



**Australian Government**  
**Productivity Commission**

# Early Childhood Development Workforce

Productivity Commission  
Research Report

November 2011

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# Foreword

The early childhood development sector plays an important role in fostering the education, health and care of young children. Early childhood education and care services are currently the subject of significant reforms nationally. These reforms have substantial implications for the associated workforce.

This report, the second of three on education and training workforces, focuses on the early childhood development workforce. It follows the Vocational Education and Training workforce report released in May 2011. The third report, on the Schools workforce, is underway and will be completed in April next year.

The Commission's recommendations and findings seek to support the future development of the early childhood workforce required to underpin the nationally agreed reforms. In particular, guidance is provided on the provision of quality early childhood education and care services to children with additional needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children in rural and remote locations.

In preparing its report, the Commission consulted widely with the early childhood development sector, governments, non-government organisations and individuals. It benefitted in particular from feedback on a draft report released at the end of June. The Commission acknowledges the valuable contribution of all those who participated.

The study was overseen by Commissioners Angela MacRae (presiding) and Robert Fitzgerald. The staff research team was headed by Ben McLean and based in the Commission's Melbourne office.

Gary Banks AO

Chairman

11 November 2011

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## Terms of reference

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING WORKFORCE STUDY

#### *Productivity Commission Act 1998*

I, Nick Sherry, Assistant Treasurer, pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 of the Productivity Commission Act 1998 hereby request that the Productivity Commission undertake a research study to examine issues impacting on the workforces in the early childhood development, schooling and vocational education and training sectors, including the supply of and demand for these workforces, and provide advice on workforce planning, development and structure in the short, medium and long-term.

#### **Background**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed on common strategic frameworks to guide government action on early childhood development, schooling and vocational education and training (VET) across Australia.

Building the capability and effectiveness of the workforces in these sectors, particularly for Indigenous people, will be critical to achieving the outcomes agreed in these frameworks. This study is to be undertaken in this context, and responds to a request from the COAG Working Group on the Productivity Agenda that the Productivity Commission undertake a research study examining workforce issues in these sectors.

#### **Scope**

The Commission is to provide advice on workforce planning, development and structure of the early childhood development, schooling and VET workforces in the short, medium and long-term.

In undertaking this study, it should consider and provide advice on:

1. The current and future demand for the workforces, and the mix of knowledge and skills required to meet service need. This will include consideration of:
  - (a) population distribution and demographic trends, jurisdictional and regional analysis;
  - (b) significant shifts in skill requirements; and
  - (c) policy and regulation given the agreed COAG outcomes (particularly the National Early Childhood Development Strategy, relevant National Partnerships, the National Education Agreement and the National Indigenous Reform Agreement).
2. The current and future supply for the workforces, including:
  - (a) demographic, socio-cultural mix and composition of the existing workforces, and jurisdictional and regional analysis;
  - (b) elements such as remuneration, pay equity/differentials, working conditions, professional status and standing, retention, roles and responsibilities, professional development, and training and support structures; and
  - (c) qualifications pathways particularly pathways that will ensure accessibility and appropriateness of training to meet the qualifications and competencies required for the various occupations in the workforces.
3. The current and future structure and mix of the workforces and their consequential efficiency and effectiveness, including:
  - (a) the composition and skills of the existing workforces;
  - (b) the productivity of the workforces and the scope for productivity improvements; and
  - (c) the most appropriate mix of skills and knowledge required to deliver on the outcomes in the COAG national framework.
4. Workforce planning, development and structure in the short, medium and long-term, including:
  - (a) policy, governance and regulatory measures to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforces in order to achieve the outcomes set out in the COAG frameworks; and

- 
- (b) changes to ongoing data collection to establish a robust evidence base, provide for future workforce planning and development and meet reporting requirements.

In addressing the Terms of Reference, a key consideration will be the extent to which sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries limit innovation and flexibility in workforce planning, development and practices. In addition to sector-specific issues, the Commission is therefore requested to consider whether reducing sectoral divides between workforces in these sectors could support a more learner-focused approach, achieve better individual outcomes and increase the efficiency of workforce development and planning.

### **Cross-sectoral and integrated service delivery**

In recognition of some lowering of cross-sectoral boundaries and the growth of cross-sectoral delivery and integrated service delivery models, the Commission is asked to consider and provide advice on:

1. workforce skill and training needs;
2. the extent to which job design and employment agreements in the sectors are aligned to contemporary work practices;
3. implications for workforce planning across the sectors from integrated service delivery; and
4. the extent to which existing employer practices encourage attracting and retaining employees.

In addition, the Commission is to give consideration to factors that impact on building Indigenous workforce capability in recognition of the effect this will have on improving outcomes for, employment of and services to Indigenous Australians.

The Commission is also to give consideration to factors that have particular impact on each sector. These will include:

#### **1. The Early Childhood Development Workforce**

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) workforce can include, but not be limited to: coordinators and managers, early childhood teachers, teaching assistants and para-professionals, childcare workers for pre-primary and primary aged children, early childhood intervention professionals, administrative staff, community service workers and relevant health and social welfare professionals.

In relation to the ECD workforce the Commission is asked to specifically consider and give advice on:

1. Factors affecting the current and future demand and supply for the ECD workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge, including:
  - a. delivery of fully integrated ECD services including maternal and child health, childcare, preschool, family support services and services for those with additional needs;
  - b. market requirements for broader leadership, management and administrative skills in operating both mainstream universal service providers and integrated service hubs;
  - c. the availability and quality of pre-service education programs, including through undergraduate and postgraduate education and VET, and consideration of training pathways;
  - d. ECD workforce participation, including ease of access to the early childhood development workforce in different sectors and net returns to individuals and recognition of expertise; and
  - e. the quality and skills of the workforce, job design and workplace practices and arrangements and their contribution to achieving COAG outcomes and setting future direction.
2. Workforce planning, development and structure in the short, medium and long term, covering:
  - a. career pathways, the structure of existing employment arrangements and practices and the extent to which they are dis/incentives to attracting and retaining employees, including pay and conditions across settings; strategies to address possible pay equity issues as necessary; options for funding pay increases as necessary; and the implications for purchasers of ECD services and all levels of government and funding responsibilities;
  - b. potential labour market failures;
  - c. the impact of government, community and private provision; and
  - d. the concept and workforce implications of integrated service delivery.

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## **2. The Schooling Workforce**

The schooling workforce refers to teachers and those who support the practice of teaching. These can include, but are not limited to: leaders and managers; teaching assistants and para-professionals; administrative staff; and relevant health professionals.

In relation to the schooling workforce the Commission is asked to specifically consider and give advice on:

1. The current and future supply for the schooling workforce, including:
  - a. the availability and quality of pre-service education programs, including through undergraduate and postgraduate education, and VET;
  - b. government programs targeting supply pressures, including the extent to which there is national cohesion in relation to these programs;
  - c. motivation for entering, remaining in and exiting the school workforce and the attraction and retention of principals in changing contexts; and
  - d. school workforce participation, including ease of access to the teacher profession and/or schooling workforce, net returns to individuals, recognition of industry expertise, wastage rates in teacher training and underutilisation of qualified teachers (such as loss of qualified teachers to other occupations or overseas).
2. The structure and mix of the workforce and its consequent efficiency and effectiveness, including:
  - a. the composition and skills of the existing workforce;
  - b. the productivity of the workforce and the scope for productivity improvements, qualifications pathways; and
  - c. how the current delineation of duties supports or impedes the achievement of COAG outcomes.
3. Workforce planning, development and structure in the short, medium and long term:
  - a. the extent to which current sectoral boundaries promote or limit efficiency and effectiveness in schooling workforce;
  - b. interface with suppliers of pre-service training (undergraduate, post-graduate and VET) and
  - c. the quality and culture of the workforce and its employers, and their contribution to achieving COAG outcomes and setting future directions.

## **3. The VET Workforce**

The status of VET practitioners as ‘dual professionals’, deploying both industry and education skills delivered in schools, VET only, dual sector and industry settings, is unique among education sectors, and poses both challenges and opportunities for the VET sector in attracting and retaining staff. In addition, the increasingly commercial environment in which many providers operate creates a significant role for VET professionals who are engaged in organisational leadership and management, but not directly involved in training delivery. The impact of this trend on the required capabilities of VET professionals is of policy interest.

In relation to the VET workforce, the Commission is asked to consider both the VET workforce as a whole, including trainers and assessors in enterprises, adult community education and community organisations, and the TAFE workforce as a subset, and provide advice on:

1. Factors affecting the current and future demand for the VET workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge:
  - a. change in participation in VET as a result of increasing labour market emphasis on formal training and lifelong learning;
  - b. change in volume and type of training delivered to each VET participant as a result of the trend towards higher level qualifications, and as a result of the impact of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC);
  - c. likely future patterns of training demand by industry and sector, including as a consequence of responses to emerging economic and environmental issues and to gap training and skills assessment;

- 
- d. requirement for broader skills in VET professionals as a result of increasing system focus on client needs, including flexible delivery, greater focus on employability skills, catering for a more diverse student base, and partnering with enterprises and communities;
  - e. demand for managerial and entrepreneurial skills as a result of growing commercial dimensions of the VET sector and strategic market positioning and branding;
  - f. the impact of delivery of higher level VET qualifications (eg Associate and Bachelor Degrees); and
  - g. training pathways and the provision of ‘second chance’ education and training such as for migrant and Indigenous students.
2. The current and future supply of the VET workforce, including:
    - a. motivation for entering, remaining in and exiting the workforce; and
    - b. competition from other employers including industry and other education sectors.
  3. The structure of the workforce and its consequent efficiency and effectiveness, including:
    - a. the extent to which job design and employment agreements in the VET sector are aligned to contemporary work practices in a commercially competitive environment;
    - b. the adequacy of support for high-quality professional practice, including consideration of practitioner qualifications and standards for VET practitioners across sectors;
    - c. the current and potential impact of workforce development activities within the VET sector on the capability and capacity of the VET workforce, including a workforce development plan; and
    - d. the implications of emerging workplace and employment practices, including increasing casual and part-time employment, the ‘core/periphery’ model and blurring of teaching and non-teaching roles.

### **Study Process**

In undertaking its study, the Commission should consult widely with relevant professionals and interested parties. It should use, but not replicate, existing work such as that underway by COAG, the relevant Ministerial Councils, Senior Officials’ Working Groups and jurisdictions, including on:

- the early childhood quality reform agenda;
- teacher quality reforms;
- further reforms arising from policy directions of the National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development;
- Indigenous reforms; and
- previous work commissioned by the Victorian DHS for the Community Services Ministers Advisory Committee.

This should include relevant recent survey work and workforce studies in each sector and research undertaken by NCVET, ACER, various university research centres, TAFEs and Industry Skills Councils, and the OECD.

The study should include a comparative element, both in terms of comparing the education and training workforce to other community/public service professions such as the health sector, and of relevant international comparisons, particularly with regard to the ECD workforce which is undergoing significant reform in Australia.

The Commission should provide a report, dealing with the VET workforce, within twelve months of receipt of this reference; and a second and third report, dealing with the early childhood development and schooling workforces, within eighteen and twenty four months respectively of receipt of this reference. The reports will be published.

Nick Sherry  
Assistant Treasurer  
[Received 22 April 2010]



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20 OCT 2011

Mr Gary Banks AO  
Chair, Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
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*Gary*  
Dear Mr Banks

Thank you for your letter of 12 October 2011, seeking a three-week extension to the reporting date for the Productivity Commission study *Education & Training Workforce: Early Childhood Development* from 21 October 2011 until 11 November 2011.

I note your advice that the extension would allow the Commission to incorporate key data recently received and to hold a workshop on the approach and findings with key stakeholders prior to finalising the report.

Accordingly, I am happy to grant the extension requested and look forward to receiving the Commission's final report on 11 November 2011.

Yours sincerely

BILL SHORTEN

cc: Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare; Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth.

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## Disclosure of interests

The *Productivity Commission Act 1998* specifies that where Commissioners have or acquire interests, pecuniary or otherwise, that could conflict with the proper performance of their functions they must disclose the interests.

Angela MacRae has the following interests to disclose:

- Balwyn North Primary School — school council (voluntary capacity)
- The Merrell Kindergarten Inc. — kindergarten committee (voluntary capacity).

Robert Fitzgerald has the following interests to disclose:

- The Benevolent Society — Board Director and Vice President (voluntary capacity)
- Australian Catholic University — Adjunct Professor (voluntary capacity).



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A range of published and unpublished data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations are also used throughout this report.

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# Abbreviations and explanations

## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
AEU	Australian Education Union
AGCCCS	Australian Government Census of Child Care Services
AGCCPS	Australian Government Child Care Provider Survey
AHW	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANF	Australian Nursing Federation
ANFPP	Australian Nurse–Family Partnership Program
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
ASU	Australian Services Union
BBF	budget-based funded
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CCB	Child Care Benefit
CCMS	Child Care Management System
CCR	Child Care Rebate
CEaCS	Childhood Education and Care Survey
CFC	Children and Family Centre
CHAPS	child health and parenting services
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPD	continuing professional development
CSHISC	Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council

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CSTP	Community Services Training Package
CURF	confidentialised unit record file
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ECD	early childhood development
ECE	early childhood education
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ELCC	Early Learning and Care Centre
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-school Education
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
EYP	Early Years Professional
FDC	family day care
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FBT	fringe benefit tax
FDCA	Family Day Care Australia
FIFO	fly-in, fly-out
FSF	Flexible Support Funding
FSAC	Framework for School-Age Care
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
HIPPY	Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (Australia); Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (US)
IEU	Independent Education Union
IHC	in-home care
IPSP	Inclusion and Professional Support Program
IPSU	Indigenous Professional Support Unit
ISA	Inclusion Support Agency
ISP	Inclusion Support Program
ISS	Inclusion Support Subsidy
JET	Jobs, Education and Training

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LDC	long day care
LGECEEA	Local Government Early Childhood Education Employees' Agreement
LHMU	Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union
LSAC	Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
MACS	Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MCH	maternal and child health
NCAC	National Childcare Accreditation Council
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NGO	non-government organisation
NIRA	National Indigenous Reform Agreement
NISSP	National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider
NMBA	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
NPA ECE	National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education
NPA IECD	National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development
NQA	National Quality Agenda
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
NSSC	National Skills Standards Council
OC	occasional care
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCAR	Out Of School Care And Recreation (New Zealand)
OSHC	outside school hours care
PAJE	<i>Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant</i> (France)
PaL	Parents and Learning program
PC	Productivity Commission
PMI	<i>Protection maternelle et infantile</i> (France)
PSC	Professional Support Coordinator

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PSP	Professional Support Program
PSSP	Professional Support Service Provider
QCT	Queensland College of Teachers
RCAB	Registering and Course Accrediting Body
REAAP	<i>Réseaux d'écoute, d'appui et d'accompagnement des parents</i> (France)
RPL	recognition of prior learning
RTO	registered training organisation
SACS	Social and Community Services
SBR	standard business reporting
SCAN	Supporting Children with Additional Needs
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SCS	Survey of Community Services
SSP	service support plan
TASDAS	Tasmanian Autism Spectrum Diagnostic Assessment Service
VECTAA	Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants Agreement
VET	vocational education and training
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
WTITO	<i>Whanau Toko I Te Ora</i> (New Zealand)

## Explanations

Billion	The convention used for a billion is a thousand million (10 <sup>9</sup> ).
Findings	<i>Findings in the body of the report are paragraphs highlighted using italics, as this is.</i>
Recommendations	<b><i>Recommendations in the body of the report are highlighted using bold italics, as this is.</i></b>
Requests for further information	<i>Information requests are paragraphs highlighted using italics, as this is.</i>