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## 14 Children's services

Children's services aim to meet the care, education and development needs of children, although the emphasis on these broad objectives may differ across the services. Child care is provided to children aged 12 years or younger, usually by someone other than the child's parents or guardian. Preschool services are provided to children mainly in the year or two before they commence full time schooling.

This chapter presents performance and descriptive information for government funded and/or delivered child care and preschool services. Unless otherwise stated, the data relate to services that are supported by the Australian, State and Territory governments and provided for children aged 12 years or younger. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver children's services. However, given data limitations, this chapter records data on local government activities only where Australian, State and Territory government funding and licensing are involved. The chapter does not include services that do not receive government funding (unless otherwise noted).

A profile of children's services is presented in section 14.1. This provides a context for assessing the performance indicators presented later in the chapter. All jurisdictions have agreed to develop, and aim to report, comparable indicators; a framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 14.2. The data are discussed in section 14.3 and future directions for performance reporting are discussed in section 14.4. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions' comments in section 14.5. Definitions of terms specific to children's services are found in section 14.6.

### *Supporting tables*

Supporting tables for chapter 14 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as `\Publications\Reports\2004\Attach14A.xls` and in Adobe PDF format as `\Publications\Reports\2004\Attach14A.pdf`.

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Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 14A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). These files can also be found on the Review web page ([www.pc.gov.au/gsp/2004/index.html](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/2004/index.html)). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain these tables (see details on the inside front cover of the Report).

## 14.1 Profile of children's services

### Service overview

Children's services are provided using a variety of service delivery types that can be grouped into the following six broad categories:

- *Centre-based long day care* — comprises services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds that are provided in a centre usually by a mix of qualified and other staff. Educational, care and recreational programs are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. In some jurisdictions, primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.
- *Family day care* — comprises services provided in the carer's own home. The care is largely aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Central co-ordination units in all States and Territories organise and support a network of carers, often with the help of local governments.<sup>1</sup>
- *Occasional care* — comprises services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals for parents who need time to attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting. These services provide developmental activities for children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.
- *Preschool* — comprises services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curriculums may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are

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<sup>1</sup> In WA, all carers providing care in their own home are licensed and supported by the Department for Community Development, but this chapter excludes data on those who are not supported by the department's co-ordination units. NSW and Tasmania license home-based carers who are not part of a family day care scheme, but this chapter excludes data on these carers.

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primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling (that is, when children are 4 years old in all jurisdictions except WA, where children are 5 years old), although younger children may also attend in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT.

- *Outside school hours care* — comprises services provided for school aged children (5–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.
- *Other services* — comprise government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous or non-English speaking background, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in rural and remote areas).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Australian Government and the State and Territory governments have different but complementary roles in supporting children's services. Both levels of government help fund services, provide information and advice to parents and service providers, and help plan, set and maintain operating standards.

The Australian Government's roles and responsibilities for child care include:

- assisting families to participate in the social and economic life of the community by providing child care services and payments (such as Child Care Benefit)
- in conjunction with other levels of government, planning the location of services
- providing information and advice to parents and providers about the availability of Australian Government funded services and some State and Territory funded services
- helping to enhance the quality of child care by funding the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to administer the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for long day care centres and Family Day Care Quality Assurance for family day care schemes (these quality systems being mandatory for services eligible for government funding)
- implementing the new quality assurance system for outside school hours care
- providing information, support and training to service providers by funding organisations
- providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

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State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities vary across jurisdictions and may include:

- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers
- delivering some services directly (especially preschool services)
- developing new child care and preschool services
- licensing and setting standards for children's services providers
- monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers
- providing information, support, training and development opportunities for children's services providers
- assisting services in enhancing quality by providing curriculum and policy support and advice, as well as training and development for management and staff
- planning to ensure the appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of the community
- providing information and advice to parents and others about operating standards and the availability of services
- providing dispute resolution and complaints management processes.

The major differences in the roles of the different levels of government relate to each level's objectives for children's services. The primary focus of the Australian Government is support for families through payments such as Child Care Benefit, which is payable to families using approved child care services or registered informal carers. State and Territory governments place greater emphasis on providing educational and developmental opportunities for children, such as preschool services.

### *Quality of care*

Both levels of government are active in maintaining the quality of care provided by children's services. The mechanisms used include licensing, accreditation, the measurement of performance against standards and outcomes linked to funding. These mechanisms are used in addition to the provision of curriculum and policy support and advice, and the training and development of management and staff.

### *Licensing*

State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdiction. These licensing requirements establish the foundations for quality

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of care by stipulating enforceable standards to support the health, safety, welfare and developmental needs of children in formal child care settings. The Australian, State and Territory governments have developed national standards for centre-based long day care, family day care and outside school hours care. Jurisdictions refer to these standards when writing regulations. The types of service covered, the standards that apply, and the extent of implementation of these standards vary across the States and Territories.

### *Accreditation*

Since 1994, the Australian Government has implemented quality assurance schemes for Australian Government funded centre-based long day care services, family day care services and outside school hours care services. Some jurisdictions have implemented quality assurance or improvement systems for preschools and other jurisdictions are developing similar systems.

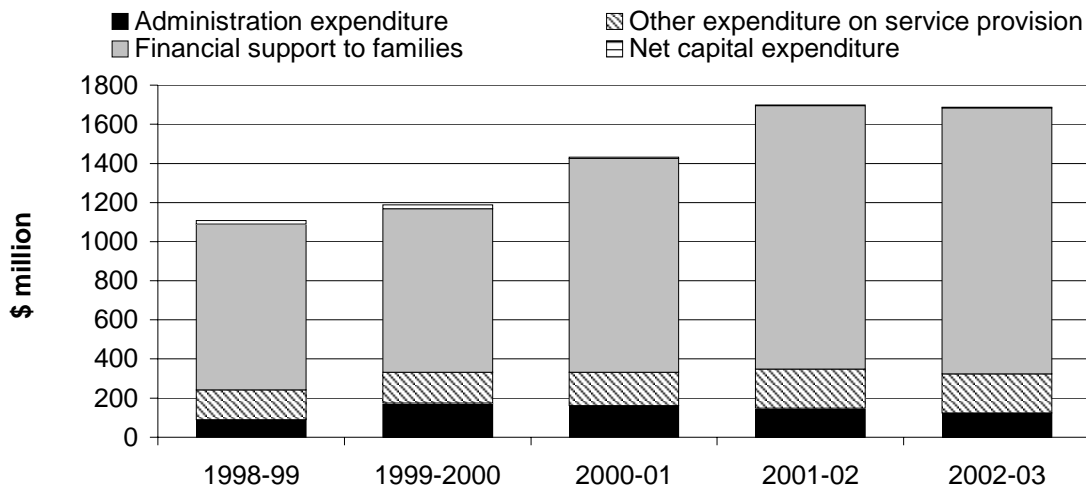
### *Funding performance standards and outcomes*

State and Territory governments impose varying performance requirements for funding children's services. These requirements may include: the employment of higher qualified staff than required by licensing or minimum standards; self-assessment of quality; and a demonstration of the delivery of quality educational and recreational programs.

## **Funding**

The Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services was approximately \$2.3 billion in 2002-03 (compared in real terms with \$1.8 billion in 1999-2000, \$2.1 billion in 2000-01 and \$2.3 billion in 2001-02) (table 14A.4). The Australian Government's expenditure in 2002-03 was approximately \$1.7 billion. The major component of this expenditure was financial support to families through assistance with fees, which accounted for 80.6 per cent (\$1.4 billion). Administration expenditure for the Australian Government was a further 7.4 per cent (\$124.2 million). Other expenditure on service provision and net capital expenditure accounted for the remaining 11.9 per cent (\$200.3 million) and 0.2 per cent (\$3.0 million) respectively (figure 14.1).

**Figure 14.1 Australian Government real expenditure on children's services (2002-03 dollars)**



Source: Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS) (unpublished); table 14A.4.

State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 2002-03 was approximately \$ 571.4 million, of which recurrent expenditure on service provision comprised around 47.5 per cent (\$271.5 million). Administration expenditure, financial support to families and net capital expenditure accounted for 40.2 per cent (\$229.7 million), 8.0 per cent (\$45.9 million) and 4.3 per cent (\$24.3 million) respectively (table 14A.4). In the distribution of total State and Territory government expenditure across all children's service types, the provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion (around 78.3 per cent, or \$447.5 million, for those jurisdictions for which data are available) (tables 14A.20, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65, 14A.74 and 14A.83).

The Australian Government provides a small amount of direct funding to Queensland and WA for the preschool year (for more information, see AIHW [1997]). It also provides supplementary funding for the preschool education of children from Indigenous backgrounds.

## Size and scope

### *Child care services*

The Australian Government supported approximately 500 000 child care places in 2002 — an increase of around 42 000 places from the 2001 number. The number of supported child care places in 2002 was equivalent to 15.0 per cent of children aged

12 years or younger (tables 14A.1 and 14A.7). The majority of Australian Government child care places were outside school hours care places (46.1 per cent), followed by centre-based long day care places (38.8 per cent), family day care places (14.2 per cent), occasional care places (0.6 per cent) and other care places (0.4 per cent) (table 14A.7). State and Territory governments supported at least 201 000 preschool places in 2002-03 (tables 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66 14A.75 and 14A.84).

Approximately 847 000 children (24.8 per cent of children aged 12 years or younger) used Australian, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 2002-03 (tables 14.1, 14A.1, 14A.9, 14A.22, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76 and 14A.85). Of these children, at least 572 000 were aged 5 years or younger. Changes to approaches to data collection and the exclusion of certain services funded by some jurisdictions reduce the comparability of these data across jurisdictions.

**Table 14.1 Children using Australian, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 2002-03 (per cent)<sup>a</sup>**

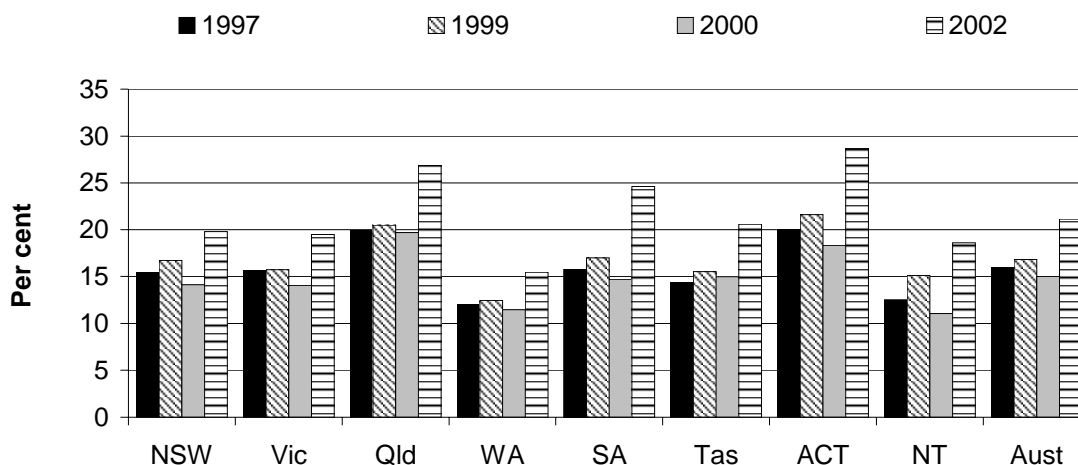
<i>Age</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
0–5 years	48.5	27.6	40.2	23.3	31.0	35.3	41.8	22.7	37.3
0–12 years	29.4	20.0	27.4	15.2	26.1	23.0	30.8	18.4	24.8

<sup>a</sup> Australian Government data are drawn from the May 2002 Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS). <sup>b</sup> Excludes children involved in the non-government sector.

*Source:* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (unpublished), Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), Cat. no. 3222.0; AGCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.1, 14A.9, 14A.22, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76 and 14A.85.

Approximately 728 000 children aged 12 years or younger (21.3 per cent of all children in this age group) attended Australian Government approved child care in 2002. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 28.7 per cent in the ACT to 15.4 per cent in WA (figure 14.2). The majority (approximately 474 000 nationally, or 65.1 per cent) of those children were aged 5 years or younger. Thirty-one per cent of children aged five years or younger attended Australian Government funded and/or provided child care services in 2002-03 (table 14A.9).

Figure 14.2 Children aged 0–12 years using Australian Government approved child care<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Children are defined as persons aged 12 years or younger. <sup>b</sup> Excludes children cared for in neighbourhood model services. <sup>c</sup> Australian total includes children in other Territories. <sup>d</sup> Data for 1997, 1999 and 2002 are drawn from the respective AGCCCS, while data for 2000 are drawn from Centrelink administrative data. The AGCCCS and Centrelink data are not fully comparable and such comparisons need to be treated with care. <sup>e</sup> Data for WA exclude children attending Department of Education provided kindergartens for 4 year olds, who would otherwise be in child care.

Source: ABS (unpublished), Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), Cat. no. 3222.0; AGCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.9.

The average hours of attendance in child care in 2002 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all types of service. The average attendance per child at centre-based long day care centres ranged from 27.2 hours per week in the NT to 13.8 hours per week in Tasmania, while the average attendance per child at occasional care services ranged from 10.6 hours per week in SA to 7.5 hours per week in Victoria. The average attendance per child at vacation care ranged from 3.8 days a week in the NT to 2.5 days a week in Tasmania (table 14A.8).

### Preschool services

Preschools provide a range of educational and developmental programs (generally on a sessional basis) to children in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling and also, in some jurisdictions, to children aged 3 years or under (children aged 4 years or under in WA). The age from which children may attend preschools varies across jurisdictions. Victoria contributes funding towards a preschool program for all 4-year-old children, which is the year before they commence schooling. Children in the NT are usually funded by government to attend preschool in the year before they commence schooling. Younger children in

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NSW, Queensland, WA, SA, Tasmania<sup>2</sup> and the ACT may also access government funded preschool services.

Younger Indigenous children living in remote areas also may attend preschools in the NT and Queensland. In SA, a pre-entry program provides one session of preschool a week for 10 weeks in the term before preschool, and children from Indigenous backgrounds may attend preschool at 3 years of age. In the ACT, children from Indigenous backgrounds, children with English as a second language, and children with a hearing impairment and/or whose parents have a hearing impairment may be eligible for early entry into preschool (for 5.25 hours per week) at 3 years of age.

This disparity in the age from which children may access preschool services reduces the comparability of preschool data across jurisdictions. Preschool data are presented for two categories to improve comparability:

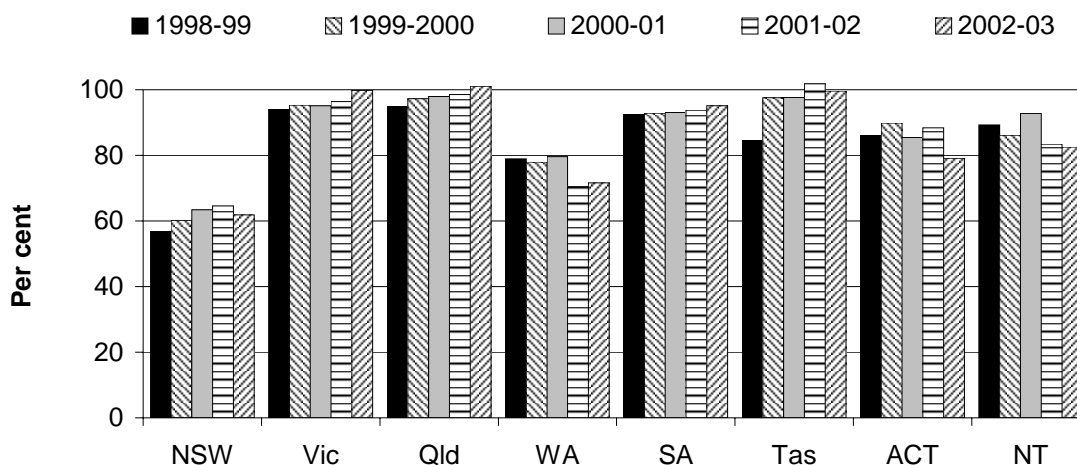
- children attending preschool in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling (data that are largely presented on a comparable basis for all jurisdictions)
- younger children attending preschool services.

At least 239 000 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided preschool services in 2002-03. The majority (88.4 per cent, or approximately 212 000 children) were to begin full time schooling the following year (tables 14A.22, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76 and 14A.85). Some jurisdictions differ in their age criterion for access to preschool services; as a result, the following data need to be interpreted with caution. In 2002-03, 83.5 per cent of children of 4 years of age attended funded and/or provided preschool in the year immediately before they commenced school. Across jurisdictions for which 2002-03 data were available, this proportion ranged from about 100 per cent in Queensland to 61.9 per cent in NSW. There is some double counting in several jurisdictions, as well as issues with synchronisation of data collection times, leading to overestimation of the attendance rates being reported (figure 14.3).

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<sup>2</sup> In Tasmania, the flexibility to enrol children of pre-kindergarten age is permitted only under limited circumstances (such as for gifted children or children previously enrolled in another State or Territory who now reside in Tasmania).

**Figure 14.3 Children in the population who attended State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool services immediately before the commencement of full time schooling<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The denominator — the population of preschool aged children — is defined as persons aged 4 years in all States and Territories. <sup>b</sup> Data for 1998-99 were for the calendar year ending 1998. There is some double counting of children in jurisdictions (except Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the ACT) because some children moved in and out of the preschool system throughout the year and, as a result, the number of children reported in preschool exceeds the number of children in the target population. There is no double counting for Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the ACT because a snapshot is used for each year's data collection (so children appear in only one preschool centre in one year at the time of the snapshot). <sup>c</sup> NSW used a revised method of calculating the number of children receiving child care and preschool services. This new method of calculation will provide clear trend data for each age group for child care and preschool. The data include estimates based on the rate of survey return for each year. NSW data are not comparable with data for other States and Territories. <sup>d</sup> Victorian data include some children attending preschool services conducted in a centre-based long day care centre. <sup>e</sup> WA data exclude children attending non-government preschools. Due to WA's alteration of entry age from 5 years to 4 years, 2001-02 and 2002-03 data are not comparable to previous years.

Source: ABS (unpublished), Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), Cat. no. 3222.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.1, 14A.22, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76 and 14A.85.

Younger children in NSW, Queensland, SA, the ACT and the NT were able to attend funded preschool services in 2002-03. Around 17.0 per cent of children aged 3 years attended preschool services in that year (approximately 28 000 children). The participation rate differed across jurisdictions, reflecting variation in policies on access to funded preschool services. The proportion of children aged 3 three years attending preschool services in 2002-03 was 13.6 per cent in NSW, 21.1 per cent in Queensland, 26.0 per cent in SA (where younger children may attend a pre-entry program for one term in the year before preschool), 4.4 per cent in the ACT and 10.8 per cent in the NT (tables 14A.1, 14A.22, 14A.40, 14A.58, 14A.76 and 14A.85).

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All jurisdictions except NSW and Victoria supplied data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 2002-03. The average attendance of children in the year immediately before they commenced full time schooling ranged from 12.7 hours per week in Queensland to 10.5 hours per week in the ACT (tables 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84).

### *Employment status of parents*

Access to children's services differs according to the service type. The workforce and employment status of parents are factors that may influence children's access to services. Those services eligible for Child Care Benefit, for example, gave a high priority to children at risk and children of parents with work related child care needs. Occasional care gives priority to parents requiring care to meet other requirements (such as to attend appointments, take care of personal matters or have temporary respite from full time parenting). Details of the labour force and employment status of parents whose children use these services are shown in table 14A.13. The data were drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) child care surveys conducted in 1996, 1999 and 2002 (ABS 1997, 2000a, 2003).

### *Services by management type*

Children's services are managed by the government (State, Territory and local), community and private sectors. The management structure of services indicates the involvement of these sectors in the direct delivery of children's services.

The limited data on the management type of child care need to be interpreted with care because the scope of the data collection varies across jurisdictions. Available data on the management type of preschool services in 2002-03, although more complete, also indicate considerable variation across jurisdictions (table 14.2).

**Table 14.2 Proportion of State and Territory licensed and/or registered children's services, by management type, 2002-03 (per cent)<sup>a</sup>**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT<sup>d</sup></i>
<b>Child care</b>								
Community managed <sup>e</sup>	34.6	95.9	32.4	60.3	41.6	60.7	84.3	78.3
Private <sup>f</sup>	61.9	0.5	67.6	33.7	31.8	18.5	15.7	21.7
Employer sponsored	na	na	na	–	–	–	–	na
Government managed	3.6	3.6	na	6.0	26.6	20.7	–	na
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Preschool</b>								
Community managed <sup>e</sup>	90.3	63.4	23.5	..	4.7	na	8.0	5.2
Private <sup>f</sup>	9.7	21.8	19.7	..	–	22.7	–	na
Employer sponsored	na	na	..	..	–	na	–	na
Government managed	na	14.8	56.8	100.0	95.3	77.3	92.0	94.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes all Australian, State and Territory government supported services. Most services receive both Australian Government and State/Territory funding. <sup>b</sup> All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. <sup>c</sup> Preschools include funded non-government preschools. <sup>d</sup> Preschool services are provided by the Department of Education directly, but a range of management functions are devolved to school councils and parent management committees. <sup>e</sup> Community managed services include not-for-profit services provided or managed by parents, churches or co-operatives. <sup>f</sup> Private for-profit services provided or managed by a company, private individual or a non-government school. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable. **–** Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.52, 14A.61, 14A.70, 14A.79 and 14A.88.

## 14.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on common objectives for children's services across Australia (box 14.1). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

### Box 14.1 Objectives for children's services

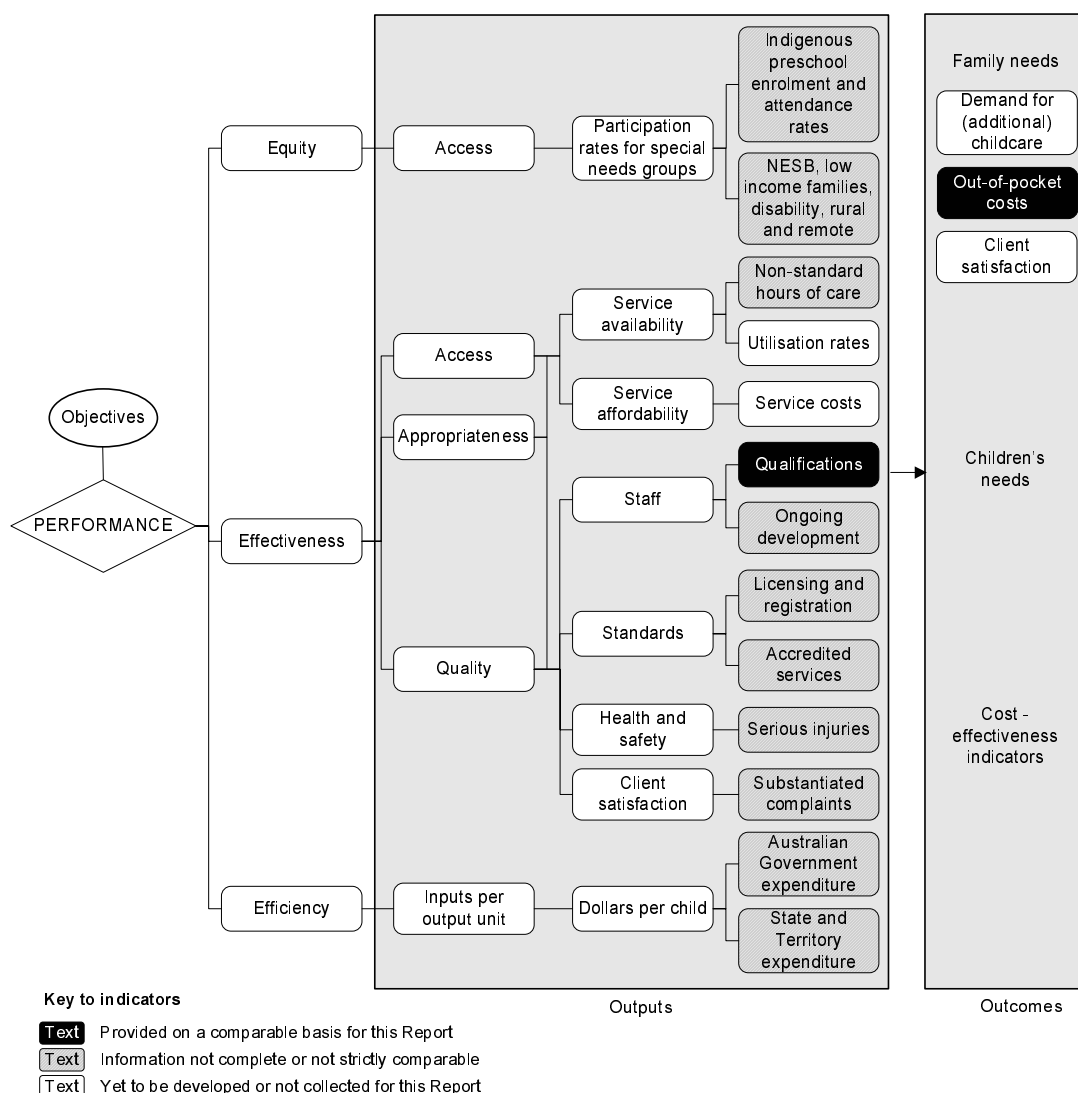
Children's services aim to:

- meet the care, education and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment
- provide support for families in caring for their children
- provide these services in an equitable and efficient manner.

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is summarised in figure 14.4. The framework shows which data are provided on a comparable

basis in the 2004 Report. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. The source tables in the attachment (Attach14A.xls) also contain more details on caveats and supporting commentary for specific data. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 14.4 Performance indicators for children's services



## New and refined indicators

The performance indicator framework has been revised to provide information on equity, effectiveness and efficiency, and to distinguish the outputs and outcomes for children's services. This approach is consistent with the revised service process and

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general performance indicator framework diagrams in chapter 1 (figures 1.2 and 1.3) that have been agreed by the Steering Committee.

The results presented in the 2004 Report remain consistent with the agreed objectives for children's services and include six new indicators:

- an equity indicator for the participation rate of children from low income families (table 14.3)
- a quality indicator for ongoing development of staff (figure 14.11)
- a quality indicator for State and Territory licensing and registration (table 14.4)
- a quality indicator for the accreditation of centre-based long day care services (figure 14.12)
- a quality indicator for the accreditation of family day care schemes (table 14A.2)
- an efficiency indicator for Australian Government expenditure (reported as dollars per child in the jurisdiction) (figure 14.13).

### 14.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of children's services. Most of the data available for reporting in this chapter are not comparable across jurisdictions. Appendix A contains contextual information, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter.

#### Outputs

##### *Equity*

##### *Access — participation rates for special needs groups*

Data on the representation of children from some special needs groups in Australian Government approved child care services are available for 1997, 1999 and 2002 from the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Australian Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS) biennially conducts the AGCCCS to collect information on the characteristics of users and providers of all Australian Government funded child care services. State and Territory governments may also support many of these services. The 2001 AGCCCS, however, was limited to a survey of family day care services. Some 2001 data for other services were sourced from Centrelink administrative data for

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conducted by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (DFaCS) and data for August 2000 are from Centrelink administrative data. The AGCCCS and Centrelink data are not directly comparable because of differences in their collection methods.<sup>4</sup> The variations are particularly distorting for data on children from Indigenous backgrounds and for NT data.

The data indicate that the proportion of children in special needs groups in Australian Government supported child care is sometimes substantially different across jurisdictions. This variation largely reflects jurisdictional differences in the representation of children from special needs groups in the community (table 14.3).

The proportion of children using child care services in 2002 who were from a non-English speaking background (NESB) ranged from 16.3 per cent in NSW (where representation of NESB children in the population was 20.4 per cent) to 2.4 per cent in Tasmania (where the representation of NESB children in the population was 2.6 per cent). Of note for the data on NESB children is the large difference between their representation in the population of the NT (29.4 per cent) and their representation in child care (6.3 per cent) — a difference that may be correlated with the representation of Indigenous attendees and children in the population (table 14.3). Compared with other jurisdictions, Victoria and SA also had larger differences between NESB representation in the community and NESB representation in children in child care services.

The proportion of children who attended child care services in 2002 who were from an Indigenous background ranged from 9.8 per cent in the NT (where the representation of Indigenous children in the population was 41.4 per cent) to 0.5 per cent in Victoria (where the representation in the population was 1.1 per cent). Nationally, the representation of children from an Indigenous background in children accessing child care services was lower than this group's overall representation in the community (table 14.3).

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the 2002 Report. The AGCCCS was referenced in previous reports as the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services (CCCCS).

<sup>4</sup> The AGCCCS data are collected from Australian Government approved child care services based on data provided by services. The AGCCCS includes all children attending Australian Government supported services, and there will be double counting where a child attended more than one service. Centrelink administrative data are collected from customers when they claim Child Care Benefit. As such, the data collection is restricted to customers who are eligible for Child Care Benefit. There is no double counting where children attended more than one service because Centrelink assigns each child a unique reference number.

**Table 14.3 Proportion of children (aged 0–12 years) from special needs groups attending Australian Government approved child care services, 2002 (per cent)**

<i>Representation</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>NT<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Australia</i>
<i>Children from non-English speaking backgrounds</i>									
In child care services	16.3	12.3	5.9	7.2	6.4	2.4	11.0	6.3	10.8
In the community <sup>c</sup>	20.4	19.9	7.1	11.0	11.2	2.6	13.1	29.4	15.6
<i>Children from Indigenous backgrounds</i>									
In child care services	1.5	0.5	2.7	1.7	1.4	1.2	0.7	9.8	1.7
In the community <sup>c</sup>	4.1	1.1	6.6	6.5	3.4	7.0	2.3	41.4	4.6
<i>Children from low-income families</i>									
In child care services	29.1	29.0	35.2	34.3	35.4	33.6	13.7	19.1	31.2
In the community <sup>d</sup>	23.3	21.2	24.7	25.2	30.8	26.7	10.3	24.1	23.7
<i>Children with a disability</i>									
In child care services	2.3	2.3	2.1	1.6	3.3	2.5	2.1	2.0	2.3
In the community <sup>e</sup>	6.6	6.6	8.1	10.4	9.9	7.5	na	na	7.6
<i>Children from rural and remote areas</i>									
In child care services	22.1	22.1	22.9	20.2	18.5	48.6	–	31.2	22.1
In the community <sup>f</sup>	28.4	27.5	35.4	30.1	31.0	42.7	0.2	59.0	30.2

<sup>a</sup> Excludes those children who attend Department of Education provided kindergartens for 4 year olds. <sup>b</sup> Data on children with a disability in the community were not available for publication. <sup>c</sup> Data relate to children aged 0–14 years at June 2001 and were obtained from the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing. <sup>d</sup> Data relate to children aged 0–14 years and were obtained from the ABS 1999–2000 Survey of Income and Housing. <sup>e</sup> Data relate to children aged 0–14 years at June 1998 and were obtained from the ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. <sup>f</sup> Data relate to children aged 0–14 years at June 1996 and were obtained from the ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS 2000b, (unpublished); ABS 1996 and 2001, (unpublished); ABS 1999, Cat. nos 4430.0, 4430.140.001–4430.9.40.001; AGCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.17.

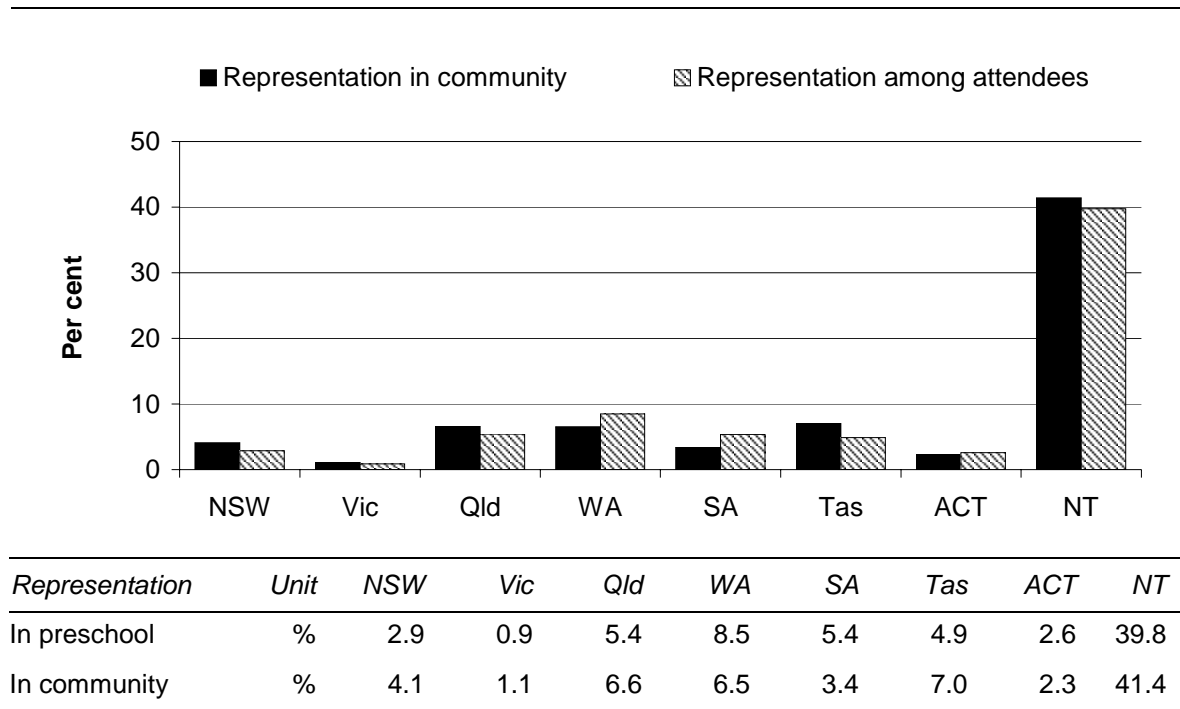
The representation of children from low income families among attendees of Australian Government supported child care in 2002 ranged from 35.4 per cent in SA (where their representation in the population was 30.8 per cent) to 13.7 per cent in the ACT (where their representation in the population was 10.3 per cent) (table 14.3). Of the reported special needs groups, children from low income families are the only group for whom their representation in child care was consistently greater than their representation in the community (except in the NT).

The proportion of child care attendees with a disability in 2002 varied from 3.3 per cent in SA (9.9 per cent in the community) to 1.6 per cent in WA (10.4 per cent in the community) (table 14.3). The proportion of child care attendees from rural and remote areas in 2002 ranged from 48.6 per cent in Tasmania (where their representation in the population was 42.7 per cent) to 18.5 per cent in SA (where their representation in the population was 31.0 per cent). The ACT does not have child care attendees from rural or remote areas (and does not have any areas in the jurisdiction classed as remote). Across all jurisdictions except Tasmania the

representation of children from rural and remote areas among children accessing child care was lower than their overall representation in the community (table 14.3).

Data on the proportion of preschool attendees from the specified special needs groups are less extensive for all jurisdictions. All jurisdictions could provide data on Indigenous children attending preschools in 2002-03. Across jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous children attending preschools in 2002-03 was broadly similar to their representation in the community. The proportion ranged from 39.8 per cent in the NT (where the representation of Indigenous children in the community was 41.4 per cent) to 0.9 per cent in Victoria (where their representation in the community was 1.1 per cent) (figure 14.5). The proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds varied across jurisdictions, but has been relatively constant over time within jurisdictions (figure 14.6).

Figure 14.5 **Proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds, 2002-03<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Comparisons between the representation of Indigenous children among preschool attendees and their representation in the community need to be treated with caution because there are definitional differences and differences in the base population. <sup>b</sup> Excludes younger children attending preschool and all children attending non-government preschools.

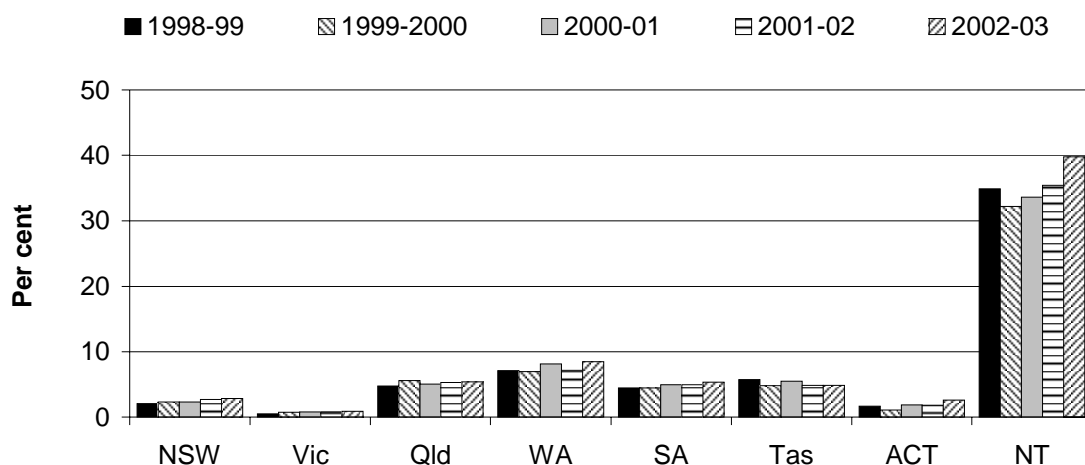
Source: ABS 2001, (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.26, 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.71, 14A.80 and 14A.89.

Data on the representation of other special needs groups among government funded preschool attendees are limited for 2002-03.

- Non-English speaking background children represented 12.7 per cent of children attending preschool in Victoria, 9.3 per cent in the ACT, 9.1 per cent in SA, 6.5 per cent in NSW and 2.5 per cent in Queensland (tables 14A.26, 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.62 and 14A.80) (WA, Tasmania and the NT did not report data).
- Children with a disability represented 14.2 per cent of preschool attendees in SA, 6.8 per cent in NSW, 5.1 per cent in the NT, 4.3 per cent in Victoria, 4.1 per cent in the ACT, 2.3 per cent in WA and 1.0 per cent in Queensland (tables 14A.26, 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.80 and 14A.89) (Tasmania did not report data).
- The proportion of preschool attendees from rural and remote areas was 70.2 per cent in Tasmania, 46.6 per cent in the NT, 34.1 per cent in WA, 32.7 per cent in SA, 30.2 per cent in NSW, 23.7 per cent in Queensland and 1.0 per cent in the ACT (tables 14A.26, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.71, 14A.80 and 14A.89) (Victoria did not report data).

The representation of these special needs groups in the general community is provided in table 14.3.

Figure 14.6 **Preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds<sup>a</sup>**



Year	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1998-99	%	2.0	0.5	4.8	7.1	4.5	5.8	1.7	34.9
1999-2000	%	2.3	0.8	5.6	6.9	4.5	4.8	1.1	32.2
2000-01	%	2.3	0.8	5.1	8.1	5.0	5.5	1.9	33.6
2001-02	%	2.7	0.8	5.3	7.2	5.0	4.9	1.8	35.4
2002-03	%	2.9	0.9	5.4	8.5	5.4	4.9	2.6	39.8

<sup>a</sup> Excludes younger children attending preschool and children attending non-government preschools.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.26, 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.71, 14A.80 and 14A.89.

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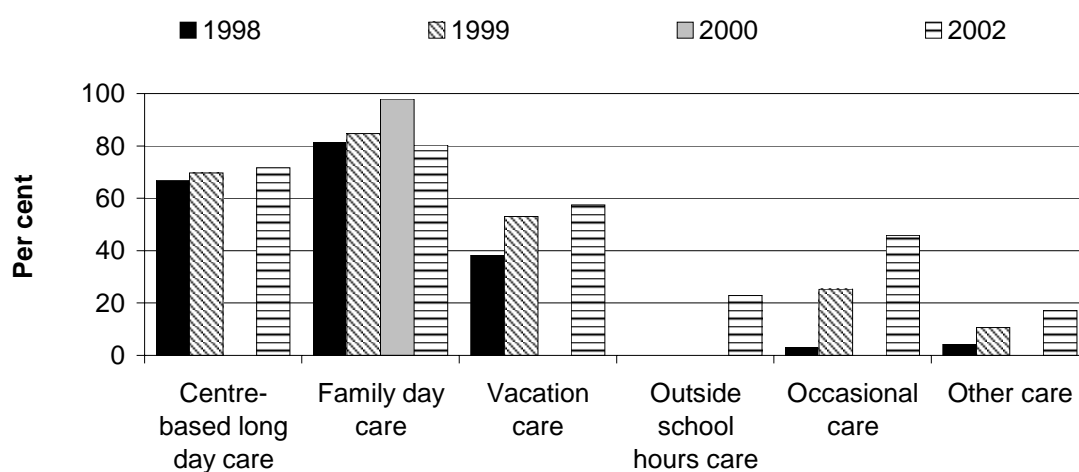
## Effectiveness

### Service availability — non-standard hours of care

An indicator of the appropriateness of, and community access to, children's services is the proportion of services offering non-standard hours of care. What constitutes non-standard hours varies across service types, and a full explanation can be found in the definitions section in table 14.5.

In 2002, based on AGCCCS results, 80.4 per cent of family day care services nationally provided non-standard hours of care (table 14A.14). Centre-based long day care had the next highest proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care (71.7 per cent), followed by vacation care (57.4 per cent), occasional care (45.9 per cent), other care (17.2 per cent) and outside school hours care (22.8 per cent) (figure 14.7).

Figure 14.7 **Australian Government approved child care services providing non-standard hours of care, by service type<sup>a, b</sup>**

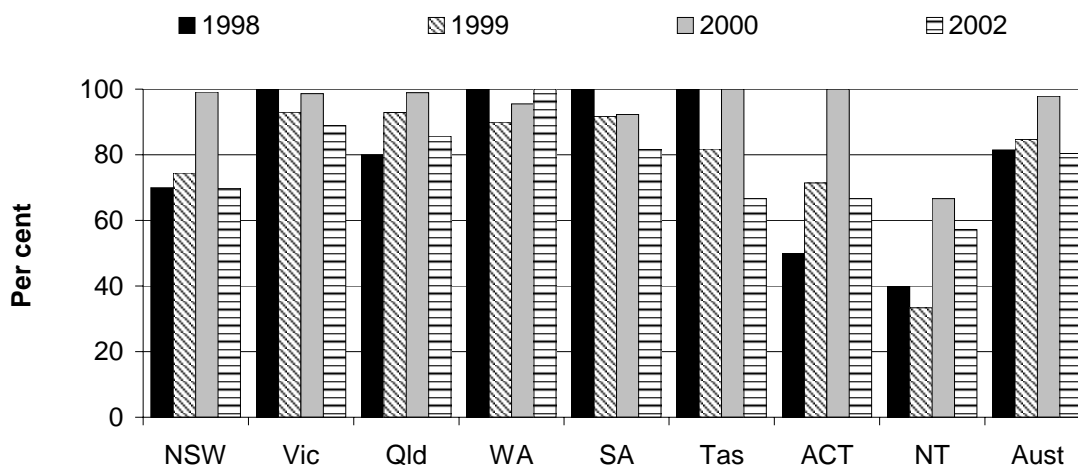


<sup>a</sup> Only family day care data can be reported for 2000. <sup>b</sup> Comparison between 2002 data and data for previous years is not possible due to different data collection methods and time frames.

Source: AGCCCS, August 1997, May 1999 and May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.14.

In WA, 100 per cent of family day care schemes offered non-standard hours in 2002. In all other jurisdictions, less than 90 per cent of these schemes offered non-standard hours of care (figure 14.8).

**Figure 14.8 Australian Government approved family day care services providing non-standard hours of care<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Comparison between 2002 data and data for previous years is not possible due to different data collection methods and time frames.

Source: AGCCCS, August 1997, May 1999 and May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.14.

Limited data are available on the proportion of services not included in the AGCCCS that were offering non-standard hours of care. Three jurisdictions could provide data on non-standard hours of preschool provided in 2002-03: 67.9 per cent of preschools in NSW provided non-standard hours (table 14A.26), along with 65.0 per cent of preschools in SA (table 14A.62) and 1.0 per cent of preschools in Queensland (table 14A.44). In SA, preschools are encouraged to offer back-to-back preschool services to assist parents, particularly in country regions where the need to travel long distances makes it impractical for children to attend preschool more frequently (see footnotes to table 14A.62).

#### *Service availability — utilisation rates*

This indicator has been identified by the Steering Committee for development.

#### *Services affordability — services costs*

This indicator has been identified by the Steering Committee for development.

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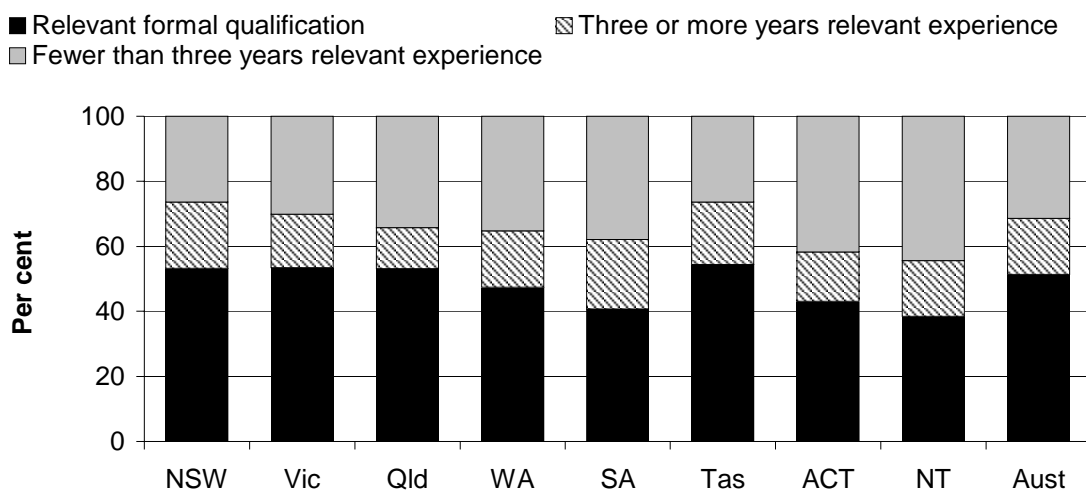
## Quality

An important focus of Australian, State and Territory governments is to set and maintain appropriate quality standards in child care and preschool services. Indicators of the quality of children's services are the proportion of qualified staff, the rate of ongoing staff development, the extent of licensing and registration, the proportion of services that have achieved accreditation, the number of serious injuries, and the number of substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service, by service type. These data need to be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting among jurisdictions.

### Staff — qualifications

Nationally, the proportion of staff with formal qualifications in Australian Government approved child care was 51.3 per cent in 2002. A further 17.3 per cent had no formal qualifications but three or more years of relevant experience. The remaining 31.4 per cent had no formal qualifications and less than three years experience (including those staff studying for qualifications). The proportion of staff with formal qualifications varied across jurisdictions, ranging from 54.4 per cent in Tasmania to 38.4 per cent in the NT (figure 14.9).

Figure 14.9 **Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government approved child care services, by qualification, 2002<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

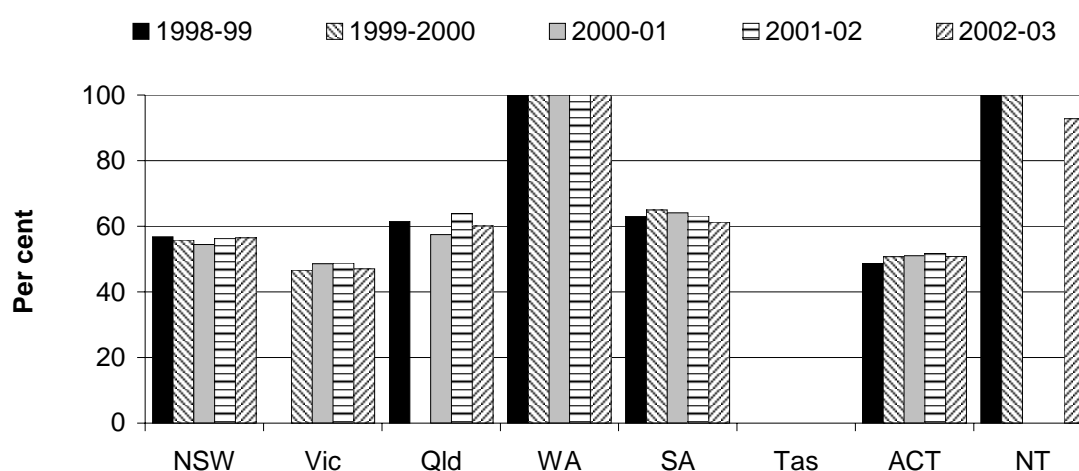


<sup>a</sup> Excludes Aboriginal play groups, mobile and toy libraries, and in-home care. <sup>b</sup> 'Three or more years relevant experience' category excludes staff with a relevant formal qualification. <sup>c</sup> 'Fewer than three years relevant experience' category excludes staff with a relevant formal qualification (but includes staff training for a qualification).

Source: AGCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.11.

Some data are available on the qualifications of staff employed by preschool services that received funding from State and Territory governments. The comparability of these data is limited by the different licensing and funding arrangements across jurisdictions. Across those jurisdictions for which 2002-03 data are available, the proportion of staff in preschool services with relevant formal qualifications ranged from 100.0 per cent in WA (where all contact staff must be qualified) to 46.9 per cent in Victoria (where only the preschool teacher must be qualified) (figure 14.10).

**Figure 14.10 Paid primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification employed by State/Territory funded and/or managed preschool service providers<sup>a</sup>**



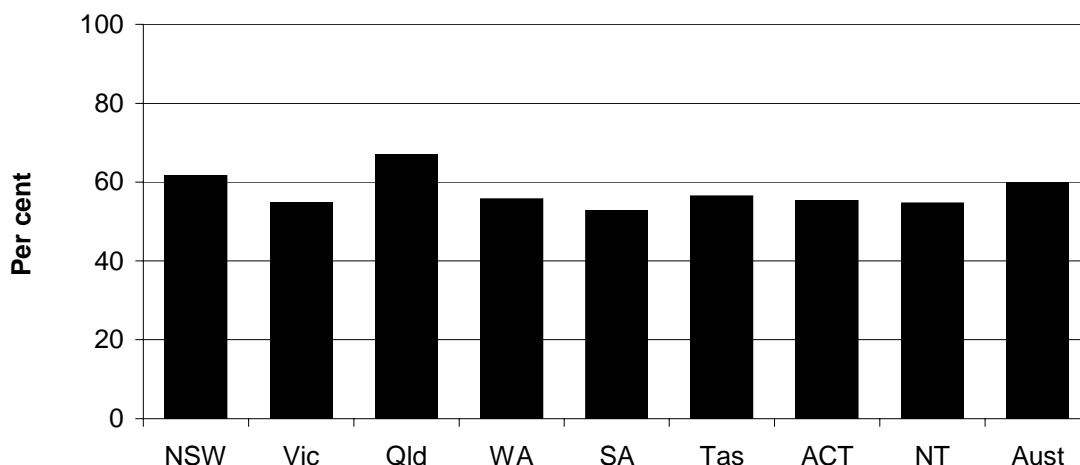
<sup>a</sup> All funded preschool services in Victoria must have at least two staff but only the preschool teacher must be qualified. Those in Queensland must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a relevant formal qualification. All primary contact staff for preschools in WA must be qualified.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.24, 14A.33, 14A.42, 14A.51, 14A.60, 14A.69, 14A.78 and 14A.87.

### *Staff — ongoing development*

The number of staff who undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months is reported for the first time in figure 14.11. This indicator has been included to provide information on the ongoing development of child care workers' skills and competencies in child care and preschool services. It includes formal training only — that is, structured training sessions which may be conducted in-house or externally. For 2002, Queensland reported the highest level of child care staff having undertaken in-service training in the previous 12 months (67.1 per cent) and SA reported the lowest (52.9 per cent) (figure 14.11).

Figure 14.11 **Staff in Australian Government child care services who undertook relevant in-service training in previous 12 months, 2002<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes Aboriginal play groups, mobile and toy libraries, and in-home care.

Source: AGCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.12.

### *Standards*

Both levels of government are active in maintaining the quality of care provided by children's services by setting quality standards. The mechanisms used to maintain quality are accreditation, licensing, the measurement of performance against standards, and funding linked to outcomes. These mechanisms are used in addition to the provision of curriculum and policy support and advice, and the training and development of management and staff.

#### *Standards — licensing and registration*

State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdiction. This responsibility involves setting regulatory requirements and monitoring adherence to these standards. State and Territory governments also undertake activities aimed at the promotion of quality, such as publishing curriculum materials and other resources, and undertaking consumer education. The types of service covered by legislation vary across States and Territories, as do the standards that apply (table 14.4).

State and Territory licensing requirements establish the foundations for quality of care by stipulating enforceable standards to support the health, safety, welfare and

developmental needs of children in formal child care settings. Accreditation of services is built on this platform.

Licensed children's services may include centre-based long day care, occasional care, preschools, family day care and outside school hours care. Australian, State and Territory governments have developed national standards for centre-based long day care, family day care and outside school hours care. Jurisdictions refer to these standards when writing regulations. The extent of implementation of these standards varies across Australia.

**Table 14.4 State and Territory licensing and registration of child care and preschool services, 2003**

<i>Service type</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Long day care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>a</sup>	✓
Occasional care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>a</sup>	✓
Family day care schemes	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>b</sup>	✓	x
Family day care carers	✓ <sup>c</sup>	x	x <sup>d</sup>	✓ <sup>c</sup>	na	✓ <sup>d</sup>	x	x
Outside school- hours care	x	x	✓ <sup>e</sup>	✓ <sup>f</sup>	x	✓ <sup>b</sup>	✓	x
Other/home-based care	✓	x	x	✓	na	✓	✓ <sup>g</sup>	x

<sup>a</sup> Licensed as centre-based children's services. <sup>b</sup> Legislation requiring licensing of services commenced on 1 September 2003, but does not take effect until early 2005. <sup>c</sup> Family day care providers in NSW and WA are also (individually) licensed. <sup>d</sup> Family day carers are not required to be licensed, provided they are registered through a Family day care scheme. <sup>e</sup> Legislation requiring licensing of services commenced on 1 September 2003, services have until 1 September 2005 to apply for a licence. <sup>f</sup> New providers must be licensed from 28 August 2003. Existing providers must be registered. <sup>g</sup> Playschools and independent preschools. **na** Not available.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

### *Standards — accredited services*

In 1994, the Australian Government introduced the QIAS for Australian Government funded centre-based long day care services. A quality assurance scheme for family day care was introduced from 1 July 2001. A quality assurance scheme for outside school hours care was initiated in July 2003 and is currently being implemented. SA and Victoria have implemented quality assurance or improvement systems for preschools, and Queensland has done so for non-State schools. Some other jurisdictions are developing such systems.

The QIAS system was modified on 1 January 2002. Revised standards and processes were implemented, and the previous three-tier accreditation review process (whereby centres were accredited for periods of three years, two years or

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one year) was replaced with a single accreditation period of two and a half years. All centres achieving accreditation under the previous system were transferred to the new single accreditation period.

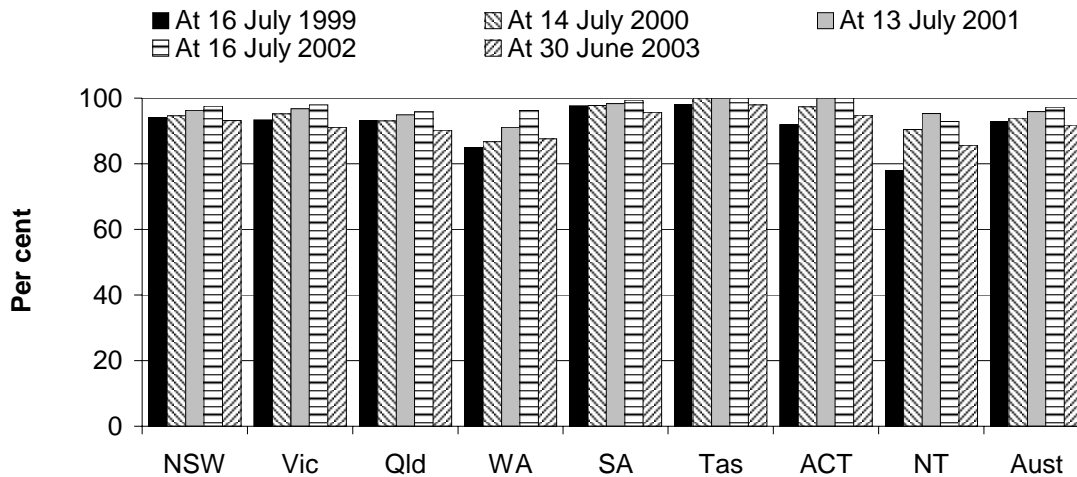
As part of their accreditation decision, long day care services now receive a composite quality profile, which details their performance against the following ten quality areas:

- relationships with children
- respect for children
- partnerships with families
- staff interactions
- planning and evaluation
- learning and development
- protective care
- health
- safety
- managing to support quality.

There were 4263 centres participating in the QIAS accreditation process at 30 June 2003. These centres collectively represent all centre-based long day care services receiving Child Care Benefit and the majority of all centre-based long day care services operating in Australia. Of these centres, 3644 were fully accredited (85.5 per cent of all centres), while 294 were in self-study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (6.9 per cent). Some 325 centres were not accredited (7.6 per cent) (table 14A.2).

Centres that do not have accreditation must work towards gaining accreditation to retain their eligibility for Child Care Benefit. The Australian Government funds resource and advisory services across the country to assist centres participating in quality assurance systems. Of those centres that had completed the accreditation process at 30 June 2003, 91.8 per cent were successful in achieving accreditation. This proportion varied from 98.0 per cent in Tasmania to 85.7 per cent in the NT (figure 14.12).

Figure 14.12 Accredited centres as a proportion of centres fully assessed under the QIAS<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Figures may change daily and are updated every six weeks following a NCAC meeting. <sup>b</sup> Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT may be unduly influenced by the relatively small number of services (58, 86 and 48 respectively at 30 June 2003) participating in the process.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 14A.2.

Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) was introduced on 1 July 2001. Family day care schemes were given a period of three months to register to participate in FDCQA. Self-study reports were submitted from July 2002, with 76 schemes accredited at 30 June 2003 (table 14A.2).

Family day care schemes also receive a composite quality profile, which details their performance against the following six quality areas:

- interactions
- physical environments
- children's experiences, learning and development
- health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing
- carers and co-ordination unit staff
- management and administration.

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) was implemented from 1 July 2003. All services providing such were given three months to register to participate in OSHCQA and will be required to undertake a self-study process and complete a self-study report for submission to the NCAC at a date to be set between July 2004 and December 2006. Accreditation data for this sector will be available in

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late 2004, and therefore reliable data may not be available for inclusion before the 2006 Report.

### *Health and safety — serious injuries*

A serious injury is defined as an injury requiring hospitalisation or a visit to, or by, a doctor. Data on the number of serious injuries and the number of serious injuries per registered or licensed service provider were limited for 2002-03. Although most jurisdictions (except SA and Tasmania) could provide some information, the small incident numbers and differences in the data collection approaches mean direct comparisons across jurisdictions are problematic. Tables 14A.27, 14A.36, 14A.45, 14A.54, 14A.63, 14A.72, 14A.81 and 14A.90 provide a breakdown of the available information for each jurisdiction.

### *Client satisfaction — substantiated complaints*

All jurisdictions, except NSW<sup>5</sup> and SA provided data on the number of substantiated complaints and allegations of regulation breaches made to the State and Territory government regulatory bodies for 2002-03 (tables 14A.37, 14A.46, 14A.55, 14A.73, 14A.82 and 14A.91). The results for the substantiated complaints indicator need to be interpreted with caution, for the following reasons:

- Some jurisdictions give priority to developing client groups who are well informed, as part of improving their service delivery. Clients who are well informed may be more likely to make a complaint than are clients without access to this information.
- The number of approved care providers or parent users per service differs in each service across States and Territories.
- Complaints management systems vary across jurisdictions. In SA, for example, the Department of Education and Children's Services is the sole sponsor of family day care and deals with all complaints that may be managed at a scheme level in other States and Territories and, as such, may not be reported.

### *Efficiency*

Differences in the indicator results across jurisdictions may reflect differences in counting and reporting rules for financial data and in reported expenditure, which

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<sup>5</sup> NSW is developing a new information system in line with its new legislation. Data on substantiated complaints are expected to be available for future reports.

are partly due to different treatments of various expenditure items. Some information on the comparability of the expenditure is shown in table 14A.5.

The levels of government input per unit of output(s) (unit costs) are proxy indicators of efficiency. The indicators used here are:

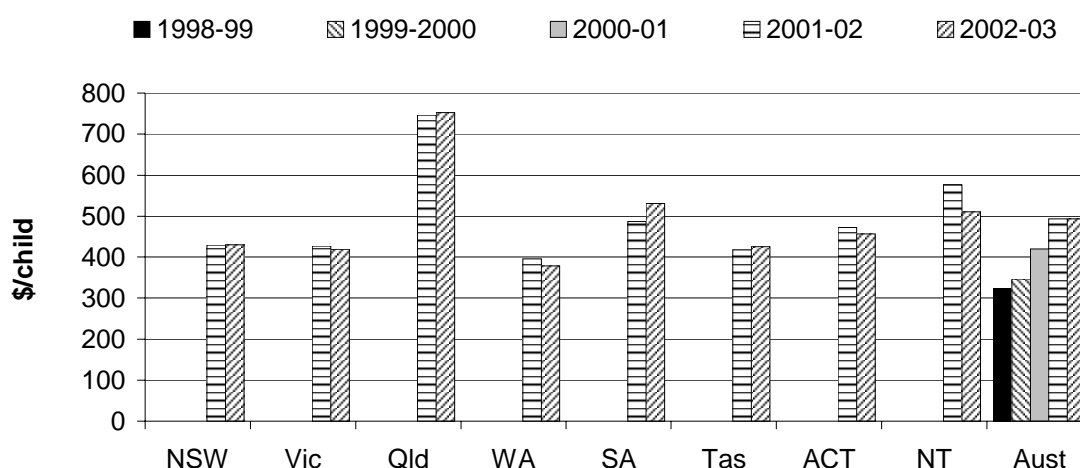
- Australian Government total expenditure on children’s services per child aged 0–12 years
- State and Territory government total expenditure on children’s services per child aged 0–12 years.

Data were sought from all governments on their expenditure by service type. Incomplete data and changes in collection method, however, make it difficult to compare expenditure across jurisdictions and over time. Unit cost data for children’s services do not yet contain an estimate of user cost of capital.

*Inputs per output unit — Australian Government expenditure (dollars per child)*

Australian Government total expenditure per child aged 0–12 years by jurisdiction is a new indicator for the 2004 Report (figure 14.13). Australian Government expenditure in 2002-03 ranged from \$752 per child in Queensland to \$378 per child in WA (figure 14.13).

**Figure 14.13 Total Australian Government real expenditure on children’s services per child by jurisdiction (2002–03 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



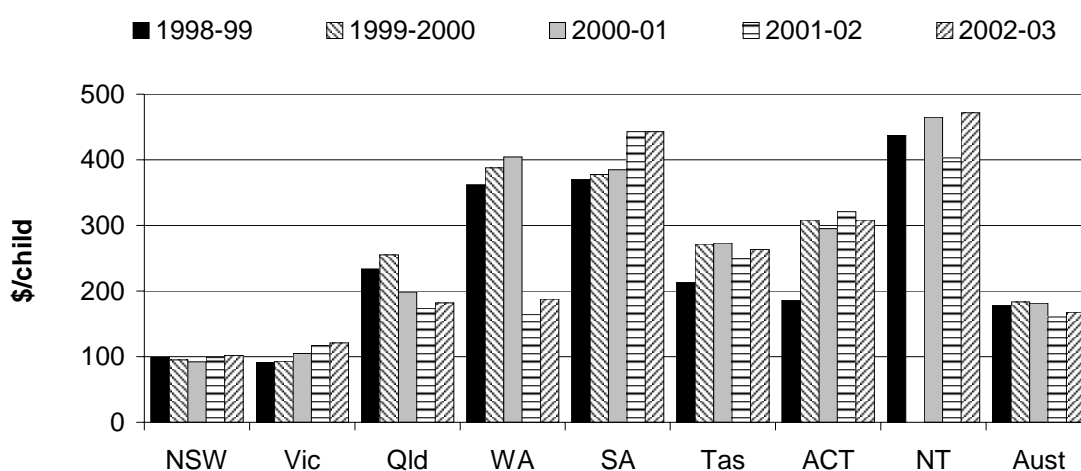
<sup>a</sup> For children aged 0–12 years. <sup>b</sup> Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. <sup>c</sup> Data broken down by State and Territory are not available for 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

Source: Australian Government (unpublished); table 14A.18.

*Inputs per output unit — State and Territory government expenditure (dollars per child)*

State and Territory government total expenditure per child aged 0–12 years by jurisdiction in 2002-03 (figure 14.14) ranged from \$472 per child for the NT to \$102 per child in NSW (table 14A.19).

**Figure 14.14 Total State and Territory real expenditure on children’s services per child by jurisdiction (2002–03 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> For children aged 0–12 years. <sup>b</sup> Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. <sup>c</sup> The drop in WA expenditure for 2001-02 was in response to the changes in the school entry age and the associated move to full time schooling for pre-year 1 children.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 14A.19.

## Outcomes

### *Demand for (additional) child care*

This indicator has been identified by the Steering Committee for development.

### *Out-of-pocket costs*

This outcome indicator measures out-of-pocket child care costs for families as a proportion of weekly disposable income at June 2003 before and after the payment of child care subsidies. Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results because a variety of factors may influence fees.

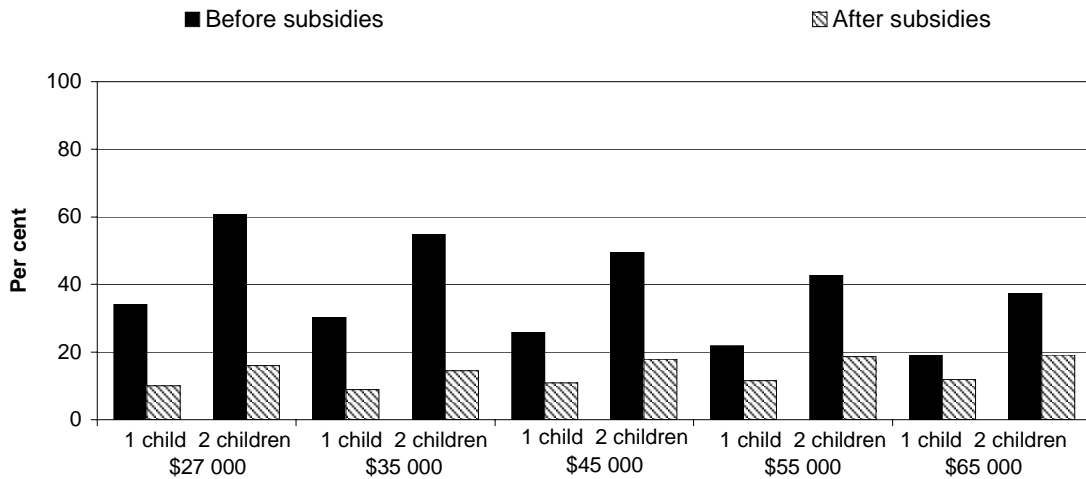
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Out-of-pocket costs are estimated for families with one child in care and families with two children in care, for five indicative levels of gross annual family income. Only data for centre-based long day care (table 14A.15) and family day care services are available (table 14A.16), with data for other service types expected to become available over time. The calculation is based on children attending full time care (equal to 50 hours per child per week) in centre-based long day care and family day care at June 2003.

After the payment of child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs as a proportion of weekly family income generally increase with gross annual family income. Nationally, families with one child in full time centre-based long day care at June 2003 and an annual gross family income of \$27 000 spent 10.0 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child care (compared with 34.1 per cent before payment of child care subsidies). By contrast, families with one child in care and an annual gross family income of \$65 000 spent 11.9 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child care (compared with 19.1 per cent before payment of child care subsidies) (figure 14.15).

For families with two children in full time centre-based long day care, the proportion of weekly disposable income spent on child care was 19.1 per cent for those on an annual income of \$65 000 (compared with 37.4 per cent before payment of child care subsidies) in contrast to 16.0 per cent for those on an annual income of \$27 000 (compared with 60.7 per cent before payment of child care subsidies) (figure 14.15).

**Figure 14.15 Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time centre-based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2003<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2003 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on couple families with dual incomes (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on June 2003 average fees.

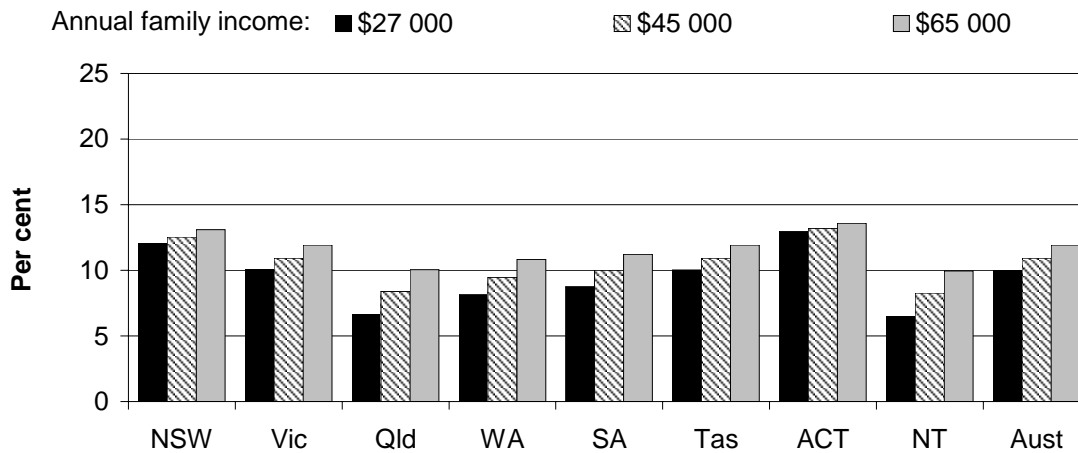
Source: DFACS, Child Care Fee Survey, June 2003 (unpublished); table 14A.15.

Across jurisdictions in 2003, out-of-pocket costs after subsidies for centre-based long day care for families with a gross annual income of \$27 000 and one child in care ranged from 12.9 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 6.5 per cent in the NT. Out-of-pocket costs after subsidies for families with a gross annual income of \$65 000 and one child in care ranged from 13.6 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 9.9 per cent in the NT (figure 14.16a).

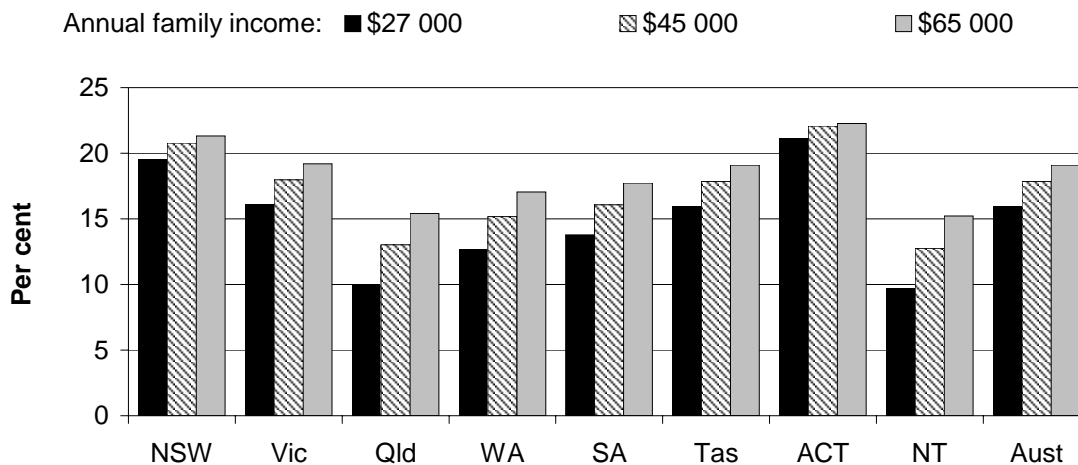
For families with two children and a gross annual income of \$27 000, the out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for centre-based long day care in 2003 ranged from 21.1 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 9.7 per cent in the NT. The corresponding proportion for families with two children in care and a gross annual income of \$65 000 ranged from 22.3 per cent in the ACT to 15.2 per cent in the NT (figure 14.16b).

**Figure 14.16 Out-of-pocket costs for centre-based long day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2003<sup>a, b</sup>**

**(a) Families with one child**



**(b) Families with two children**



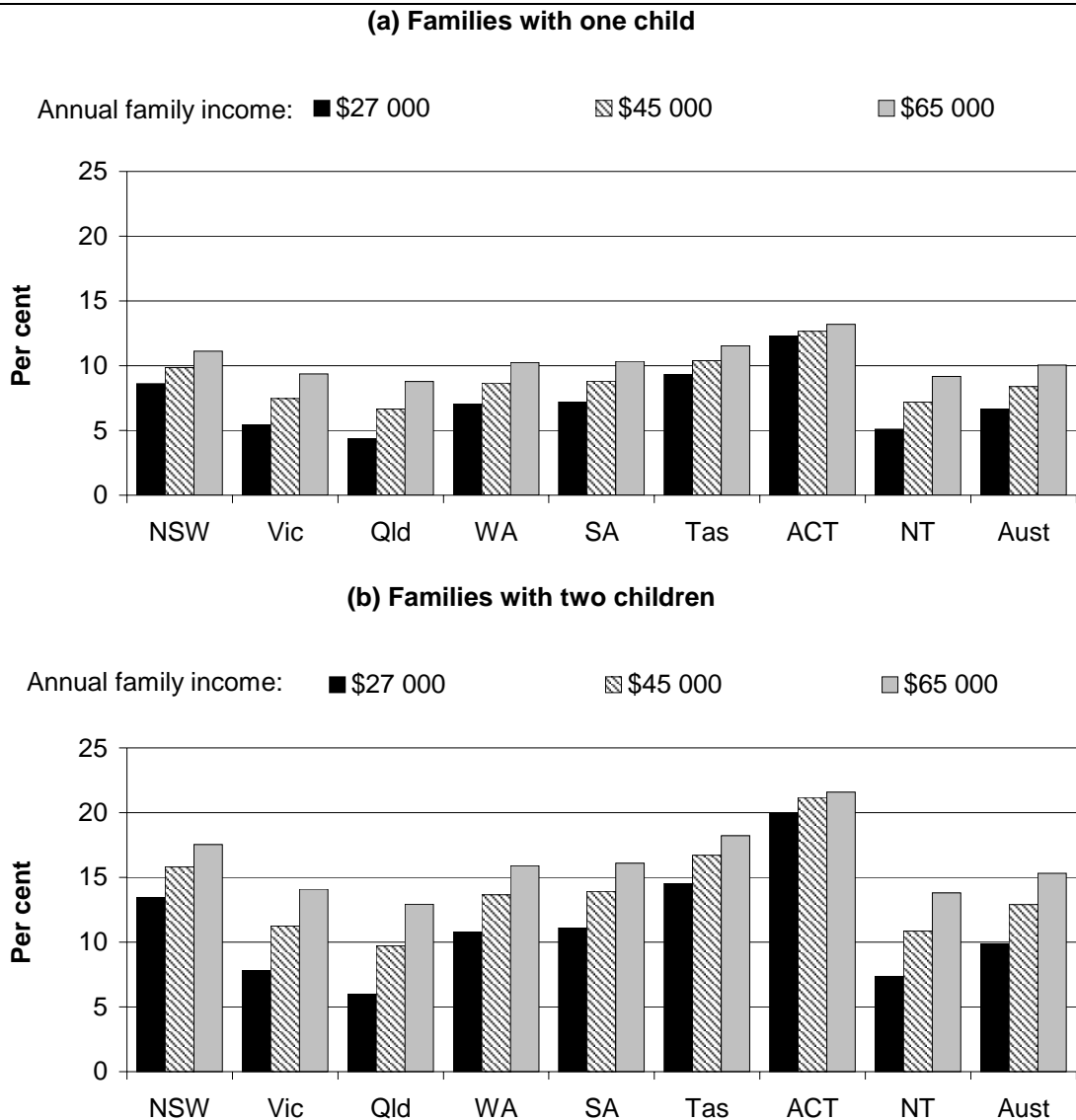
<sup>a</sup> Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2003 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on couple families with dual incomes (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on June 2003 average fees.

Source: DFACS, Child Care Fee Survey, June 2003 (unpublished); table 14A.15.

In 2003, the out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for family day care as a proportion of weekly disposable income for a family with a gross annual income of \$27 000 and one child in full time care ranged from 12.3 per cent in the ACT to 4.4 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.17a). The corresponding proportion for families with the same income and two children in care ranged from 20.0 per cent in the ACT to 5.9 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.17b).

The proportion of weekly disposable income (after subsidies) spent on child care for a family with a gross annual income of \$65 000 and one child in full time family day care ranged from 13.2 per cent in the ACT to 8.8 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.17a). The corresponding proportion for a family with the same income and two children in care ranged from 21.6 per cent in the ACT to 12.9 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.17b).

**Figure 14.17 Out-of-pocket costs for family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2003<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2003 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on couple families with dual incomes (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on June 2003 average fees.

Source: DFACS, Child Care Fee Survey, June 2003 (unpublished); table 14A.16.

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### *Client satisfaction*

This indicator has been identified by the Steering Committee for development.

## **14.4 Future directions in performance reporting**

The Steering Committee is committed to ongoing improvement in the comparability, completeness and overall quality of reported data for all indicators included within the performance indicator framework.

### **Improving reporting of existing indicators**

Processes for refining definitions, estimating methods and counting rules are continuing. Further work is planned to improve the consistency and comparability of performance information across jurisdictions. Changes in the children's services industry have required jurisdictions to revise collection methods, and these revisions have reduced the comparability of historical data across years and across jurisdictions. It will take some time before the improvements are reflected in the chapter.

### **Future indicator development**

The Review will continue to improve the appropriateness and completeness of the performance indicator framework. Future work on indicators will focus on:

- developing an access indicator for Indigenous preschool enrolment and attendance rates
- developing a service availability indicator for utilisation rates
- developing a service affordability indicator for service costs
- completing the quality indicators for licensing, accreditation and registration
- revising the quality indicators for health and safety, and client satisfaction
- developing indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet family needs, including investigating outcome indicators for the demand for child care and client satisfaction
- developing indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet children's needs
- conducting a rolling revision of all indicators within the framework.

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Options for reporting on service appropriateness in future reports will also be investigated. While these areas have been identified as requiring further work, the improvements to the chapter and progress on performance reporting will not be limited to these indicators.

## **Improving the completeness and comparability of data**

### *National Minimum Data Set*

The National Community Services Information Management Group's Children's Services Data Working Group, under the auspices of the Community Services Ministers' Council, is developing a National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) for children's services. When completed, this data set will provide a framework for collecting a minimum set of nationally comparable data and assist the development of measurable performance indicators and descriptors.

The first stage of the NMDS was pilot tested in 2002. It set out to test data elements assessing the characteristics of the children who use child care and preschool services, the organisations providing these services and their primary contact staff. The results of the pilot were positive in terms of a national data collection.

A proposal for the second stage of development (subject to funding approval) of the NMDS for children's services has now been prepared. Stage 2 items will focus more on the characteristics of families of children who use child care and preschool services and characteristics of workers delivering these services.

The stage 2 pilot test is expected to be completed at the end of June 2005 and the Working Group is currently assessing options for implementation of a national data collection in 2006-07.

### *Data collection*

Consistency in the data collected by State and Territory governments is an important goal in terms of data comparability. One way of improving comparability is to collect data in a (preferably common) sample week that is representative of a typical standard week (and does not include any public holidays) in each State and Territory. There is still room for improvement in the data collection process.

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## 14.5 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

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## Australian Government comments



Work continued with all jurisdictions on developing a National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) to collect consistent and comparable national data on children using government funded and/or licensed child care and preschool services. The first stage of the NMDS was pilot tested in 2002. The aim of pilot testing was to test the data items in the widest range of service delivery settings possible to ascertain their potential to produce nationally consistent, comparable and comprehensive data. The results of the pilot were favourable and positive. Development of Stage 2 data items is underway and is expected to be completed at the end of June 2005.

Another significant development was the introduction of a quality assurance scheme for Outside School Hours Care from 1 July 2003.

Work on the redevelopment of the Child Care Support Broadband, which funds programs for child care services and support for service provision, progressed steadily during 2003. This included comprehensive consultations with stakeholders to gather their views on how to better meet the needs of children and families and to maximise opportunities for the Government to respond to emerging priorities in child care. A report detailing the findings, analysis and recommendations from the consultation process was provided to the Department in September 2003. The Government is currently considering options for the best way forward, having regard to the report and other Government priorities and objectives.

A Think Tank on child care workforce issues was convened in April 2003 to respond to the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council's report *Child care: Beyond 2001*. The Australian Government is taking a lead role in facilitating a co-operative approach to addressing child care workforce issues with State and Territory governments and the sector.

To build on the contribution the Australian Government has already made to provide practical assistance to families with young children, the Government committed \$10 million to Early Childhood Initiatives including:

- Child Care Links Projects – to facilitate the development of child care centres in about 19 locations of significant disadvantage, including remote Indigenous communities.
- Indigenous Capital Projects – to support the continued development of child care services on remote Indigenous communities by providing assistance with minor capital works to existing buildings.
- Professional Support workshop pilots – to develop strategies to support the professional development of child care workers to improve their skills and ability to enhance children's development.



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## New South Wales Government comments

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The NSW Government's Early Childhood Services Policy provides the directions for the NSW Government's involvement in children's services. The approach framed by this policy is based on principles of quality and responsiveness and is founded on sound research evidence.

NSW views the care and education of young children as having a dynamic interrelationship that is not separable. All licensed early childhood centres are required by regulation to provide an education program tailored to each child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development and to employ appropriately qualified teaching staff.

Hence, the structure of the Children's services chapter poses difficulties in comparing the performance of NSW with that of other jurisdictions and in accurately reporting NSW data. The chapter is based on service type classifications of preschool and child care, which suits the way children's services are structured in most jurisdictions but not in NSW. While data have been provided to meet the requirements of the chapter, NSW urges caution in any use or interpretation of this data in relation to the numbers of children that access a preschool program.

The State Curriculum Framework provides a contemporary evidence based practice tool for early childhood professionals in support of best outcomes for children. Since its distribution in 2002, there has been great interest in the Curriculum Framework both nationally and internationally. During 2003 training to support the implementation of the curriculum was conducted throughout NSW.

Also during the year, the Health *Promoting Early Childhood Kit* was launched and distributed to all licensed services. Consisting of a video, manual and website, the Kit aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and families by using centres as hubs to disseminate information, build and enhance social networks, and engage in health promoting activities.

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## Victorian Government comments



The Victorian Government is committed to building stronger communities and ensuring the wellbeing of all children wherever they live, play or are cared for. Its policy approach focuses on providing services in ways that are integrated, accessible and affordable.

In this year's Budget, the Government has committed a further \$88 million to family and children's services with the commitment to give children the best possible start in life.

With a guiding emphasis on prevention, there has been heavy investment in maternal and child health and preschool services, which are universally available to provide support for the development of all children.

Where necessary, vulnerable children and families are identified and provided special, often more intensive, support before they encounter difficulties.

Eleven Best Start projects have been established to promote better co-ordination, integration and access to early years services.

In addition, the Government has established a Premier's Children's Advisory Committee to advise the Premier on the best way to deliver integrated children's services and how outcomes for children from these services can be improved.

The preschool program has been supported by the continued implementation of the group employer model of management, which groups individual, community-based preschool services under a single employer.

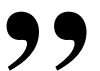
The emphasis of group employment is to ease the management pressures for voluntary committees of management and to provide a stable and an attractive professional employment model for preschool staff. In the 2002-03 State Budget, \$7.3 million was allocated to apply this model to approximately 400 locations across Victoria.

Investment in preschools is paying off, with participation rates hitting an all time high this year of 97 per cent.

The regulation of children's services passed an important milestone on 1 June 2003, with all children's services having to meet the specified premises and staff requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 (Regulations).

However, Victoria still continues to have a shortage of child care places and the Commonwealth failed to provide funding to address this issue in this year's federal budget. In 2003, the Government completed a funding initiative of \$10.25 million to assist community based, non-profit preschools, long day care and occasional care services undertake capital works to comply with the premises requirements of the Regulations.

Also, the second year of a two-year Study Grants Scheme continued to offer financial assistance to individual childcare staff working in occasional care services to obtain an approved early childhood qualification.



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## Queensland Government comments

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As part of the Queensland Government's commitment to work towards a child care system for Queensland children and families that is responsive, sustainable and of a high quality, consultations regarding the *Child Care Act 2002* and the *Child Care Regulation 2003* continued throughout the State in 2002-03.

The implementation of the Act and Regulation was a key initiative of the *Queensland Child Care Strategic Plan 2000–2005*. Important features of this legislation, that commenced on 1 September 2003, are the licensing of school age care services and increased qualification requirements for centre-based child care workers. The continued implementation of the Child Care Statewide Training Strategy supports the implementation of the legislation by providing access to subsidised and flexible training programs to more than 4,000 child care workers (including more than 200 Indigenous workers) across the State.

The Preparing for School trial is a critical component of the Queensland Government's 'Education and Training Reforms for the Future' package of initiatives. This trial aims to investigate how to better assist children's preparedness for compulsory schooling and success as lifelong learners. The outcomes of the trial will inform Government decisions about converting sessional preschool programs into a full-time year of schooling and altering Queensland's age of entry to school.

On 28 August 2002, the Minister for Education announced the 39 state and non-state schools participating in Phase 1 of the Preparing for School trial. The 30 state, 6 Catholic and 3 Independent schools representative of Queensland's diverse community contexts, began operating a preparatory class in 2003.

The Queensland Studies Authority has developed a draft *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* and draft *Early Learning and Development Framework* for use by teachers when planning for, implementing and monitoring trial preparatory programs.

The Queensland Government continues to work with the child care sector on the three priorities identified in the *Queensland Child Care Industry Plan 2002–2005*. Research into employment and training patterns and trends, as suggested in the plan has been completed. The Queensland Government, in collaboration with key child care stakeholders, is currently considering strategies identified to support the retention of qualified staff.

In 2002-03, 22 services received funding under the successful Child Care and Family Support Hub Strategy which supports the delivery of integrated child care and family support services in communities, including the Indigenous communities of Doomadgee and Aurukun.

The Queensland Government continues to promote collaboration between and integration of child care and early education services. The Department of Families and Education Queensland are collaborating on the development of policies that enhance the provision of child care, kindergartens, playgroups, school age care and family support services on school sites.

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## Western Australian Government comments

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In response to the changing child care environment, and based on a strong commitment to support families with children in their early years, the Department for Community Development has strengthened its management of child care licensing and support functions. Additional resources have been invested including increased local level support to assist providers of child care services understand and meet regulatory requirements.

Licensing compliance and monitoring functions have also been enhanced and a new licensing system has been introduced including a requirement for new applicants for child care licences to undertake an assessment to determine their knowledge of the legislation and child development.

The Child Care Services Board ceased on 4 September 2003 and will be replaced by a Child Care Advisory Committee in early 2004. This Committee will provide advice to the Director General and the Minister in relation to matters relevant to the legislative responsibilities and have a pivotal role in promoting the value of child care as a springboard for a range of other initiatives.

The Department for Community Development and the Department of Education and Training are jointly piloting an overseas qualifications assessment project with the aim of streamlining processes for qualified workers to be employed. The shortage of qualified workers continues to be a major issue across the state, particularly in view of the expanding market.

The Community Services (Outside School Hours Care) Regulations 2002 commenced on 28 August 2003. All new outside school hours care providers must be licensed prior to commencing operation. Services operating prior to 28 August 2002 have three months to register with the Department and then up to two years to become licensed.

A significant trend is the increasing market share of child care centre ownership by national child care organisations through the purchasing of existing centres and the building of new centres. Although there is some local concern that an oversupply situation may occur, overall demand for child care for children from 0 – 12 years is very high throughout the state.

At a broad across government level an Early Years Strategy is being developed. Funding is available to support families and local communities enhance and support children's early development. \$3.8 million has been allocated for the next three years and an increasing number of local areas will be progressively targeted.

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## South Australian Government comments

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The first full year of operation under the new Department of Education and Children's Services has heralded the implementation of a variety of programs aimed at increasing services in the Children's Services environment. This reporting period has seen the commencement of several long term commitments by the South Australian government for both students and Children's Services staff, with the long term aim of improving student outcomes in the early years, a time that has been acknowledged as crucial in the educational development process for students.

As a part of the commitment to Children's Services staff made by the South Australian government, approximately 180 offers of permanency were made in 2002 to staff previously employed on a contract basis, providing a more stable and secure environment within the early learning environment. In addition to the added stability provided by ongoing employment, the government has also introduced incentives for staff within the Children's Services environment to pursue formal qualifications with the aim of increasing the overall level of qualifications within the workforce.

The continuing support of programs enabling community participation as a means to improving learner outcomes has been a feature of the 2002-03 period, with the following initiatives either commencing or continuing:

- the Learning Together program, aimed at improving literacy and numeracy from birth to age three through fostering partnerships between families, early childhood services and schools,
- the Rural Care program, aimed at providing flexible long day care through selected DECS preschools in rural areas to support the needs of rural working families,
- the SACSA Planning Resource kit for Family Day Care centres, aimed at providing relevant information on the SACSA framework to home based childcare as a means to improving outcomes for children from birth to age three.

The per capita expenditure on Children's Services by the South Australian government is at a high level, however the level of Federal funding has meant the demand for Child Care places has exceeded the supply, resulting in an increase in private Child Care centres operating in 2002-03. The South Australian government will continue to seek Federal funding for additional places in order to ensure sufficient government Child Care places are available.

The South Australian Government is continuing its commitment to the Children's Services environment with projects such as the reopening of the Sturt Street Community School currently underway. This centre will provide not only a much needed integrated child care, preschool and primary school facility for children from birth to age eight located within the CBD, but will also serve as a focus centre for innovation in early childhood education and care to be used as a model for future centres.

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## Tasmanian Government comments



The State Government recognises the importance of the early years and is therefore continuing to extend and implement relevant supportive strategies in children's services.

Work has occurred to enable the *Child Care Act 2001* to commence on 1 September 2003. The Act is inclusive of Outside School Hours Care and Approved Registration Bodies (Family Day Care Schemes) for the first time as the community demonstrated its strong support for a regulatory framework for these types of care. Standards and licensing procedures are being developed for these and they are expected to be licensed early 2005. Revised standards for centre-based care 0–5 years are in place.

The Government announced in March 2003 that \$4 million from the sale of Government assets will be used over the next two financial years to develop child care centres on school premises where there is an identified community demand for child care. These centres are to be operated by community based service providers. They will provide the opportunity for child care and school providers to work together in a collaborative manner.

In acknowledgement of the importance of qualified carers working with children, the Department of Education is continuing its ongoing financial support to assist child carers to gain qualifications. In addition to the recurrently funded scholarship program, an additional \$50 000 was provided in the 2002-03 budget to provide access to formal recognition processes for staff already employed in the child care industry and also for those who may be interested in child care as a new career path. This proved successful.

The Department of Education is continuing its extensive work on a new curriculum framework for 0–16 year olds, which although not mandatory for child care services, is being strongly encouraged. Curriculum planning for kindergarten programs is already reflecting the ongoing implementation of the Essential Learnings Framework. Professional learning programs to support the Framework have been developed for both teachers and child care staff. The development of synchronicity between the curriculum and learning experiences provided to children in child care and in schooling is expected to maximise learning outcomes and school success for young children.



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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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Quality education and care for children from birth provides the foundation for development and lifelong learning. Through the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, the ACT Government supports the provision of quality programs that gives children the opportunity to have a fulfilling childhood and every chance to realise their full potential.

The Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, in partnership with parent communities, is responsible for providing preschool services for all eligible children in the year immediately prior to their entry to school. The Department is also responsible for licensing and monitoring children's services in the ACT to ensure that they meet the requirements of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*. These services include centre-based children's services, school age care, family day care, independent preschools and playschools. Funding is also provided to assist with the provision of a range of children's services programs, including early intervention programs for children up to 6 years of age.

In response to meeting needs of ACT families, a trial was initiated of preschool alternate session times in four ACT Government preschools. The trial session times were evaluated by a team of key stakeholders and recommendations used to inform the provision of preschool session times for 2004. A *Best Practice in Preschool to School Transitions* leaflet was also published to support staff when planning program transitions for preschool children.

*Contours of Learning: a guide for children's learning in the early years* was launched by Katy Gallagher MLA, Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services in August 2003. This major initiative in curriculum planning was developed for educators working in early childhood education and care settings, including early years of school, early intervention programs and special schools across the ACT. A 'train the trainer' model for the implementation of *Contours of Learning*, with two facilitator programs successfully working with early childhood professionals from a range of ACT early childhood settings.

Following a review of ACT funded occasional care services in 2002, recommendations were implemented to ensure access to permanent part time, casual and emergency child care places to assist the most vulnerable families in the ACT community. This has resulted in an increase in utilisation of these services by families. All family support agencies were notified of the availability of emergency child care and following the bushfires in January 2003, emergency child care was provided at the Lyons Recovery Centre for the first two weeks of operation.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

“ Children’s services in the Northern Territory aim to support families in caring for and educating their young children.

The Territory has a small and young population dispersed across one-sixth of the national landmass. About 40 per cent of the 0–12 population are Indigenous children, some 75 per cent of whom live in small remote communities and towns. Diseconomies of scale, an environment ranging from desert to tropical climates, and the particular interests and needs of the population have resulted in unique approaches to providing children’s services in the Northern Territory.

Comparability for reporting purposes therefore continues to be difficult. For example, this and previous reports indicate a considerably lower participation level of Indigenous children in child care services, however the data do not include participation in other services and activities such as innovative child care centres, JET creches, playgroups and informal care services, which are preferred service models in a number of communities.

The NT continues to maintain relative affordability for centre-based child care services across all income brackets. This is in part due to payment of an indexed operational subsidy of (currently) \$20.20 per child per week over two years of age, and \$27.37 per child per week under two years of age.

The NT has the longest average hours of attendance at child care centre, occasional care and vacation care services, due in part to high full-time employment levels in the NT relative to other jurisdictions. A low proportion of services offering non-standard hours of operation may be due to comparatively reduced travel to work times in the major urban areas.

In 2002-03, the focus of the program was on continuing to expand access to appropriate children’s care and education services in remote Indigenous communities and tailoring services to better meet family needs. Program development activities included improving the supply of appropriately qualified staff, and strengthening collaboration and service delivery co-ordination among children’s education, health, disability and care services.

A review of legislation regulating child care services is being undertaken in 2003-04.

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## 14.6 Definitions

Table 14.5 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Administration expenditure	All expenditure by the departments responsible for the provision of 'licensing', 'advice', 'policy development', 'grants administration' and 'training' services. Responsible departments include those departments that are responsible for administering policy for, and funding and licensing/accreditation of, child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction.
Approved preschool care	Preschool care that meets State and Territory government licensing requirements (where such requirements exist).
Centre-based long day care	Care for children (usually aged 0–5 years) in a licensed child care centre that is open for a minimum of eight hours per day, five days per week, 48 weeks per year. These centres provide quality all day or part time care for working families and the general community. Some centres provide care for limited numbers of primary school children before and after school, and during school holidays.
Child care	The meeting of a child's care, education and developmental needs by a person other than the child's parent or guardian. The main types of service are centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hour care (vacation, before/after school hours and 'pupil free days' care), occasional care and other care.
Children	All resident male and female Australians aged 12 years or younger at 30 June of each year.
Children from Indigenous backgrounds	Children of Indigenous descent who identify as being Indigenous and are accepted as such by the community in which they live.
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB)	Children living in situations where the main language spoken is not English.
Children from single parent families	Dependent children who are resident in households of lone parent (either father or mother) families.
Children's services	All government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services (unless otherwise stated).
Counting rules	Prescribed standards, definitions and mathematical methods for determining descriptors and performance indicators for monitoring government services.
Expenditure on assets	Expenditure on the acquisition or enhancement of fixed assets, less trade-in values and/or receipts from the sale of replaced or otherwise disposed of items.
Disability related care	Care of children who have a developmental delay or disability (including a intellectual, sensory or physical impairment), or parent(s) with a disability.

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Table 14.5 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Family day care	A network of experienced carers who provide care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. A co-ordinating unit oversees each family day care scheme, which covers a number of carers in an area. The unit provides support and resources to the carers. Care is flexible and can be tailored to suit each family's needs, including care outside normal working hours and, if needed, overnight care. The number of children per carer is restricted in some States by State licensing requirements.
Financial support to families	Any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of children's services (for example, the Child Care Benefit).
Formal child care	Organised care provided by a person other than the child's parent or guardian, usually outside of the child's home — for example, centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care and occasional care (excluding babysitting).
Formal qualifications	Early childhood related teaching degree (three or four years), a child care certificate or associate diploma (two years) and/or other relevant qualifications (for example, a diploma or degree in child care [three years or more], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work). Some jurisdictions do not recognise one year certificates.
Full time equivalent staff numbers	A measure of the total level of staff resources used. A full time staff member is employed full time and engaged solely in activities that fall within the scope of children's services covered in the chapter. The full time equivalent of part time staff is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on activities within the scope of the data collection compared with that spent by a full time staff member solely occupied by the same activities.
Government funded or/and provided	All government financed services — that is, services that receive government contributions towards providing a specified service (including private services eligible for the Child Care Benefit) and/or services for which the government has primary responsibility for delivery.
Informal child care	Child care arrangements provided privately (for example, by friends, relatives, nannies) for which no government assistance (other than the Child Care Benefit) is provided. Such care is unregulated in most States and Territories.
In-home care	Care provided by an approved carer in the child's home. Families eligible for in-home care include those where the parent(s) or child has an illness/disability, those in rural or remote areas, those where the parents are working shift work or non-standard hours, those with multiple births (more than two) and/or more than two children under school age, and those with a breastfeeding mother working from home.

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**Table 14.5 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
In-service training	<p>Formal training only (that is, structured training sessions that may be conducted inhouse or externally) including training in work or own time but does not include training towards qualifications included in obtaining formal qualifications. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management or financial training</li> <li>• training for additional needs children (such as children with a disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and children from a culturally diverse background)</li> <li>• other child care related training</li> <li>• other relevant courses (such as a first aid certificate).</li> </ul>
Licensed services	<p>Those services that comply with the relevant State or Territory licensing regulations. These regulations cover matters such as the number of children whom the service can care for, safety requirements and the required qualifications of carers.</p>
Metropolitan areas	<p>Defined as per the publication <i>Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition</i> (DPIE and DSHS 1994). In this publication, metropolitan areas are defined as areas that have an urban centre of 100 000 people or more. Jurisdictions were provided with a table indicating the classification assigned to 1996 statistical local areas. Jurisdictions used this table to establish the total number of rural and remote places receiving government funding.</p>
Nonstandard hours of care	<p>Defined by service type as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• centre-based long day care — services providing service for more than 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday and/or providing service on weekends</li> <li>• preschool — services providing service for more than six hours per day</li> <li>• family day care — services providing service for more than 50 hours per week and/or providing service overnight and/or on weekends</li> <li>• vacation care — services providing service for more than 10 hours per day</li> <li>• before school hours care — services providing service for more than two hours before school</li> <li>• after school care — services providing service for more than three hours after school</li> <li>• occasional care — services providing service for more than eight hours per day</li> <li>• other — services providing service for more than 10 hours per day.</li> </ul>
Occasional care	<p>Services for parents who need short periods of care for children under school age. They can be used regularly or irregularly while parents shop or attend appointments, for respite from full time parenting, and to provide developmental opportunities for children. Some occasional care services also provide for casual or part time workers.</p>
Operational place	<p>A licensed place (where a licensing system exists, or in receipt of government funding where not licensed) able to accept children at 30 June each year.</p>

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Table 14.5 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Other care	Child care designed to meet the needs of children in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous background, NESB children, children with a disability or whose parents have a disability, and children living in remote and rural areas). These services include multifunctional services, multifunctional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services, mobiles and toy libraries.
Other expenditure on service provision	All recurrent expenditure on government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services. It also includes one-off, non-capital payments to peak agencies that support child care and preschool service providers.
Outside school hours care	Outside school hours care provides care for primary school children before and/or after school and, in some services, on 'pupil free days' during the school term. Some outside school hours care services also provide school holiday care or are linked to vacation care services, and provide for primary school children all year. These services are generally located on or near primary schools and offer recreational programs and activities along with time for rest and homework.
Preschools	Educational and developmental programs for children in the year or two before they begin full time school. Traditional preschool services are generally provided on a sessional basis (two to five sessions of two and a half to three hours in length per week) in dedicated preschools during school terms only. Preschool programs can also be provided in a long day care centre by a qualified early childhood teacher.
Primary contact staff	Staff whose primary function is to provide care and/or preschool services to children.
Program support activities	Administration expenditure associated with the licensing of services that do not receive government funding.
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments were made using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent expenditure	Expenditure that does not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets (new or secondhand). It consists mainly of expenditure on wages, salaries and supplements, purchases of goods and services, and the consumption of fixed capital (depreciation).
Rural and remote areas	Areas defined as per the <i>publication Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition</i> (DPIE and DSHS 1994). This publication assigned a measure of remoteness to each statistical local area in Australia. Jurisdictions were provided with a table showing the classification assigned to each statistical local area. Jurisdictions used this table to establish the total number of rural and remote places receiving government funding.
Serious injury Service	Injury requiring hospitalisation or a visit to (or by) a doctor. The type of service provided. Preschool service, for example, is a package of educational and developmental services received by a child in the year or two before full time schooling. Preschool services may be provided by either a preschool service provider or a child care service provider.

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**Table 14.5 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Service type	The categories for which data were collected, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• long day care</li><li>• family day care</li><li>• vacation care</li><li>• before/after school care (outside school hours care)</li><li>• occasional care</li><li>• 'other' care</li><li>• preschool services.</li></ul>
Substantiated complaint	An expression of concern about a child care or preschool service, made orally, in writing or in person, which constitutes a failure by the service to abide by the State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently considered to have substance by the regulatory body.
Vacation care	Care and developmental activities provided for school age children during school vacation periods.

**Table 14.6 Indicators**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care	The number of services providing non-standard hours of care divided by the total number of services, by service type.
Proportion of special needs groups using services relative to their population proportions	The number of children from special needs groups using children's services divided by the total number of children using children's services. Results are presented separately for child care and preschool services, with special needs groups divided into NESB children, children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, children from low income families, children with a disability, and children from remote or rural areas. These results were compared with these groups' representation in the community.
Serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service	The total number of serious injuries sustained by children divided by the total number of registered or licensed services.
Substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service	The number of substantiated complaints divided by the total number of registered or licensed services. Results are presented separately by service type. The proportion of substantiated complaints against which action was taken is also reported.
Out-of-pocket costs relative to family income for children's services	Modelling undertaken by the DFACS for families with one child and two children respectively in full time care (defined as 50 hours per week for each child) for a range of indicative annual incomes. Out-of-pocket costs are based on the average weekly fee for one child and two children in full time care, and are calculated as a proportion of weekly disposable income, after the payment of child care subsidies. The annual income levels used are \$27 000, \$35 000, \$45 000, \$55 000 and \$65 000.

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## 14.7 References

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