



**Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into
Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.
Addendum September 2014**

Background

This addendum provides supplementary information to the Australian Nanny Association's first submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning (Submission 254), and offers responses to issues about nannies working in the family home that were identified in the public hearings as needing clarification or further information.

1. Minimum qualifications for subsidised nannies working in the home.

The Australian Nanny Association, (ANA) believes a minimum of a Certificate III in Children's services is appropriate for a regulated nanny working in a family home provided there is a Diploma in Children's Services (or higher) qualified coordinator based within the agency providing care to mentor and coordinate the role of the nanny. We envisage this would be similar to the current system of Family Day Care where a coordinator oversees up to 15 Family Day Care Educators in the home.

2. Social development and activities for children in regulated nanny care.

Due to the flexible nature and often lower ratio of nanny care there is a unique opportunity to socialise and build relationships with other nannies and families within their local community through play groups, mothers groups and play dates with other children and their parents or carers. Examples of some activities a nanny may attend with the children in their care are:

- Local community based playgroup
- Story telling at the local Library
- Visiting Museums, farm, Zoos, Aquariums and the park.

These activities would be pre-negotiated with the parents, some being regular weekly activities and others planned in advance to cater to the children's interests.

3. Nanny to child ratios.

Nanny to child ratios are currently self-regulated by the sector and the same as ratios under the National Quality Framework. ANA recommends ratios remain the same however, this will vary from family to family with some families having one or two children and others having four or more children. Rates of pay are based on the amount of children in care and the expertise required of the nanny.

4. Costing of nanny care.

In the private nanny system costs vary based on location, number of children, ages and needs of the children and hours of care required.

ANA recommends that nannies be subsidised at an hourly base rate which would cater for up to two children and then increasing per child thereafter. The hourly rate under the private system is currently between \$30-35 per hour for 1-2 children and increases per child to \$35-40 per hour for up to 4 children. These rates include all oncosts of wages – super, payroll tax, workers compensation, other insurances and leave loadings.

The base rate for a subsidised nanny covering up to 2 children is consistent with the private nanny sector and provides incentive for nannies to take on more demanding roles with a higher ratio of 1 nanny to 4 children as the rate increases with more children. This option keeps the costs down as the base rate will cover up to two children in care.

Services providing in home nanny care will need funding for set up and ongoing administrative support funding. This will enable quality care, monitoring and accountability. Currently, the majority of private nanny agencies typically do not provide an educative supervisory role for nannies. Agencies, Family Day Care operators and centre based services would need to expand their current business to include the more flexible nanny care services. The costs associated with providing qualified supervisory staff on call overnight will affect service viability and needs to be considered when taking into account operating costs, award rates and conditions.

5. Hours of work required for families to be eligible for childcare subsidies.

ANA notes the Productivity Commission's recommendations that families should be working or studying a minimum of 24 hours per fortnight before being eligible to receive child care subsidies. ANA believes that the hours required should be less to accommodate those parents who are returning to work for short amounts of time, for example; shift workers working short but regular weekend shifts. Consideration should also be given to stay at home parents who may need some respite from the full time parenting role.

6. Work health and safety in the family home.

ANA recommends that the service coordinator from the agency providing the care make an initial orientation visit to families approved for a nanny service to carry out a general home safety check. Once the nanny commences work with the family a daily safety audit should be carried out at the beginning of each shift. ANA recommends that nannies be required to maintain a safe and hygienic environment in their day to day role.

7. Service provision of a regulated and funded nanny scheme.

ANA would like to see models of nanny care where the marketplace is broad to enable coverage for families in rural, regional and city areas, and allow current and new early childhood services the ability to provide the nanny care. The two models ANA believe will work for funded nanny care are as follows:

Model 1: The agency, centre or Family Day Care service recruits, trains and supervises the placement and ongoing support of the nanny in the home.

Model 2: An agency, centre or Family Day Care service provides an educational and supervisory service and staff are recruited privately and placed with the family.

Both models allow for the family to interview a variety of candidates and choose a suitable nanny for their children, or arrange an alternative nanny if the one they initially engage is deemed unsuitable for their needs.

8. Au Pairs and the extension of the 6 month visa

ANA believes the current demand for au pairs is due to the lack of affordable and flexible in home care. ANA believes there is a place for the au pair cultural exchange program and that au pairs are most appropriately utilised as before and after school care for school aged children, or as a part time helper for a stay at home parent. Au pairs should not be used to provide sole charge, full time care and there are several safety concerns with inexperienced, untrained au pairs being used in this way. ANA does not support the extension of the related visa from 6 months to 12 months due to the unregulated, unqualified and inexperienced type of care that is provided by an au pair. Once a regulated and subsidised nanny model is in place, ANA believes the demand for au pairs will decrease as families who require professional in home care will be able to afford to move into the regulated nanny model.

9. Licensing service providers of a regulated and subsidised nanny scheme.

ANA recommends that regulated and subsidised nanny care has its own licensing, separate to the existing approved child care services to cater for the differences in providing care in the family's own home under the National Quality Framework.

The Australian Nanny Association, as the peak national body representing nannies and nanny agencies would like to continue to provide input into the ongoing consultation process around nannies becoming regulated and subsidised. ANA members would like to offer their services for any future pilot program or trial of the proposed regulated nanny model.

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