

Queensland early Childhood Sustainability Network Inc. (QECSN)

Submission to the review of the Productivity Commission Report August 2014

QECSN Inc. (www.gecsn.org.au) fully supports all aspects of the submission from the Early Childhood Sustainability Alliance to the Productivity Commission.

We have engaged in mentoring and supporting Queensland early childhood educators in strong understanding of both the philosophy and practices of sustainability, and in education for sustainability. Our members are based in locations from North Qld to the Gold Coast, and have grown steadily in numbers for the past decade, as a recognition of the importance of education for sustainability in the early foundational years of children's lives, and the desire to increase their understanding of the diversity of sustainability and how to practically engage children and their families in these understandings. Our Patron, Dr Julie Davis has been a passionate and articulate advocate for education for sustainability, especially in early childhood, for many years.

Despite the UN decade for sustainability, and the concerns of climate change outlined in the Early Childhood Sustainability Alliance submission, education of the educators in the importance of education for sustainability remained sporadic throughout many Tertiary Institutions. Universities now embed Sustainability in the B.Ed, but only recently has CHCECE025 Embed Sustainable Practices in Service Operations become a compulsory competency in the Diploma of Early Childhood studies. There is a great need for the staff in early childhood centres to be educated themselves in the knowledge of education for sustainability (efs) so they are able to effectively engage children in the sustainable elements of the Early Years Learning Framework. It is essential that the standards and elements of the Framework not only be retained, but strengthened and supported.

Additionally, to implement best practice, we would strongly recommend that existing educators in the workforce be financially supported by the State and Federal government to be trained in education for sustainability to enable them to meet and exceed the requirements of the Early Years Learning Framework.

References-

National ECEFS Alliance Submission August 2014

Davis, J., 2010, *Young Children and the Environment: Early education for sustainability*, Cambridge University Press, Victoria

Davis, J. & Elliott, S., 2003, *Early Childhood Environmental Education: making it mainstream*, Early Childhood Australia, Watson, ACT