at school. Also better money for less supervisory responsibilities.

No, because hopefully I will be teaching in England as I want to travel before I have children.

It is interesting to note that 42 per cent (71) of the survey respondents had completed their early childhood qualification within the last 5 years, and 31 per cent (53) six to ten years ago. Only 30 per cent (49) of those who completed their training within the last five years anticipated that they would still be working in child care in two years time.

Several stakeholders identified the issue of retention having primacy over recruitment, particularly in relation to 2 year TAFE trained (or equivalent) personnel. There appeared to be an adequate number of graduates coming into the profession, but these people were electing not to stay within early childhood for a variety of reasons including workplace stress, poor rates of remuneration for the responsibility, work load and wanting to upgrade qualifications.

Survey respondents and some stakeholders commented that the mismatch between training and work expectations contributing to the attrition rate. Forty-four per cent of survey respondents stated that the readiness of early childhood teachers and 26 per cent of TAFE qualified staff was one of the contributors to the shortage of trained early childhood staff.

Trained teachers know what they are getting in to and yet still have preconceived ideas that are totally unrealistic in 'the real world'. For teachers practicum should include face to face with directors role in a centre as well as teachers role.

... early childhood teachers are inadequately prepared for the daily routine of child care

Some stakeholders commented that there was decreased focus on working with children and families, and more time required to fulfil 'routine and mundane work not with the children and families' (Stakeholder interview, inner Sydney council child care centres directors network meeting responses). This had an impact on the mismatch of training and work experiences.

Survey respondents were asked if they were likely to be still working in child care in two years time, 68 per cent (109) stated yes, 55 respondents were early childhood trained teachers and 54 were 2 year TAFE qualified (Table 8).

**Table 8: Plan to Continue Working in Child Care in Two Years, by Qualification**

	2–4 year teacher		Graduate diploma		TAFE and other		Total	
	freq	%	freq	%	Freq	%	freq	%
Yes	53	63	2	40	54	73	109	68
No	13	15	3	60	6	8	22	12
Probably	6	7	-	-	3	4	9	6
Don't know	9	11	-	-	4	5	13	8
No longer in child care	1	1	-	-	6	8	7	4
Planning family	2	2	-	-	1	1	3	2
Other	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	1
Total	84	100	5	100	74	100	165	100

While two thirds of the survey respondents indicated that they anticipated still working in child care in 2 years time, almost 75 percent of TAFE qualified staff anticipated still working compared to around 60 percent of both 3 and 4 year trained teachers. Most of these teachers planned to move to preschools or schools.

Reasons why teachers might be more likely to leave the profession than TAFE qualified staff could include the higher portability of their qualifications outside the profession in other teaching and early childhood environments and outside Australia. Stakeholders reported that the lack of a clear career path for Associate Diploma graduates inhibited their movement in child care services as they needed to upgrade to move up the hierarchy.

Many survey respondents, particularly those trained as early childhood teachers commented that they would prefer to work in preschools and schools. Some felt that their qualifications were more applicable to these settings as they were viewed as more educational environments. Two-year TAFE qualified staff did not believe that they had as many career options as teachers, and felt the need to upgrade their qualifications prior to moving up within the children's services profession. One stakeholder commented that 'at the end of the day though – breadth of experience and growth remains quite narrow' for all trained staff.

Once you become director, there is nowhere else to go. We cannot get any other promotions – no incentives to keep working.

### **Staff turnover**

Yet another factor which reduces the quality of child care in Australia is the high rate of staff turnover, as opposed to attrition. Child care workers are highly mobile and can move from one institution to another if they see an advantage in doing so, but the end result is a loss of continuity of care for the children concerned, and a consequent dilution of quality in their pre-school experience.

Staff turnover is a serious barrier to improved service quality (Boyd, 1997; Whelan, 1990). Kontos cites a 15 to 30 per cent turnover annually compared with 10 per cent in other service fields (Kontos, 1988). The US Department of Labor places staff

turnover even higher, at 40 per cent (Weiss, 1999) and in Australia the figure was 40 per cent in 1995 (FACS, 2000). It has an impact on stability of care for children in the services and increases the reliance on casual and relief staff. Apart from the resultant lack of continuity and security for the children, communication and social support within the teaching community is lowered.

Survey respondents commented on the workplace stress that turnover created. This resulted in a higher use of casual staff, which in turn created a higher work load for permanent staff and created greater workplace stress. Twenty-six per cent (45) of survey respondents felt that the availability of regular casual employment through child care recruitment agencies was one of the reasons for the trained staffing shortage. Several respondents commented that working casually suited their family and financial requirements, and they did not feel under as much stress working in this way. Some stakeholders felt that the use of long term casuals had a negative impact on the profession and resulted in potential employees not viewing the profession as a good place to work.

### **General recommendations**

7. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the profession about improving the value of early childhood careers by collating material supplied by educational institutions, peak bodies and employers and distributing to graduates in and out of the profession, including:*

- *6-monthly mail-out to graduates with periodical information included in this recommendation;*
- *a register of graduates who have left the profession. Employers and relief agencies should be asked to encourage graduates leaving the profession to join the register;*
- *clearinghouse of information for career paths, networks and development opportunities (such as continuing education, retraining, bridging courses and financial assistance for education);*
- *role of CSAs in supporting consistent implementation of the regulations to enhance the provision of quality care;*
- *a new edition of the Community Child Care policy handbook (or similar) to include information about priority of access for employees' children and an additional handbook on family friendly practices for child care service employees; and*
- *supportive workplace conditions in awards and examples of best practice.*

8. *That the Office of Childcare recommends to the National Children's Services Administrators that national workforce data on early childhood qualified staff be separately categorised by existing data collectors such as the Graduate Careers Council of Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.*

Australian Graduate Destination Survey includes comparative information on the number of graduates and which industries recent graduates are currently working in (Graduate Careers Council of Australia). The data do not distinguish early childhood.

Similarly, no relevant ABS statistics on labour force participation and training specific to early childhood teachers is available (Directory of Education and Training Statistics, ABS).

Refer also to:

- Recommendations 1-6. Work conditions
- Recommendation 9. Education
- Recommendation 12. Recruitment
- Recommendation 14. Professional status

### **4.3 Qualifications and Education**

Reasons for the shortage of early childhood trained staff begin at three points in the process of qualifications and education: the number of people applying and accepted for entry to courses, attrition during courses and the number who successfully graduate and intend to enter early childhood teaching.

#### **Entry to education**

Survey respondents were asked whether one of the contributors to the trained staffing shortage was that people did not want to train as qualified early childhood staff - 32 per cent (55 respondents) considered that this was one of the reasons for the shortage.

Many survey respondents commented that they had entered child care because they loved children and loved working with children. This was cited as the reason why respondents would continue to be working in child care in 2 years time.

I enjoy working with children. I realise the shortcomings and the low pay, but I personally enjoy and get a great deal of satisfaction to put in my effort in to their developing years.

Several survey respondents commented on the difficulty of retraining to assist in their career path. This was of particular concern for 2 year TAFE trained staff. Finances and family circumstances made it difficult to retrain. Traineeships assisted unqualified child care workers to remain in their job and to maximise their experience. However, several stakeholders expressed concern about the potentially exploitative nature of traineeships, where trainees needed to be assured of ongoing and regular employment on completion of their training.

Traineeships are problematic as they don't always offer permanency after training had finished. Looking at options to encourage permanency on completion of training would enhance this program. (stakeholder interview – LHMU)

According to the national survey, some states offer scholarships to encourage students to enter early childhood education (Appendix H). This is similar to the Commonwealth, State and private scholarships for rural nurses.<sup>1</sup>

Several stakeholders believed that assisting students to enter tertiary courses was one way to alleviate the trained staff shortage. Particular note was made of scholarships for students from rural and remote communities, and indigenous communities. Although they also cautioned for the need to ensure access to culturally appropriate and sensitive courses.

Scholarships could be given to students where they are required to work in regional NSW or anywhere there is a shortage. (stakeholder interview – Country Children’s Services Association of NSW)

DoCS scholarships and additional funding.

Other data were not available about why child care workers and high school graduates were not prepared to enter early childhood education.

## **Recognition of qualifications**

### *Upgrading qualifications*

Upgrading of qualifications was one of the career options that was the preferred option for TAFE qualified staff. This enabled these staff to move into management positions or similar. Some stakeholders commented that actively encouraging the upgrading of older existing staff would have an impact on the trained staffing shortage.

Concern was expressed that the current recognition of prior learning (RPL) used by some tertiary institutions was so onerous and detailed that many potential study candidates were put off. One university stakeholder commented that they ‘had been told by trainers – you would probably find it easier to just do the stipulated assignments for each unit rather than prepare and present portfolios to prove your right to RPL.’ It was suggested that revising and supporting trained staff who wanted to upgrade their qualifications through the RPL process was important and should be vigorously pursued. Additional support to upgrade qualifications could be provided to older existing staff through some form of incentive such as ‘one day paid release a week or one/two weeks per term from the workplace to train’ (stakeholder interview – NSW tertiary institution).

Two unions, LHMU and MEU, suggested that it should be a requirement that employers to pay for 2 year TAFE qualified staff get training and support if acting/working as Authorised supervisors. This could involve effective RPL and specifically tailored courses to provide support the trained staff member in their role.

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Undergraduate Remote and Rural Nursing Scholarship (CURRNS) Scheme for registered or enrolled nurses who have been out of the nursing workforce for some time, to undertake a program accredited with the Nurses Registration Board or Council.. Also Mayne Health, private employer, Work/life program scholarship program to upgrade registration, child care assistance, counselling, work environment (Australian, 2002).

For some stakeholders and survey respondents there was a perception that the dichotomy between care and education – early childhood trained teachers and 2 year TAFE qualified staff – had an impact on the shortage of trained staff.

EC teachers like to feel superior to TAFE qualified staff. Over my many years of experience all EC teachers I have met are inadequately prepared for the daily routine of child care.

Need more child care focusing on education so teachers feel they are ‘teachers’ not ‘child minders’.

The perceptions around status of training also related to wages and conditions. One survey respondent comment that ‘there is little difference between qualified and unqualified worker’s wages’ so gaining qualifications was of little financial benefit.

In 1996-7 NSW had a Policy on the Alternative Recruitment Arrangements for Licensed Children’s Services Where a Suitably Trained Early Childhood Teacher is Unavailable. An infants or primary qualified teacher could take a 30 hour inservice training course, from providers such as Lady Gowrie, to be recognised in early childhood. The review of the policy was unfavourable and the program was discontinued. If it was to be reinstated it would need more than 30 hours training, focus on play as a vehicle for learning, interactions with younger children, implications of child development for interactions eg toileting, equipment, practice oversight by an ECE teacher and further training (Office of Childcare interview, December 2001).

#### *Overseas qualifications*

The recognition of overseas qualifications can go some way to lessen the shortage of trained early childhood staff. Stakeholders and several survey respondents commented on the difficulties they had experienced obtaining recognition of overseas qualifications. The Qualifications Committee, contracted by the Office of Childcare meets bi-monthly, with the possibility of additional monthly teleconferences (although the Committee was reported as not having used this mechanism). At this time the committee reviews applications and may make determinations regarding the acceptance of overseas qualifications. The time lag from receipt of application to approval was reported as being more than 3 months. The Office of Childcare reported that decisions could be made within a month if an application is completed correctly with the required information attached. Until the application is approved the staff member is unable to formally act in the trained position they have been appointed to and may not receive the rate of pay for which they may be potentially approved. One survey respondent lost the trained staff member due to the length of time of the approval process and not being able to pay the staff member the higher rate of pay.

Also applied to Qualifications Committee to recognise overseas qualifications – took 4 months with no result. Director resigned in the mean time as we could not pay her a teacher rate until her qualifications were recognised.

A pilot is being run by the Community Services and Health ITAB, the Community Services Training Package TAFE to supplement unrecognised overseas qualifications.

The pilot is an on the job competency assessment process to award a TAFE diploma, for example a child care teacher from Fiji. There is no equivalent process for teachers.

### **Course attrition**

Analysis of attrition from UNE courses revealed that students enrolled in university courses that build on TAFE qualifications experience a high rate of attrition, up to thirty per cent. Reasons included the following:

- **Personal expectations:** Students can be highly committed to the study program and set high expectations of themselves. They can become demoralized when expectations are not met and grades may not be as high as they might have achieved at TAFE.
- **Family responsibilities:** TAFE qualified early education students are reported to be more likely to be older and have young children. This responsibility was often cited as a reason for extension of assignments or withdrawal from courses.
- **Economic disadvantage:** The group tends to be more likely to include students on lower incomes than other part time students in other fields. This is partly to do with the income level in child care but also to do with the general family circumstance. Comments from graduating students indicate that they are likely to be the first member of their family to be graduating from a university. Lack of access to up to date computers, difficulty paying fees and remaining in course, lack of funds to attend residential programs are some indicators that identify the group as less well resources than other university groups.

The issue of economic disadvantage came up in one stakeholder interview in the context of career options, choices and paths and how these may impact on the trained staff shortage. The barriers of social class and the ability to pay for courses no longer appeared to have a significant impact on people entering tertiary courses. Access to AUStudy and HECS made tertiary training more affordable. The greatest consideration seemed to be how well a student did in secondary school.

### **Course content and format**

#### *0-5 year old specialisation*

Internationally, early childhood is recognised as spanning the period from birth to eight years. While there are difficulties associated with a birth to eight focus in early childhood teacher education programs, most universities in NSW offering early childhood degrees are committed to maintaining this broad focus for two key reasons.

The first relates to children's wellbeing. In brief, there is an urgent need for teachers with a strong understanding of early child development in the early years of school. There is an equally strong need for teachers who can effectively support children and families through the transition to school process. Early childhood teacher education programs play a crucial role in ensuring a supply of such teachers to the school sector. The cross fertilisation of ideas that can arise when early childhood teachers move between the prior-to-school and the school sectors, and vice versa, is also regarded as beneficial.

Second, universities have a responsibility to prepare graduates for the widest possible range of employment options. To a considerable extent, their success in attracting students to their early childhood teacher education programs depends on prospective students' perceptions of the employment options available to them following graduation. Although there is some scope for specialist niche marketing of some birth to five specific programs, in general, universities would find it difficult for ethical and economic reasons to offer programs that sought to restrict graduates' employment prospects to a particular segment of the early childhood field. For these reasons, we have chosen not recommend that universities be urged to offer only programs with a birth to five focus.

### *Managerial skills*

Survey respondents were asked whether one of the contributors to the trained staff shortage was the preparedness of new graduates to work in the early childhood field. Forty-four per cent (74 respondents) believed that early childhood teachers and 26 per cent (45 respondents) believed that TAFE qualified graduates were not ready to work in early childhood services. Similarly stakeholder interviews indicated lack of preparedness and unrealistic workplace expectations as reasons for the shortage.

Stakeholders reported that graduates lacked sufficient education in business skills, team work and management. They were of the opinion that students were not aware they would manage a small business rather than work with children once they get to managerial roles. They thought these skills needed to be included in courses and that business management skills should be included as part of requirement for authorised supervisor. Several long day care centres in NSW have employed business managers (or similar) in the past. In this instance the trained early childhood teacher was able to focus on working in leadership roles with families, children and the community, rather than becoming the business manager.

### *Flexible delivery*

Charles Sturt University, Bathurst has a rural placement strategy to encourage students to take up rural positions but it was reported that graduates tend to enter the rural school system (Interviews). Other universities are also flexible in the way they provide training to rural students but it seems that graduates then leave the rural area or leave the early childhood profession (Interviews).

E-learning for upgrading Associate Diploma graduates was suggested to assist in self paced learning. However, the USA experience is retreating from reliance on electronic delivery.

Other suggestions for increasing flexibility in education were to accredit in-service courses. It was reported that UNE has a special topic course that recognises attendance at conferences; for example, students attending the Child Care Work Forum (Child Care Exchange) can negotiate to report back on specific elements of the conference and receive credit for attendance and reporting back as part of their course. This is part of the university's focus on aiming for what is practical within working life, while ensuring academic rigour.

### *Practicum*

Stakeholders and survey respondents who either worked in rural services or had experience in these areas were concerned that graduates were not encouraged to look at rural services as a work option. One stakeholder believed that the increasing contraction of university courses to metropolitan areas and large regional campuses actively discouraged students asking for rural practicum placements. The students having to bear the cost of these placements further exacerbated this. Recently UNE has developed a large external course for early childhood students, drawing on students throughout NSW, and Charles Sturt University is opening a campus with an early childhood program in Dubbo in 2002.

Graduating students also referred to the importance of the practicum, with 25 per cent of those interviewed explicitly citing the quality of their practicum experience in a particular service as a key determinant of their decision to either seek or avoid employment in that workplace. For all students interviewed it was clear that the practicum played a key role in shaping their perceptions of the early childhood field (Appendix C).

Thirty per cent (50) of survey respondents commented that there was not enough practicum experience for undergraduates, and 35 per cent (60) believed that addressing this issue would help solve the shortage of trained early childhood staff.

Trained staff should have more hands on experience prior to graduation.

Several stakeholders commented on the difficulties in supervising students in rural and remote placements, particularly having access to a suitably qualified supervisor. Many practicum supervisors are early childhood lecturers. It is important for students to experience these work environments as one way to encourage potential employment, however the difficulties associated with effective practicum supervision need to be overcome. One suggestion was to contract 'local appropriately qualified individuals to undertake the supervision and supports' (stakeholder interview - Contact Inc).

### **Employment intentions after graduation**

Findings from the field work in this research, student interviews, survey and stakeholder interviews confirmed the impression that graduate intentions were generally to enter early childhood teaching immediately upon graduation but also expect to leave the profession within five years (Appendix B and E). This was also the finding from Alison Elliott's research of University of Western Sydney graduates (Appendix D).

### **Qualifications and education recommendations**

9. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to stakeholders in early childhood education courses about:*
- *strategies and commitment to broadening the recruitment pool to increase geographic, gender, cultural and indigenous diversity;*

- *the relationship between courses at different campuses such as specialisation, differentiation, flexibility of delivery and collaboration to improve effective education opportunities;*
- *embedding mentoring as part of the course to establish connections to the profession before students graduate;*
- *support to workers already in the profession to enrol in and complete courses to upgrade their qualifications, such as onsite learning hours, study leave;*
- *ways to support the quality of students' practicum experiences, including mentoring, peer support, assistance for Indigenous and rural placements (transport, accommodation and lost income); and*
- *managerial skills for operating children's services.*

10. *That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the tertiary education sector and Commonwealth and State Government Departments about considering methods of offering scholarships funded by Commonwealth, State or private sources to address the imperatives of:*

- *increasing recruitment from rural areas;*
- *retraining of mature graduates who have left the profession; and*
- *increasing gender, cultural and indigenous diversity.*

*Relevant agencies include Commonwealth Departments of Education, Science and Technology; Employment and Workplace Relations; Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission; and NSW Department of Education and Training.*

11. *That the Office of Childcare requires as a key performance indicator from the contracted provider, AECA, that it clarifies to the profession the processes of the Qualifications Committee and the precise information required to be attached to the application to minimise decision making delays and review whether additional staffing support to the Committee is required to expedite the process.*

Refer also to:

- Recommendations 1- 6. Work conditions
- Recommendation 7. Communication with the profession

#### **4.4 Recruitment**

The recruitment process into the child care profession is relatively straightforward, assuming an adequate recruitment pool. There is a well defined process with larger employers recruiting (where graduates are available) directly from training institutions and through advertisements in local and daily newspapers. Extreme difficulties in recruitment were reported in relation to attracting trained staff to rural and remote areas and difficulty in attracting Indigenous students to courses.

CSAs from eleven Areas reported difficulty attracting staff (Appendix F). Vacancies remained for extended periods. In one service this was the case for seven months at the time of reporting. This occurred despite extensive advertising, including in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and, in one rural service, advertising in four States and Territories. The cost to the centres of placing numerous advertisements represented an added financial burden. The centre that advertised interstate ran advertisements for the same vacant position since 1990. A number of centres, particularly in rural localities, posited that offering above-award wages might reduce this dilemma, but at this time, raising wages was not possible.

Family responsibilities had an impact on the difficulty of recruiting trained staff in rural and remote areas. If a move to a rural area included a partner and children this could create tension, particularly if the partner wanted to work and was unable to find suitable employment.

One stakeholder identified that they had been successful in recruiting qualified staff by promoting their service as one that employed more trained staff that required by licensing providing greater peer support and guidance for new graduates. This was combined with above award pay and conditions. This centre very rarely had experienced difficulty in recruiting trained staff.

Child care was a priority recruitment category for immigration following the mid 1990s shortage. It has since been removed as a priority but NSW could advocate for it to be reinstated.

It appears that neither the Government nor children's services employers currently apply a strategy to attract mature qualified people back into the profession. This strategy has been successfully adopted in industries such as nursing (stable preferred shifts eg Mayne) and finance (family friendly conditions).

The cost and placement of advertisements for child care services is a common issue for some locations. Some areas seem to require ongoing advertising in national and regional media that can have an impact on child care service budgets. This was exacerbated for services located in rural and remote areas. One stakeholder suggested regional services could recruit through a co-operative model. The example was given of three small preschools located in southern NSW, who required a trained staff member for one or two days a week. The services could consider a combined approach to recruitment, pooling 'resources to promote the benefits of their locations, sharing advertising, sharing positions so that a full-time job could be advertised, investigating could support or service supplied housing' (stakeholder interview – Contact Inc).

Some services used the offer of above award conditions to attract suitable trained staff to their services. The difficulty in providing above award conditions is the financial burden that services had to bear. If services were located in areas where parents could not afford higher fees, the above award conditions were not an option. While most survey respondents commented on the poor wages, many stated that it was the lack of workplace flexibility that caused the greatest concern in relation to recruitment, this was particularly marked for staff with families of their own.

## Recruitment recommendations

12. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and employers about developing graduate recruitment strategies such as:

- university-based recruitment 6 months before graduation (similar to the Department of Education Targeted Graduate Scheme);
- pooling recruitment resources and strategies;
- positive practicum experiences (Recommendation 9);
- financial support for indigenous and rural placements (Recommendation 10); and
- supporting recruitment of mature workers back into the profession through scholarships to retrain and work conditions such as stable fixed shifts and family policies (Recommendations 1-5, 10).

A recruitment scheme that benefits employers that vary in size, location and graduate characteristics is required to meet the diverse needs of the profession. A combination of direct and indirect strategies is therefore needed. The *Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award* provides a 'Socio Economic Goods and Services Allowance', dependent partner and child allowances, vehicle allowance and vacation travel allowance to compensate for geographic isolation. These allowances vary depending on location throughout NSW. They vary in value from \$248 to \$2482 per annum, and for the vacation allowance from one to three vacation journeys per annum. Offering a similar scheme or tax rebates to attract trained staff to rural and remote regions may assist in the recruitment process.

13. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to the Commonwealth about:

- the restoration of early childhood education to the priority migrant career list and provides advice to the Commonwealth about acceptable documentation required to meet NSW qualification standards; and
- the inclusion of early childhood educated staff in the tax concession categories for rural and remote areas (Tax Zone A and Special Tax Zone A and B) or the provision of specific area allowances in all appropriate industrial awards.

Refer also to:

- Recommendation 7. Communication with the profession

## 4.5 Professional Support and Status

Other factors that result in attrition are the perception that there is no significant career path, especially in small institutions with only one or two professional positions. Some workers feel the need for job satisfaction, which includes factors such as a need for seniority and responsibility (Stremmel, 1991).

Job satisfaction also relates to perceived inequities within children's services. There is some concern that workplace status within a centre is determined by formal qualifications only, without regard for practical experience. Public perception is that there are differences between care – what long day care provides – education – what a

preschool provides. In reality a long day care centre provides a seamless service of both care and education, that is continuous and interlinked. This public perception contributes to some early childhood trained teachers making the decision to move from long day care to preschools and subsequently into school education.

Would like to go into schools – better conditions, prestige, support.

I would like to get into preschool and schools because it is more education focused and pay and conditions of work are better in preschools and schools.

A number of child care workers said that their stress and burnout resulted in part from a lack of social support. Clearly in small institutions there are not enough colleagues of similar experience and qualification to form close-knit social units capable of mutual support, advice and assistance. The loss of any individual from the groups that do exist is felt more strongly than would be the case, for instance in a primary school where there is a relatively large community of teachers capable of mutual support.

Since the size of children's services is regulated in order to keep them to a size where young children are in a suitable social environment, the obvious solution of centralising early childhood education is not viable. It may, however, be possible to create professional groups across institutional borders in order to bring child care workers together for the kind of information exchange and morale support which is required in order to save these workers from feelings of isolation and provide them with a ready resource for problem solving.

Even the use of the term 'child care worker' is seen by some as conferring a lower status than is appropriate and several focus groups meeting for the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council suggested alternative terms such as 'childhood services' to emphasise the pro-active nature of the calling (CCCAC, 2001d).

Students reported poor experiences during placements in child care services, including resentment towards them (Appendix C). However, for University of Western Sydney students, professional support and status did not rank highly as in their preferred employment choices (Appendix D). Twenty per cent of students mentioned career opportunities or salary as a deciding factor in their preference for employment in primary schools. Similarly, only 10 per cent cited the poorer salaries, status and professionalism associated with child care centres as reasons for rejecting such employment as their preferred option.

### **Feminised workforce**

The gender imbalance within the children's services workforce can contribute to the difficulties with staff recruitment and retention in two ways. First is the relatively tiny percentage of men entering the field. The ABS 1996 Census indicates that only 3.3 per cent of Australian child care workers and 2.3 per cent of pre-primary teachers are men. These figures are consistent with international trends. Men comprise approximately 2 to 3 per cent of the children's services workforce in New Zealand (Farquhar, 1997), Canada (Goelman, 1998), the USA (Stremmel, 1993) and the UK (Skelton, 1991). It can be argued that this imbalance virtually cuts the potential recruitment field by 50 per cent. Available enrolment data for TAFES and universities

suggest that in Australia, at least, this imbalance seems unlikely to be alleviated in the foreseeable future. In 1998, in NSW, TAFE enrolment figures for students in child care courses were predominantly female (285 females, 2 males, or 98.58 per cent female enrolment) (Community ... 1996). Unpublished data from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Technology do not show any trend in changes in these statistics (Sumsion, 2002).

Despite this imbalance the second element of gender bias is shown by the fact that men tend to have the top jobs, a factor which may lead to resentment and attrition in the female segment of the work force. This could be very frustrating for many women, especially those who are career minded, a subset that should be retained if at all possible. Alexander (1991) claimed that 80 per cent of primary teachers in the United Kingdom are female but 50 per cent of head teachers are male.

The European Commission Network on Childcare as part of its role in reconciling employment and family responsibilities, examined the links between quality in children's services and 'equal treatment for men and women in the labour market' (European Commission Network, 1996: 5). One of the issues the Commission looked at was the participation of men in children's services, at all levels, not just in managerial positions. The Commission felt strongly that men should be actively encouraged to work in child care to challenge stereotypic child care roles, but as a way to encourage greater involvement of fathers in parenting. The Commission set a target that 20 per cent of all child care employees should be men.

Gender bias in child care extends, as in most employment areas, to the question of family raising. Whereas a woman is often expected to give up her career, at least temporarily, to raise children to school or pre-school age, men do not have this interruption to their career progress, and continue to gain seniority and work experience (Thornton, 2000).

The issues associated with the possible recruitment of more men to the child care profession are many and complex. As one stakeholder commented 'gender bias is a big issue'. Several survey respondents commented that child care may fare better if there were more men in the field. Nursing is a one example of a profession that improved its public perception once more men were employed. Rates of pay increased, along with the profile of nursing as a viable career choice. These potential advantages need to be counterweighed against the potential disadvantages of the 'glass escalator' (Williams, 1992) that can see men in traditionally female professions rise quickly to the top, thus creating resentment and exacerbating gender inequities.

Men's fears about the dangers of sexual abuse allegations would need to be addressed if they were to be attracted to the field in large numbers. A study of the views of men enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program at a NSW university indicated that all participants were deeply concerned about this possibility (Sumsion and Lubimowski, 1998: Sumsion, 2000).

### **Enhancing status**

Various initiatives to enhance the status of the teaching profession have been introduced or proposed in Australia. These include the creation of teachers professional bodies such as the Institute of Teachers, Victoria; Teacher Registration,

Queensland; and the proposed Institute for NSW recommended in the Ramsey Review. The Ramsey proposal recommended that early childhood teachers be included in the Institute. An aim of the bodies is to enhance the professional status of teachers both within the teaching community and with the general public. However, in the early childhood profession this may also have the effect of further differentiating teachers from other qualified child care workers, unless associate membership was available to them.

### **Professional support and status recommendations**

*14. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and educators in the profession about establishing local professional support networks and professional continuing education through:*

- *providing a small amount of seeding money to each local area;*
- *publicising successful examples of networking and mentoring (Recommendation 7);*
- *publicising career path and development opportunities such as examination markers; QIAS reviewers; part-time or guest lecturer; tutor; professional and advocacy participation (Recommendation 7);*
- *publicising professional continuing education and incorporating it as an annual requirement for Authorised Supervisors (Recommendation 3) through a variety of courses and formats eg in-service, on the job training, networks and courses at universities, TAFE and non-government providers.*

Peer support, mentoring and professional networks have been successful strategies both within the profession (eg Local Network Eastern Suburbs, Sydney) and externally (eg Women in Business Mentoring Program). Initiatives need to be locally driven but assisted in their establishment by the Office of Childcare by connecting child care services, staff within them, graduates who have left the profession, networking facilities such as distance education equipment. Undergraduates should be represented in the establishment consultations. Thirty-five per cent (59) of survey respondents commented that the lack of a regular mentor or support programs for new graduates contributed to the staffing shortage.

Professional continuing education is a requirement for some early childhood employers (eg SDN Children's Services (Inc), Early Childhood Long Day Care Centres (State) and Creche and Kindergarten Association Queensland) and in other professions (eg medical, legal, financial). A distinction from other professions is the relatively poor pay, which would probably require that employers were required to pay the cost of continuing education in work hours. Many courses and training opportunities exist in the profession and in related training areas (eg university and TAFE centres for professional education and continuing education, management skills training and courses and conferences run by peak bodies within the profession).

*15. That the Office of Childcare advocates to the NSW Department of Education and Training the implementation of the Ramsey Report recommendation on the formation of an Institute of Teachers, with the following features to benefit early childhood profession:*

- *representation from all early childhood bodies; and*
- *associate membership for TAFE trained staff.*

The emphasis within the profession of uniting all types of early childhood care and education and employees with different qualifications should be maintained in the principles of the Institute of Teachers. Similar objectives have been advanced in the Australian Librarian Information Association.

*16. That the Office of Childcare communicates the findings to peak bodies and educators to develop publicity to enhance the status of the profession by:*

- *improving graduates' participation in professional organisations and peak bodies;*
- *publicising early childhood education as a positive career by designing information about the nature of the profession and personal and professional benefits that can be gained from this type of work;*
- *promoting the educational function of children's services;*
- *promoting early childhood in high school career days; and*
- *promoting the benefits of further education to child care professionals.*

Refer also to:

- Recommendation 7. Communication with the profession
- Recommendation 9. Education



## Appendix A Award Analysis

WAGE COMPARISON	Awards covered by the Independent Education Union								Other awards				
	SDN	KU - long day care	KU - preschool	Teachers (Catholic ESC)	Teachers (Catholic preschool)	Non-govt ECC other than preschools	Independent schools)(State) Award 2001	Non-govt preschools	LHMU - Miscellaneous Workers'	Kindergartens and Child Care Centres &c. (State) Award	Crown Employees*	NSW Nurses Association, Public Hospital Award 2002	
all other teachers													
Step 1				25 471			31 162						
Step 2				26 084			33 184						
Step 3				26 774			35 394						
Step 4				27 735			37 228						
Step 5				28 906			39 250						
Step 6							41 275						
2 year trained teacher									advanced ccw qualified		nurse (1,2)		
Step 1				27 775	26 707		33 184		28 210		29 286		
Step 2				30 771	29 587		35 394		28 683		29 926		
Step 3				32 338	31 092		37 228		29 162		30 571		
Step 4				34 026	32 719		39 250				31 216		
Step 5				35 590	34 221		41 275				31 871		
Step 6				37 210	35 780		43 294						
Step 7				39 008	37 506		45 320						
Step 8				39 990	38 452		47 340						
Step 9				40 961	39 386								
Step 10					40 450								
3 year trained teacher													
Step 1	32 479	32 971	31 706	32 002	30 772	31 861	35 394	30 638		33 947			
Step 2	34 133	34 650	33 317	33 630	32 338	33 483	37 228	32 196		35 705			
Step 3	35 918	36 462	35 060	35 390	34 028	35 235	39 250	33 879		37 645			
Step 4	37 565	38 134	36 669	37 013	35 590	36 851	41 275	35 434		39 584			
Step 5	39 270	39 870	38 337	38 697	37 209	38 529	43 294	37 047		41 523			
Step 6	41 173	41 800	40 189	40 568	39 008	40 391	45 320	38 836		43 465			
Step 7	42 209	42 851	41 204	41 589	39 990	41 408	47 340	39 816		45 403			
Step 8	43 238	43 893	42 201	42 601	40 962	42 415		40 308		47 343			
Step 9	44 960	45 641	43 886	44 297	42 595	44 104		42 408		49 281			
Step 10	46 757	47 465	45 640	46 069	44 296	45 867		44 102		51 224			
Step 11	48 019	48 744	46 872	47 311	45 493	47 104		45 294		53 747			
4 year trained teacher											nurse (2,3)		
Step 1	34 537	35 060	33 712	34 028	32 719	33 879	39 250	32 576		37 645	33 202		
Step 2	36 676	37 232	35 801	36 137	34 745	35 978	41 275	34 595		39 584	35 012		
Step 3	38 738	39 325	37 813	38 169	36 700	38 002	43 294	36 540		41 523	36 816		
Step 4	41 026	41 647	40 046	40 421	38 868	40 245	45 320	38 698		43 465	38 750		
Step 5	43 152	43 807	42 121	42 518	40 883	42 332	47 340	40 702		45 403	40 669		
Step 6	44 960	45 641	43 885	44 297	42 595	44 104	49 364	42 408		47 343	42 593		
Step 7	46 757	47 465	45 640	46 069	44 296	45 867	51 387	44 102		49 281	44 782		
Step 8	48 783	49 522	47 618	48 065	46 216	47 855	53 410	46 014		51 224	46 623		
Step 9	50 732	51 501	49 522	49 987	48 065	49 768	55 432	47 856		53 747			
Director's allowance – paid in addition to teachers salary									coordinator - small	coordinator - large	nursing unit mgr (2)		
1- 6 staff (1 unit)	4407	4900	4150	3296		3282	3282	29 604	30 597	step 1	58 484	level 1	
7-12 staff (2 unit)	5502	5929	4900	4025		4008	4008	30 077	31 070	step 2	61 272	level 2	
13-16 staff (3 unit)	6871	7217	5929	5025		5001	5001	30 555	31 444	step 3	62 910	level 3	
17+ staff (4 unit)	7529	7837	7217	6275		6249	6249						
Travel per km	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.25			0.51				0.448 - 0.672		
Late fee per 1/2 hour		20	20										

Notes: Local government rates of pay not available due to new award; \* (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award; 1. Enrolled, mothercraft, 2 yr qualified; 2. Ordinary hours only; 3. University qualified.

Clauses	SDN Children's Services (Inc) Early Childhood Long Day Care Centres (State) Award	Teachers (KU Children's Services) (State) Award	
		Long day care	Preschool
Definitions	'director' as 'early childhood teacher' 3-4 year qual	defines 'director' as 'early childhood teacher' 3 or 4 year qualified	
Rates of pay - 3 yr trained	\$32 479 - \$48 019	\$32 971 - \$48 744	\$31 706 - \$46 872
4 yr trained	\$34 537 - \$50 732	\$35 060 - \$51 501	\$33712 - 49 522
Director's allowance	1 to 6 employees: \$4407	1 to 6 employees: \$4900	1 unit: \$4150
	7 to 12 employees: \$5502	7 to 12 employees: \$5929	2 unit: \$4900
	13 to 16 employees: \$6871	13 to 16 employees: \$7217	3 unit: \$5929
	17 + employees: \$7529	7 + employees: \$7837	4 unit: \$7217
Calculation of service		lecturer in ECE or child development, child development officer, Family Day Care Co-ord equivalent to service; Family Day Care, CCC worker, wholly engaged in child rearing (while ECT qualified) recognised as service at 1 increment / 3 years so engaged to maximum of 4 increments	
Vehicle allowance	\$0.27 per kilometre	\$0.27 per kilometre	
Late fee allowance		\$20 per half hour or part there of	
First aid allowance			
Geographic isolation allowances			
Climatic allowance			
Casual employees	20% loading, up to max step 4 of appropriate scale	20% loading, up to max step 4 of appropriate scale	maximum of step 4
Part time employees	work up to 0.8 hrs of f/t teacher	work up to 0.8 hrs of f/t teacher	
Shift work	early morning, starting 5am-6am - 10%	early morning, starting 5am-6am - 10%	
	afternoon , finishing 6.30pm -12am - 15%	afternoon , finishing 7pm -12am - 15%	
	night, rotating, finishing 12am-8am - 17.5%	night, rotating, finishing 12am-8am - 17.5%	
	night, permanent - 30%	night, permanent - 30%	
Broken shift allowance			
Authorised supervisor allowance			
Hours of work	38 hours, 6am - 6.30pm, M-F, 5 x 8 hrs/day	38 hours, 6am - 7pm, M-F, 5 x 8 hrs/day	
	3 x 10hrs + 1 x 8hrs		
	4 x 9.5hrs		
	or any other arrangement not more than 10 hrs/day		
Rostered days off	accrue 1 every 20 days	accrue 1 every 20 days	
	19 day month	19 day month	
	or up to a 12 day block p.a.	or up to a 12 day block p.a.	
	p/t & temp can take RDOs or be paid +5% in lieu	p/t or casual if accrue RDO can elect paid 5% or time off	

Clauses continued	SDN Children's Services (Inc) Early Childhood Long Day Care Centres (State) Award contd	Teachers (KU Children's Services) (State) Award continued
Inservice	3 paid days pa, leave to attend first aid course or til	2 paid days pa in lieu of attendance at courses, meetings, 2 days child free attendance, 202 days parent and committee meetings face to face
Preparation time	average 1 hour per week	? per week to perform admin duties 1 half day /week
Annual leave	4 weeks, 17.5% loading, pro rata for less than f/t	4 weeks, 17.5% loading, pro rata for less than f/t
Sick leave	10 days per year of service, accumulates, p/t prorata	15 days for each year of service, accumulates, p/t pro rata
Personal carers leave	can use accrued sick leave	can use accrued sick leave
	can take part day leave	can take part day leave
	family leave for "pressing domestic necessity"	
	can access 3 extra family days if 5 days of s/l already used p.a., non-cumulative	
	unpaid family leave	unpaid family leave
	can take 5 single days, or part thereof, of a/l, exclusive of shut down periods	can take 5 single days, or part thereof, of a/l, exclusive of shut down periods
	toil of payment of overtime for family leave	can use TOIL for accrued over time instead of payment
	make up time	make up time
	pro rata for p/t	pro rata for p/t
Parental leave	additional 52 weeks unpaid leave on top of provision of IRA 1996, Part 4, Chapter 2 - 2 yrs leave???	IRA 1996 - maternity, paternity and adoption
	paternity leave - 1 day paid on date of confinement or day "wife leaves hospital"	paternity leave - 1 day paid on date of confinement or day "spouse leaves hospital"
	adoption leave - 1 day paid	paid maternity & adoption leave - 1-2 yrs service - 2 wks salary, 2-3 yrs service - 3 wks salary, 3+ yrs service - 6 wks salary
Bereavement leave	3 days paid, can be taken with personal carers leave	3 days paid, can be taken with personal carers leave
Examination & study leave	relevant quals - paid leave on day of exam, lw/o pay for residential school	relevant quals - paid leave on day of exam, lw/o pay for residential school
Trade Union Training leave		
Union conference leave		
Leave without pay		
Union picnic day		
Meal breaks	30 minutes, counted as time worked if on premises, prior to 6th working hours	30 minutes, counted as time worked if on premises, prior to 6th working hours
Job share	agreed division of work, part time employees, pro rata benefits, if job share partner absent then second person offered the work at casual rates	documented approval process, at discretion of Children's Services Manager, part time employees, pro rata benefits, if job share partner absent then second person offered the work
Salary sacrifice for child care		

Clauses	Teachers (Catholic Early Childhood Service Centres and Preschools) (State) Award		Local Government (State) Award 2001
	Early Childhood Service	Preschool	
Definitions	defines "director" as 2, 3 or 4 year qualified		operational bands
Rates of pay - 3 yr trained			progression based on acquisition and use of skills
4 yr trained			
Directors allowance			
Calculation of service	lecturer in ECE or child development, child development officer, Family Day Care Co-ord equivalent to service; Family Day Care, CCC worker recognised as service at 1 increment/3 years engaged to max 4 increments		
Vehicle allowance			agreed travel allowance, <2.5L car - \$0.52 per km, >2.5L - \$0.60 per km
Late fee allowance			
First aid allowance			\$9.10 per week
Geographic isolation allowances			employees in Moree Plains, Walgett, Narrabri, Connamble, warren, Lachlan, Carrathool, Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Windouran, Murray, Griffith – paid \$3.90 per wk, if employed under previous award
Climatic allowance			employees working within the areas bounded by councils of Snowy River, Tumut, Tumbarunba – paid \$3.90 per wk, if employed under previous award
Casual employees	20% loading, up to maximum of step 4 of appropriate scale		25% loading, regular casual – access to annual assessment under council salary system, & have service counted as long service leave if move to permanent position
Part time employees	work up to 0.9 hrs of f/t teacher		any hrs less than 38 per week, pro rata conditions
Shift work	early morning, starting 5am-6am – 10%		
	afternoon , finishing 6.30pm –12am – 15%		
	night, rotating, finishing 12am-8am – 17.5%		
	night, permanent – 30%		
Broken shift allowance			
Authorised supervisor allowance			
Hours of work	38 hours, 6am – 7pm, M-F, 5 x 8 hrs/day		38 hrs, agreed spread of hrs, M-F, unpaid meal break
Rostered days off	accrue 1 every 20 days		
	19 day month		
	or up to a 12 day block p.a.		
	p/t or casual if accrue RDO can elect to be paid 5% instead of time off		

<b>Clauses continued</b>	<b>Teachers (Catholic Early Childhood Service Centres and Preschools) (State) Award continued</b>	<b>Local Government (State) Award 2001 continued</b>
	<b>Early Childhood Service</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
Inservice		
Preparation time		
Annual leave	4 weeks, 17.5% loading, pro rata for less than f/t	taking during summer vacation and paid allowance at this time
Sick leave	1st yr - 15 days, there after 22 days, accumulates from 2nd yr - 20 days full pay, 20 days half pay, up to 80 days	1st yr - 5 days/term, not exceed 15 days, there after 22 days, accumulates from 2nd year - 20 day full pay, 20 days half pay, up to 80 days
Personal carers leave	narrow definition of family - 10 day current sick leave, 30 days accrued sick leave	4 weeks, 17.5% loading, pro rata for less than f/t
	can take part day leave	15 days pa, unlimited accumulation, up to 13 wks transferable if move from council to council
	5 days of current or accrued sick leave for "pressing domestic necessity"	use of any current or accrued sick leave, can be taken as a part day
	unpaid family leave	define carer's leave - family, same sex, relative, affinity, household
Parental leave	6 wks paid maternity leave	can use til, make up time, annual leave & leave w/o pay
	paternity leave - 1 day paid on date of confinement or day "wife leaves hospital"	
	adoption leave - 1 day paid	
Bereavement leave	3 days paid, can be taken with personal carers leave	9 wks paid (18 wks half pay) maternity leave
Examination & study leave	relevant quals - paid leave on day of exam, lw/o pay for residential school	2 days paid
Trade Union Training leave		if sponsored by union to attend TUTA, entitled to up to 10 days paid leave
Union conference leave		if employee is accredited delegate entitled to paid leave of absence for conference, if more than 1 delegate, payment is at discretion of council
Leave without pay		as agreed, do not constitute break in continuity of service
Union picnic day		1 day as agreed
Meal breaks	20-30 minutes, counted as time worked if on premises	unpaid breaks
Job share		as agreed, pro rata conditions
Salary sacrifice for child care		yes if provided by the school

<b>Clauses</b>	<b>Teachers (Independent Schools) (State) Award 2001(IEU)</b>	<b>LHMU - Miscellaneous Workers' Kindergartens and Child Care Centres &amp;c. (State) Award</b>	<b>Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award</b>
Definitions	1-4 yr trained teachers, recognises 5 yr trained, but not for preschools	training defined - 2 yr TAFE trained or equivalent	teacher defined as someone who has completed prescribed tertiary course
Rates of pay - 3 yr trained	\$31 162 - \$55 432; 5 yr trained - start on step 6-13; 4 yr trained - start on step 5-13; 3 yr trained - start on step 3-9	steps 1-3: \$28,210-\$29,162	\$31 825 - \$53 747; 5 yr trained - start on step 6-13; 4 yr trained - start on step 5-13; 3 yr trained - start on step 3-139
4 yr trained			
Director's allowance	1 unit (25 children:) \$3692 2 unit: \$4507 3 unit: \$5626 4 unit: \$7028	co-ordinator (small, <5 eft staff): \$29 604-\$30 555 Co-ordinator (large): \$30 597 - \$31 444	
Calculation of service	lecturer in ECE or child development, child development officer, Family Day Care Co-ord equivalent to service; Family Day Care, CCC worker recognised as service at 1 increment / 3 years so engaged to maximum of 4 increments	1 yr deducted for every 5 yrs absence from ec and cc services	not considered - any leave more than 5 days w/out pay
Vehicle allowance	\$0.51 per kilometre	none specified	\$0.448 - \$0.672, depending on engine capacity
Late fee allowance			
First aid allowance			
Geographic isolation allowances			Isolation from Socio Economic Goods and Services Allowance, depending on location: \$248 - \$2,482pa; dependent child allowance \$139 - \$288pa; vehicle allowance \$649 - \$1,296pa; Vacation Travel Allowance \$one - three vacation journeys; reimbursement of car
Climatic allowance			Western Division of NSW, or 0 degrees celsius average minimum temperature isotherm - +\$757pa w/out dependent partner & +\$867pa w dependent partner
Casual employees	plus 5%	plus 15% loading	plus 5%, minimum 2 hours start, maximum 6.5 hours per day with 30 minute break
Part time employees	pro rata pay and conditions	pro rata pay and conditions	pro rata pay and conditions
Shift work		early morning, starting 5am-6am - 10% afternoon , finishing 6.30pm -12am - 15% night, rotating, finishing 12am-8am - 17.5% night, permanent - 30%	
Broken shift allowance		\$9.10 per day, \$45.30 per week	
Authorised supervisor allowance		\$13.20 per week if required to act as AS	

<b>Clauses continued</b>	<b>Teachers (Independent Schools) (State) Award 2001(IEU) continued</b>	<b>LHMU - Miscellaneous Workers' Kindergartens and Child Care Centres &amp;c. (State) Award continued</b>	<b>Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and related employees) Salaries and Conditions Award continued</b>
Hours of work		38 hrs, 6.30am-6.30pm, M-F	
Rostered days off		accrue 1 every 20 days	
		19 day month	
		or up to a 5 day block p.a.	
		p/t or casual if accrue RDO can elect to be paid higher rate instead of time off	
Inservice		only for staff employed in preschools and out of hours services	2 days scheduled by Director-General
Preparation time			
Annual leave	taking during summer vacation and paid allowance at this time	4 weeks, 17.5% loading, pro rata for less than f/t	
Sick leave	1st yr - 5 days/term, not exceed 15 days, there after 22 days, accumulates from 2nd year - 20 day full pay, 20 days half pay, up to 80 days	5 days - first yr of employment, 10 days - second and subsequent yrs of employment, unlimited accumulation	
Personal carers leave	10 days current sick leave, 30 days accrued sick leave	can use accrued sick leave	
	can take part day leave		
		can use til, make up time, annual leave & leave w/o pay	
	domestic leave - 1 day deducted from sick leave		
	unpaid family leave		
Parental leave	9 wks paid maternity leave	unpaid leave	
	paternity leave - 1 day paid on date of confinement or day "wife leaves hospital"	paternity leave - 1 week unpaid leave	
	adoption leave - 9 weeks paid leave	adoption leave - 3 weeks unpaid leave	
Bereavement leave	3 days	2 days	
Examination & study leave	relevant quals - paid leave on day of exam, lw/o pay for residential school	relevant quals - paid leave on day of exam	
Trade Union Training leave			
Union conference leave			
Leave without pay			
Union picnic day			
Meal breaks	crib break - 20-30 minutes per day, counted as time worked	rest pause - 10 minutes 2nd-3rd hr of shift, >7hrs another 10 minutes at an agreed time; crib break - 20-2=30 minutes, 4th-5th hr of shift, counted as time worked	
Job share		as agreed, pro rata conditions	
Salary sacrifice for child care			teachers may participate in Department's salary packaging, not defined further.



## Appendix B Stakeholder Analysis

### **What are your perceptions of the extent of the shortage of early childhood trained teachers and Associate Diplomas (Child Studies)?**

Stakeholders believed that shortage of trained early childhood teachers and Associate Diploma (Child Studies) was apparent through NSW. There was speculation regarding the differences in attracting early childhood trained teachers or Associate Diploma staff, with no consistency regarding the difficulties attracting either qualification. Some stakeholders commented that children's services was not viewed favourably by potential students as many young people did not want to work in caring professions and there appeared to be a diminishing of community responsibility and participation. There was some concern that with fewer people opting for early childhood courses that there would be a dropping of the academic standards required to enter the courses.

Several stakeholders highlighted the cyclical nature of the shortage of trained staff. One stakeholder commenting that their archives included reports to Federal Ministers noting similar issues in 1984, and another on the shortage of trained staff with the expansion of Childcare Assistance (now Child Care Benefit) to the private child care sector. There seemed to be some concern that this shortage cycle extended over a longer period of time and was having a far greater impact than previous experiences.

Particular note was made of types of services that found it increasingly difficult to attract trained staff. These included:

- rural and remote services. This was exacerbated when permanent trained staff went on any type of leave that required replacing with a trained casual staff member. Most often trained casual staff were not available in remote communities. One stakeholder commented on the difficulty attracting a longer term replacement for a maternity leave position, no trained staff replacement was available so the centre operating with exemptions;
- single unit centres that only require one trained staff member (for example a 29-place service) where trained staff may feel isolated without peer support;
- services located in areas perceived as disadvantaged in some way, for example, working with high needs families and children, areas of economic disadvantage and Indigenous communities; and
- indigenous children's services experienced great difficulty attracting trained staff which impacts on the ability to then attract relief staff and provide support for students that may want to do their practicum in an indigenous services. Many indigenous services operate with a non-indigenous early childhood teacher who may not have a stake in developing indigenous leadership within the local community. One stakeholder commented that 'some indigenous services have been trying for years to get a trained indigenous staff member'.

The shortage was more marked for long day care services than preschools. Trained staff preferred the shorter hours of work, longer holidays and paid time to program without children in preschools. Comments were made that there seemed to be a hierarchy of employment preferences with schools being the highest, followed by preschools, and long day care the last preference. These choices related to perceived status, money and conditions.

There was acknowledgment that aspects of tertiary training and career opportunities impacted on the trained staff shortage. Associate Diplomas found it difficult to move into managerial positions without higher qualifications. Some universities in NSW had specifically developed external courses targeted to Associate Diploma that provided recognition of prior learning, combined with practical, time and cost effective ways of obtaining a degree. Some stakeholders, while believing that this created a shortage of TAFE qualified staff, felt that the long term benefits to the children's services through the upgrading of TAFE qualifications to a degree resulted in trained staff with a better understanding of the sector and who were prepared to stay longer as they move up the hierarchy.

One stakeholder commented that the issue was retention in the sector rather than a shortage of trained staff. This was reinforced indirectly by many other stakeholders commenting that work load, conditions, financial pressures and onerous reporting that did not match remuneration forced people out of children's services employment.

Of particular note was the impact of the new child protection legislation. Several stakeholders commented that this legislation directly impacted on the inability to attract men into children's services.

Trained staff are now more selective about where, when and who they work for. Several stakeholders offered above award conditions and salary, but found that this did not always attract the person required for the available position. Some stakeholders found that they were 'forced to lower standards and accept and employ staff we would never have employed before', accepting the qualification to meet licensing requirements rather than the best person for the job due to shortage of suitable candidates.

Inexperienced trained staff were recruited into leadership roles without having the skills and experience to guide and support a team. This resulted in very high levels of stress from too many management and reporting tasks to complete that did not relate to children and families. There was some concern that the day to day reality of work in long day care did not always match expectations. One stakeholder commented that 'children's services are continually being asked to take on an ever increasingly diverse range of families. At the same time, their administration loads and accountability expectations have increased. The services administration role requires maturity, experience, time to link together, and a high level of knowledge ...'.

Many stakeholders commented on the frustration services were experiencing from ongoing costly and wide ranging advertising that did not attract suitable applicants. Some stakeholders had resorted to using specialist children's services recruitment agencies hoping to attract a wider pool, but were not more successful than when they advertised themselves.

### **Do you think this is different in different areas of NSW?**

There was a general perception that the impact of a shortage of trained staff would be greater in rural and remote areas. The loss of one trained staff member could be significant due to having a much smaller pool of potential candidates to draw on, the difficulty attracting employees to the country particularly if the potential candidate has a family that may need to move, and the impact of seasonal work patterns resulting in patchy child care attendance resulting in less money to attract a highly qualified and/or experienced staff member. One stakeholder commented that 'owing to a lack of qualified people in some rural and remote regions, relief staff may be required to travel long distances and may need accommodation for the relief employment period'.

Several stakeholders commented that the greater the perception of isolation, whether this was geographic, cultural or socially the greater the difficulty attracting trained early childhood staff.

Rural areas with training institutions did not seem to fare so badly, students had done practicum in the local areas and were often the preferred recruitment pool for local children's services.

Some city services were more successful when they recruited locally as potential employees did not want to travel out of area. This had greater impacts on TAFE qualified staff who may have to pay for high travel or parking costs out of small salary.

**Do you think the problem is different in the private, community-based sector, preschools or long day care?**

The prevailing view of stakeholders was that the shortage of trained early childhood staff was not as bad in preschools and schools. Long day care and occasional care had the greatest impact. Several reasons were cited for the preference toward preschools/schools.

- There is a perception of higher status working in preschools by staff, parents and the community. Preschools had better working conditions than long day care. Trained staff did not have to work with babies, only children aged 3-5 years.
- Long day care is about 'nice ladies playing with children' rather than having an educational focus.
- Employees will move on to another long day care centre if they become disenchanted with their current employer. The large number of job options results in some employees moving with the minimum provocation.

Mobile children's services were mentioned specifically having unique recruitment issues. These related to the wide range of skills required by trained staff working in a mobile service, that are not only child related but also offering family and community support due to social and geographic isolation. This broad skills set is not always reflected in the early childhood training received.

Stakeholders offered differing opinions in relation to differences between community-based and private children's services. Opinions were dependent on the work or practicum experiences stakeholders had had personally or had been related. Some stakeholders commented that the trained staff shortage was more apparent in the private sector as these centres did not want to employ early childhood trained teachers as they were too expensive, offered lower pay, had a lack of resources and expected staff would participate in out of hours fund raising. Others stated that the community-based sector had greater difficulty due to the lack of consistency with community management committees having an annual turnover, with a lack of expertise and support in managing staff resulting in higher trained staff turnover. One stakeholder commented that private owners put 'blood, sweat and tears' into their centres, with the owner doing all the work while parent committees do not have the skills to manage small businesses.

There was some consensus that good children's services operators (regardless of ownership status) with significant business experience could offer above award conditions to attract trained staff. Although this was moderated by the impact of different award conditions. For example the new local government award now provides nine weeks paid maternity leave, the

ability of private centres to more easily offer trained staff salary packages, and some larger employers having their own enterprise agreements providing above award pay and conditions.

### **What about difficulties attracting teachers compared to Associate Diplomas?**

There were mixed comments from stakeholders regarding differences in recruiting early childhood trained teachers compared to TAFE qualified staff. For stakeholders there were no consistent shortage pattern, the primary concern was job satisfaction. Of greatest concern was that with fewer applicants for positions there was a resulting lowering of standards as services made do with the qualification rather than the best person for the job. One stakeholder commented that directors were particularly difficult to recruit and ‘we are taking the lowest possible denominator as managers’.

Two stakeholders commented that early childhood teachers were avoiding director positions as they did not want the increased responsibility with only minimally increased pay. The new child protection legislation and significant changes in workers compensation and occupational health and safety compounded this.

One stakeholder was concerned that the recent 20 per cent salary increase for early childhood trained teachers would be to the detriment of community-based children’s services. They also felt that teachers deserved this pay increase as for ‘many years early childhood trained teachers had been subsidising community-based committees by forgoing their full entitlements’.

There was general agreement that salaries were low, but particularly so for TAFE qualified staff, with wages that did not reflect the level of skill and work undertaken.

### **What do you think are some of the reasons for the problem?**

All stakeholders commented on the poor wages and conditions, particularly in relation to the level of responsibility required. There are very little productivity savings to be made in children’s services as the predominant cost is related to staffing. This was linked to increased job dissatisfaction resulting from lack of recognition both financially and the perceived low value of working with children.

Many stakeholders believed that New graduates to the field did not have a good understanding of the work expectations or had unrealistic expectations. There was concern that undergraduates should have experience with administrative and managerial tasks during practicum placements, but it was acknowledged that this was of little value until it had real meaning in the workplace. Several stakeholders believed that the shortage was much broader than children’s services affecting all human services.

The child:staff ratios and child group sizes were of concern with stakeholders commenting that the level of intensity working face to face with children was very demanding, and lowering the ratios would decrease this intensity and have a positive impact on attracting staff to services. The intensity related to always having to be ‘switched on’ with children and not having an off day.

The increasing level of accountability, without adequate funding to support this was considered an issue.

The lack of peer support for trained staff working in centres, such as one unit preschools was an issue. This was particularly marked for males, as the profession is very gendered with few males supports. Support was also an issue for new graduates with little mentoring and

guidance for new graduates with children's services staff having less time to provide this support due to increasing work loads and accountability requirements.

The range of differing career options for early childhood teachers provided greater work opportunities, and the variety of tertiary courses enabling an upgrade of TAFE qualifications, while seen as ultimately beneficial, diminished the pool of trained early childhood staff available.

There was also some concern expressed about less money being available in tertiary institutions to support early childhood training and the increasing competition between institutions for students.

### **How do you think career options/choices and career paths impact on the trained staff shortage?**

Most stakeholders agreed that early childhood trained teachers had many more career options than 2 year TAFE qualified staff. TAFE qualified staff increased their career opportunities if they were able to upgrade their qualifications to that of a 3 or 4 year trained teacher.

The development of specific TAFE upgrade courses at universities was seen as a positive development to support the ongoing professional growth of these people.

Several stakeholders felt that there were more career options in the metropolitan areas, so people prefer to start work here to be close to and be able to explore other career options.

There were also several stakeholders that believed that overall there were poor career structures for all trained staff.

### **What could be some of the solutions – short and long term?**

Lobbying politicians and the community to demonstrate the value and contribution staff make to children and families.

Improve pay and conditions – child free programming time, family friendly work practices, paid staff meetings, 6 weeks annual leave (plus RDOs). Use of pay equity as a way to improve conditions. Salary parity across all children's services.

Market and promote children's services – all stakeholders working together for example all tertiary institutions 'network more effectively and promote the benefits of training and education for child care workers' (Associate Professor Nadine McCrae – UNE)

Tertiary scholarships to help pay for courses. These could be linked to rural employment on graduation. Could also use employment contracts with fixed location and/or periods of time.

Accredit inservice courses as part of RPL for tertiary studies.

Mentoring and support for new graduates and staff working in isolated areas.

Do not lower regulations, but look at ways to attract trained staff back to the sector. Improve child:staff ratios and child group sizes.

Seamless link between preschools and long day care centres.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People to proactively promote young children, use media to promote children and fund research.

Employer needs to fund training and support for exempt staff members to fulfil their new role.

Improved processes to recognise overseas qualifications and reinstatement of child care qualifications as an immigration priority.

Promote a child care career in secondary school more actively.

On-site, workplace training for those in the TAFE (or equivalent) courses.

Centre staff need to be responsible for their own advocacy.

Targeting or older workers to retrain, or those who have left the workforce to re-enter. Offer refresher courses for people re-entering the field after an absence.

Tertiary institutions to deliver optimal practicum experiences. This may require working with services and practicum supervisors.

Early childhood education should come under the Department of Education and Department of Education should decide curriculum. Commensurate pay and conditions as per school teachers.

Self regulation for services combined with a parent education campaign to highlight educational elements of child care.

Allow experienced TAFE qualified staff to be authorised supervisors, combined with agreed number of hours of high quality inservice per annum.

Operational subsidies for long day care.

Strike to advocate for profession and raise public awareness.

Accountability to one level of government – not a combination of Federal, State and local.

Web page about rural services for students/lecturers to assist in organising and promoting practicum.

## **Appendix C Student Graduate Interviews**

Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 20 students graduating from an early childhood (0-8) program at a metropolitan university. The students interviewed ranged in age from 21 – 42 years; 75 per cent (15) were aged 21-22 years. All were women.

Students were asked about:

- their immediate employment plans;
- reasons for these plans;
- their longer term career plans;
- suggestions for how the apparent staff shortage in the 0-5 sector might be addressed.

Their responses are summarised below.

### **Immediate Employment Plans**

Within 3 weeks of completing their final assessments, 60 per cent of the graduating students interviewed had accepted a teaching position. Of these, two thirds (8 students) had taken positions in the 0-5 sector, all in private centres. One third (4 students) had accepted positions within the school sector (3 in targeted DET positions; 1 in the Catholic system). All positions were within the greater Sydney Metropolitan area.

Of the remaining students, four planned to teach casually prior to travelling overseas (3 students) or because of family responsibilities (1 student). Three were actively looking for full time positions in the 0-5 sector, and one planned to continue her present work in vacation care where she has established a career path. Students who had not yet found positions anticipated little difficulty in doing so.

As the sample is small and not necessarily representative, caution is needed when interpreting these findings. Nevertheless, the ease with which students found employment highlights the positive initial employment prospects for early childhood graduates, especially in child care. Particularly if the economy contracts, the availability of employment opportunities could be an important ‘selling point’ in any publicity initiatives.

It is interesting to note that all students entering the 0-5 sector accepted positions in private centres. Reasons for this trend, and implications for private sector employers seem worth exploring further. These findings, while not able to be generalised, suggest that anecdotal reports that the majority of early childhood graduates are being recruited by the school sector may need to be treated with caution.

### **Reasons for Immediate Employment Plans**

The following table summarises the reasons given by the students for their employment plans for 2002. Most students gave more than one reason. As the majority of students had obtained or were looking for positions in the 0-5 sector, it is not surprising that most comments related to this sector. These findings suggest that the 0-5 sector holds attractions for many graduates and appear to contradict anecdotal reports that suggest that the school sector will be inherently more attractive. These ‘pull factors’ drawing graduates to the 0-5 sector seem worthy of further investigation, and could be highlighted in campaigns to attract more graduates to this sector. They suggest areas for possible focus by employers in the 0-5 sector seeking to attract staff.

**Table D.1: Reasons Given by Graduating Students for their Immediate Employment Plans**

Reason	0-5 sector	School sector
Well-prepared for / confident about working in the sector; seeking to develop further confidence and expertise	6	-
Preferred age group	6	3
Congenial work place [collegiality, high quality program, mentoring / career advancement opportunities]	6	-
Perceived greater flexibility in programming	3	1
Pay and conditions	2 *	-
Positive practicum experiences in the sector	2	-
Pragmatic reasons [offered a job, close to home]	1	2

Note: \* Responses given by students specifically seeking positions in preschools

### Longer term career plans

When projecting ahead 5 to 10 years, students' long term career plans fell into 4 distinct categories:

- 30 per cent (6 students) would prefer to work in schools. Of these, 2 would not consider working in the 0-5 sector.
- 30 per cent (6 students) would prefer to work in the 0-5 sector, with 4 aiming to become the director / owner of a centre.
- 15 per cent (4 students) envisaged moving back and forth between the 0-5 and school sectors and valued the possibility of a flexible career path.
- 15 per cent (4 students) envisaged moving to a different career [e.g. nursing, personnel management] in which they could build on their early childhood background.
- 10 per cent (2 students) envisaged moving into a policy-making / advisory role in EC.

Again, these findings need to be interpreted with caution, especially given the difficulties associated with asking 21-22 year olds to project their career paths. Many students pointed out that it was difficult to anticipate the impact of life changes (such as having children) might have on their career plans and trajectories.

These findings reinforce, however, that the presumed inherent bias by graduates toward the school sector may not be as great as is often anticipated. Indeed, they suggest that there may be a 'window of opportunity' in the early career years in which 0-5 sector employers might usefully focus in consolidating interest in and long term commitment to the sector.

Strategies might include highlighting career paths available to early childhood educators with experience in the 0-5 sector. Even if these career paths eventually lead some graduates to alternative careers outside early childhood enhanced awareness of career opportunities could still be an important 'selling point' in drawing people to the profession. Any expectation that graduates make a lifetime commitment to early childhood sector, or the 0-5 sector specifically, may become increasingly unrealistic. Increasing the 'flow' of well qualified people who are committed to making a contribution to the sector in the medium term might ultimately be more fruitful.

### Graduating students' suggestions for addressing the staff shortage in the 0-5 sector

Most students offered several suggestions, and their responses again fell into 4 distinct categories, all of approximately equal importance. Not surprisingly, these were:

- Improve working conditions by:
  - scheduling daily, child-free, preparation time;
  - reducing staff-child ratios, especially in baby toddler rooms;
  - offering alternatives to rotating shifts;
  - ensuring a pleasant physical working environment;
  - providing good resources to enable staff to perform their roles effectively.

[14 responses]

- Improve pay [11 responses]
- Improve the status of early childhood professionals through:
  - engaging in more effective advocacy by the profession;
  - influencing government policy;
  - emphasising the link between qualifications and quality of care.

[11 responses]

- Improve morale by
  - valuing staff in 'small ways that mean a lot';
  - placing a high priority on effective leadership and enhancing collegiality in centres;
  - providing professional development opportunities and identified career paths;
  - reducing staff turnover and achieving greater staff stability

[11 responses]

In addition, three students highlighted the need for a more strategic approach to staff recruitment. They suggested making early offers of employment (equivalent to the DET targeting policy); offering traineeships to students; ensuring that students practicum experiences were positive; and offering a 'training' rate to students employed casually in the 0-5 sector.

These suggestions are generally consistent with the literature about retention and attrition. It is important to take note of the views of teachers in the early phases of their career about improving retention rates. While some of the above suggestions would be difficult to implement in the light of current funding and budget constraints, with some ingenuity and strong and strategic advocacy, others may be possible to achieve.

## **Appendix D Early Childhood Students' Employment Expectations**

Research was conducted by Alison Elliott, University of Western Sydney from 1998 to 2001 on early childhood students' employment expectations and preferred destinations in the short and long-term.

Four cohorts (n=64 (1998); n=64 (1999); n=89 (2000), n=75 (2001)) of Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) students from the Penrith campus of the University of Western Sydney were surveyed for preferred employment, expected employment upon graduation and preferred employment in five years.

After nannying, child care centres constituted the least preferred option for local employment upon graduation (including preschools and kinder classes). In 2001, child care centres ranked marginally above preschools (7 per cent to 5 per cent), but far more preferred to be employed in primary schools (51 per cent).

However, more students expected to be employed in child care upon graduation, an expectation shared by all cohorts. This appears to be a suitable option for most students in the short term: the primary consideration of most students was to gain employment as quickly as possible following graduation. They were also conscious of the need to work casually or in long day care before being offered a scarce and highly sought-after full-time position as a kinder teacher.

Most students did not wish to be employed in a child care centre in five years' time, and the reason for this was overwhelming associated with anticipated family responsibilities. Ninety five per cent of those who indicated they did not wish to be employed in five years' time cited caring for their own children as the reason. Of those who did wish to be employed, primary schools were considered preferable by approximately half of students from each cohort. Three quarters of them wanted jobs that suited their lifestyles, which included a partner and children. Primary schools were seen as more desirable workplaces due to the 'family friendliness' of working conditions - longer holidays, shorter and regular hours, maternity leave, the opportunity to take time off work for family reasons, and the opportunity for permanent part-time work. Long day care centres were not considered desirable due to the shift work involved, four weeks of annual leave and lack of flexibility.

Conversely, fewer students mentioned career opportunities or salary as a deciding factor in their preference for employment in primary schools (20 per cent). Similarly, only 10 per cent cited the poorer salaries, status and professionalism associated with child care centres as reasons for rejecting such employment as their preferred option.

## Appendix E Survey Results

There were 170 respondents to the survey. Surveys were sent to 144 services in 4 areas specified by the Office of Childcare.

**Table E. 1: Gender**

	frequency	percent (170)
female	167	99
male	2	1

**Table E.2: Age range of respondents**

	frequency	percent (170)
20-24 years	36	21
25-29 years	65	38
30-34 years	24	14
35-39 years	10	6
40-49 years	28	17
over 50 years	7	4

**Table E.3: Highest early childhood qualification**

	frequency	percent (170)
2 year trained early childhood teacher	2	1
3 year trained early childhood teacher	45	26
4 year trained early childhood teacher	36	21
graduate diploma	2	0.5
2 year TAFE qualification (or equivalent)	76	45
other qualification	7	4

**Table E.4: Completion time of early childhood qualification**

	frequency	percent (170)
last 5 years	71	42
6-10 years ago	53	31
11-15 years ago	23	14
16-20 years ago	7	4
21-25 years ago	4	2
26-30 years ago	4	2
over 30 years	2	1

**Table E.5: Is respondent currently working with children**

	frequency	percent (170)
yes	146	86
no	24	14

**Table E.6: If no longer working with children what is the respondent doing**

	frequency	percent (24)
other paid work not with children	7	29
voluntary work	1	4
family responsibilities	8	33
studying	1	4
other	7	29

**Table E.7: If respondent is still working in child care do they anticipate working in child care in 2 years**

	frequency	percent (162)
yes	109	67
no	19	12
probably	9	6
don't know	13	8
no longer in child care	7	4
planning family	3	2
other	2	1

**Table E.8: Time with current employer**

	frequency	percent (167)
less than 1 year	17	10
1 year	46	28
2 years	19	11
3 years	21	13
4 years	12	7
5 years	13	8
6 years	7	4
7 years	11	7
8 years	3	2
9 years	4	2
10 years	5	3
12 years	4	2
13 years	1	0.5
15 years	2	1
16 years	1	0.5
18 years	1	0.5

**Table E.9: Length of time working (or did work) in child care**

	frequency	percent (166)
less than 1 year	1	0.5
1 year	13	8
2 years	12	7
3 years	8	5
4 years	10	6
5 years	17	10
6 years	13	8
7 years	12	7
8 years	16	10
9 years	12	7
10 years	11	7
11 years	3	2
12 years	8	5
13 years	4	2
14 years	2	1
15 years	6	4
16 years	1	0.5
18 years	3	2
19 years	3	2
20 years	4	2
21 years	1	0.5
23 years	1	0.5
25 years	2	1
27 years	1	0.5
34 years	1	0.5
38 years	1	0.5

**Table E.10: Reasons for the shortage of trained early childhood staff**

	Reasons for the shortage of trained early childhood staff		Reasons respondent no longer works in child care		Fixing these would help solve the shortage of trained child care staff		If these things were fixed respondent would consider returning to child care	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
<b>Workplace</b>								
age range of children catered for, 0-5 yrs	20	12	2	1	19	11		-
inadequate child:staff ratios	67	39	3	2	76	45	4	2
parent expectations	44	26	1	0.5	38	23	2	1
high work load expectations	127	75	7	4	88	52	7	4
lack of career path	70	41	4	2	45	26	4	2
managing multiple demands – staff, management/owner, parents, children, government (state & Federal)	103	61	6	4	68	40	9	5
<b>Legal/regulatory requirements</b>								
financial accountability such as Child Care Benefit, collection of parent fees, small business management	34	20	3	2	46	27	3	2
legal responsibilities such as child protection, occupational health & safety	71	42	4	2	52	31	4	2
<b>Wages and conditions</b>								
worse wages & conditions in child care	148	87	9	5	107	63	11	65
hours of work	81	48	6	4	68	40	7	4
lack of flexible work practices eg job share	66	39	8	5	70	41	12	7
availability of regular casual employment through child care recruitment agencies or similar	45	26	2	1	46	27	3	2
<b>Support</b>								
lack of peer support in child care centres (someone with similar qualifications)	45	26	2	1	41	24	2	1
inadequate training & support for employees acting in exempt positions, eg Associate Diploma acting as an authorised supervisor should attend agreed ongoing & regular inservice paid for by the employer	68	40	3	2	66	39	1	0.5
lack of regular mentor/support programs for new graduates	59	35	3	2	70	41		-
<b>Training</b>								
people do not want to train as qualified early childhood staff	55	74			31	18	1	0.5
readiness of new graduates ( <u>early childhood teachers</u> ) to work in early childhood services	74	44	1	0.5	51	30	1	0.5
readiness of new graduates ( <u>TAFE qualified</u> ) to work in early childhood services	45	26	1	0.5	36	21	1	0.5
expectation of new early childhood teacher graduates that they can be employed as centre director's immediately	65	38	2	1	51	30	2	1
not enough practicum experience for undergraduates	51	30		-	60	35	3	2
<b>Other</b>								
low value job & poor public perception of child care	128	75	5	3	91	54	5	3
family responsibilities eg children	37	22	11	6	21	12	2	1
other	9	5	1	0.5	4	3	1	0.5

**Table E.11: Is respondent the person responsible for staff employment**

	frequency	percent (170)
yes	52	32
no	113	68

**Table E.12: Number of trained staff that needed to be replaced over the past 12 months**

	early childhood trained teacher	TAFE qualified staff
1 person	24	21
2 people	13	13
3 people	2	4
4 people	2	1
5 people	1	1
8 people		1
14 people *		1
22 people *		1
31 people *	1	

\* quoted by child care manager of a number of children's services

**Table E.13: Was the recruitment process successful**

	frequency	percent (52)
yes	35	67
no	17	33

**Table E.14: Considered applying for a staffing exemption from DoCS**

	frequency	percent (61)
yes	15	25
no	46	75

**Table E.15: Still working in child care in 2 years time by age range of respondent (162)**

	20-24 yrs		25-29 yrs		30-34 yrs		35-39 yrs		40-49 yrs		>50 yrs	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
yes	28	17	40	25	14	9	4	3	18	11	5	3
no	3	2	8	5	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	0.5
probably	1	0.5	4	3	2	1	-	-	2	1	-	-
don't know	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	-	-
no longer in child care	1	0.5	4	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
planning family	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Table E.16: Still working in child care in 2 years time by qualifications of respondent (162)**

	2 yr teacher		3 yr teacher		4 yr teacher		grad dip		TAFE		other	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
yes	2	1	28	17	20	12	2	1	49	30	3	2
no	-	-	11	7	9	6	3	2	4	2	1	0.5
probably	-	-	1	0.5	2	1	-	-	1	0.5	-	-
don't know	-	-	4	2	3	2	-	-	4	2	-	-
no longer in child care	-	-	2	1	1	0.5	-	-	12	7	2	1
planning family	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5	-	-	2	1	1	0.5

**Table E.17: Still working in child care in 2 years time by when graduated (162)**

	<5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16-20 years		21-25 years		> 26 years	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
yes	49	30	36	22	17	11	2	1	2	1	3	2
no	7	4	7	4	1	0.5	2	1	1	0.5	1	0.5
probably	3	2	4	3	1	0.5	1	0.5	-	-	-	-
don't know	7	4	3	2	1	0.5	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5
no longer in child care	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
planning family	1	0.5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Appendix F Children's Services Advisers Data

In July 2001, the Office of Childcare (OCC) asked Children's Services Advisers (CSAs) to describe the extent of the shortage of qualified staff. A summary of the findings is presented below.

OCC sent an email to Children's Services Advisers asking them to provide details of any recruitment problems in their area. OCC gave suggestions as to what these details may be, including number of teaching positions, number of current vacancies and number of positions filled by staff with other qualifications. Many CSAs responded to these and provided additional information.

CSAs from 4 metropolitan areas and managers from 13 rural office locations responded with information regarding the shortage of qualified staff in long day care centres (LDC), in consultation with service providers.

CSAs in the majority of Areas reported experiencing five main problems: difficulty attracting staff (either previously or at the time of reporting, or both); current vacancies; positions filled with staff holding other qualifications; difficulty attracting relief staff; and reduction in the number of licensed child care places due to staffing shortages.

Table 1 presents the number of Areas experiencing each of these difficulties. As this information was gathered qualitatively without the use of a schedule, these figures may under-represent the extent of the problem. Some CSAs were not in a position to provide accurate data, which further limits the reliability of the data to illustrate the extent of staffing difficulties.

**Table F.1: Main Staffing Difficulties Experienced in Long Day Care Centres, by Area**

Staffing difficulty	Number of areas	
	Rural (14)	Metropolitan (4)
Difficulty attracting staff	8	3
Current vacancies	7	1
Positions filled with staff with other qualifications	5	1
Difficulty attracting relief staff	3	0
Reduction of licensed number of child care places as a result of staffing issues	4	1

Source: Office of Childcare, July 2001

Comments about the five difficulties are presented below.

### 1. Difficulty attracting staff

CSAs from eleven Areas reported difficulty in attracting staff. Vacancies remained vacant for extended periods. In one service this was the case for seven months at the time of reporting. This occurred despite extensive advertising, including in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and, in one rural service, advertising in four States and Territories. The cost to the centres of placing numerous advertisements represented an added financial burden. The centre that advertised interstate has run advertisements for the same vacant position since 1990. A number of centres, particularly in rural localities, posit that offering above-award wages may reduce this dilemma, but at this time, raising wages was not possible.

## **2. Current vacancies**

Eight Areas had multiple vacancies at the time of reporting. There appears to be more vacancies in rural areas than in the city. However, one metropolitan Adviser noted that the situation was worse than in the previous year. The problem existed for both community-based and private centres, but was more pronounced for private operators. It was also noted that a number of highly regarded centres were having these problems, suggesting that the difficulty in filling these positions was not reflective of the working conditions of these centres over other centres.

## **3. Positions filled with staff with other qualifications**

Filling positions with staff with other qualifications was the most common solution (albeit temporary) to the lack of an early childhood teacher where needed. A number of centres employed staff who were currently upgrading their qualifications. One Area benefited from a long-serving, highly experienced Director of a pre-school to supervise unqualified staff. The appointment of teachers who gained qualifications overseas and those approved prior to the 1996 introduction of the regulations was also reported. One service used the same two relief teachers to fill one position whilst the Authorised Supervisor was completing her degree, as a way of remedying the problem without compromising quality and continuity for the children. As this arrangement is not permissible for more than one year, it was not a sustainable option, particularly for rural centres and small centres for which the cost of advertising is prohibitive.

## **4. Difficulty attracting relief staff**

CSAs reported that relief staff were not available to employ for a number of centres. One Area that was experiencing no other difficulties stated that the shortage of casual early childhood teachers made administrative duties (such as attending meetings), professional development and other activities that require the presence of all centre staff extremely difficult. This was particularly prevalent among rural services. The use of casual relief staff to combat the shortage of EC Teachers was not popular, as temporary staff members who are unknown to the children and other staff is not considered in the best interests of the children.

## **5. Reduction of licensed numbers as a result of staffing issues**

Most CSAs regarded reduced licensed number to avoid the requirement for an early childhood teacher as a highly undesirable alternative. One metro-based CSA commented that all centres in the Area were full and that most also had waiting lists. Nonetheless, CSAs reported that this occurred in a number of services, reducing licensed numbers to 29 or 39. Three centres in one rural Area had capped numbers at 39 because of the difficulty attracting appropriately qualified staff. For at least some centres, this reduction was expected to be temporary, and a return to full quota was anticipated upon the appointment of a teacher.

## **6. Other issues**

It was noted by one rural CSA that filling part-time positions was particularly difficult, as attracting a suitable candidate for a part-time position was unlikely to happen.

Some centres found the cost of an EC teacher's wage prohibitive and were thus unable to employ qualified applicants. This appears to be the case for a number of small, rural centres that receive minimal funding and also for private operators.

One CSA noted that centres that could not attract early childhood Teachers tended to be those providing 'borderline' care and poor working conditions. She reiterated the particular difficulty long day care programs have in comparison to services offering other types of care.

Services that attempted to recruit qualified staff through direct contact with universities met with no success. They were informed that all graduates had found positions.

## **Appendix G Guidelines for the ‘Approval of Other Persons’**

Source: Office of Childcare, January 2002

### **Suggestions for Guidelines for the ‘approval of other persons’**

In recognition of the current shortage of appropriately qualified early childhood teachers, individuals with qualifications other than those specified in the Regulation, may be approved by the Minister to work in the position of early childhood teacher, under the following circumstances:

- The service meets the guidelines as developed by the Office of Childcare.
- The Minister approves each individual, and approves each service to continue operating for the period of the approval.
- Approvals are on a case by case basis and are not transferable.

### **Draft Process**

- The Licensee provides a submission to the Minister via the CSA. (A proforma for this submission will be developed by the Office of Childcare)
- CSA checks the information to confirm the Guidelines have been met.
- Submission is then forwarded to the Office of Childcare. The Office of Childcare will record the details on a database.
- Submission is forwarded to the Minister for approval.

### **Guidelines**

- The Licensee needs to demonstrate evidence of appropriate advertising. (A format for advertising will be developed which will include where the advertisement should be placed, the information the advertisement should contain, and how often an advertisement needs to be placed).
- Internet advertising and advertising via recruitment agencies are acceptable forms of advertising, providing documentation can verify the advertisements and some newspaper advertising is also used.
- The service must not be in breach of the Regulation with the exception of Clause 35 (1) (3).
- Children’s Services Advisers must support the exemption. (If the CSA does not support the exemption, a briefing to the Minister is prepared explaining the reasons for not supporting the request. The submission is returned to the Licensee with an explanation of the refusal)
- Approvals will be in place:
  - until an early childhood teacher is recruited into the position, or
  - until the licence expires, or
  - for a period of 12 months, whichever is sooner.
- The Minister’s approval lapses if the service is found to be in breach.

- The Licensee must begin recruiting for an appropriately qualified EC teacher 2 months prior to the approval expiring, or when a vacancy exists in the service, or if the approval is removed by the Minister.
- The Licensee is required to submit a copy of the program to their Children's Services Adviser on a monthly basis.
- Where possible the person with the approval to work in the position must be supervised by an EC teacher.
  - Where possible the Children's Services Advisers will undertake additional visits to services with these approvals.

**Other issues for consideration**

- Number of approvals per service.
- Further study for approved persons.
- Employment/Union issues re temporary employment and natural justice.
- Requirements for new services unable to recruit appropriately qualified staff (should they be able to operate or should they not open until appropriate staff are recruited?).

## Appendix H National Children's Services Administrators

### Meeting, Workforce Planning Issues, Background Paper

The CSMAC of 8/3/01 agreed to a national approach to consideration of workforce planning issues in children's services. The matter was referred to the Children's Services Sub-Committee and Victoria will take the lead in development of the work.

The National Industry Skills Initiative has identified cross industry issues for Australian's National Training system and skill shortages in other industries such as engineering, automotive and electrotechnology. Industry Task Forces have identified 12 common themes to be addressed in Workforce Action Plans. These themes are relevant to children's services:

A learning culture	Alternative training pathways	State legislative, regulatory and licensing frameworks
Industry image	Recognition of prior learning	Employer incentives
Career information and guidance	Retraining existing workforce	Migration
New Apprenticeship Centres	Workplace relations	Information and analysis

(Additional information about the National Industry Skills Initiative is available on the following website: [www.skillsinitiative.gov.au/about.htm](http://www.skillsinitiative.gov.au/about.htm))

#### Proposal for Investigating a National Approach to Workforce Planning Issues

A five stage process is proposed to progress the workforce planning issues identified by Victoria.

1. Ascertain what data States/ Territories and the Commonwealth currently collect with regard to the children's services workforce. A simple survey is attached and should be returned by xxxxx.
2. Collation of data provided from each jurisdiction.
3. A second survey will be prepared and forwarded at the end of xxxxx to each jurisdiction. The survey will aim to collate workforce planning issues across all jurisdictions grouped using the 12 themes identified by the National Industry Skills Initiative (outlined above).
4. Each jurisdiction would complete the survey and identify:
  - strategies which have been implemented (or are planned for implementation) to address workforce planning issues
  - whether the strategy is being or should be addressed at a State/ Territory or National level
  - any additional workforce planning strategies to be considered in developing a national approach.
5. The second survey will be collated to identify strategies to progress the issues at both a local level (State/Territory) and a National level. The themes of the National Industry Skills Initiative will be used to summarise the issues and make recommendations which develop a national approach to Workforce Planning.

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