

ELAA Response to National Review of Teacher Registration Consultation

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) is a peak body representing over 1100 service providers in Victoria and across Australia. Our membership includes independent preschools; early years management organisations; integrated and long day care services; government and independent schools; and out of school hours care services.

ELAA's vision is 'excellence in early learning for every child'.

ELAA welcomes the National Review of Teacher Registration. We support the establishment of a nationally consistent approach to the registration of early childhood education teachers. We understand that there are teacher registration arrangements in place for early childhood teachers in all territories and almost all states, with the exception of Queensland, however, each jurisdiction has varying arrangements and requirements due to differing legislation and schooling structures.

Uniform arrangements and requirements would mean that it is easier for early childhood teachers to move between jurisdictions, comfortable knowing that registration will be recognised. A national approach to registration would mean consistent requirements, and consistent protections and standards, as well as reducing unnecessary red-tape.

The approach would also simplify the registration process for people who live close to a state or territory border and who regularly work across jurisdictions, reduce unnecessary delays and potentially reduce costs of multiple registrations. It would also make it easier for early childhood teachers to apply for work regardless of the jurisdiction within which they live.

How could a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration support and improve the quality of early childhood teaching in school and non-school settings?

Early childhood teachers work in both community and school settings. A nationally consistent approach to teacher registration support would recognise the valuable role early childhood teachers play in setting the foundations for children's ability to learn. Many school teachers do not have a good understanding of the work undertaken by early childhood teachers. Being part of a common national registration system would communicate the value of early childhood teachers to school teachers and thereby play a role in supporting a positive transition experience for children from preschool to school, recognising their expertise when documenting transition issues.

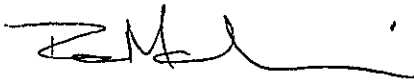
How could the Teacher Standards be applied for early childhood teacher registration?

Since 30 September 2015, all qualified early childhood teachers who are employed or engaged as an early childhood teacher in a Victorian education and care service or a Victorian children's service need to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). VIT has adapted the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to recognise the diverse contexts in which teaching takes place; for example, the terms 'school' has been replaced with 'learning environment' and the term 'student' has been replaced with 'learner'. Other critical documents which should inform the development of the national standards include the Early Childhood Australia Code of Conduct, the Principles of Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and the Practice Principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Provisionally registered early childhood teachers are required to find a mentor to support them and to find interested teachers to participate in a panel to review the project they are to complete. With their larger infrastructure, schools are well set-up to support their provisionally registered teachers and often have a pool of mentors to draw on, however no such structures or support exists in early childhood education. Provisional teachers in stand-alone kindergartens struggle the most.

It would be highly valued to set up a bank of mentors and those prepared to be a part of a panel to make meeting this essential requirement. Facilitating access to mentors and panel members would make this part of the process less of a barrier or hurdle for provisional teachers so they can focus their energies on developing the mentor/mentee relationship and completing the project. ELAA recommends that this part of the registration process also be considered for its applicability in the early childhood education sector.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Martin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tina Martin
Interim Chief Executive Officer
7 May 2018