



Early Childhood Teachers' Association Inc.

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The Early Childhood Teachers Association (ECTA) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide feedback on the National Review of Teacher Registration.

ECTA represents 820 Early Childhood Professionals working across Queensland and interstate. Our members were pleased that early childhood teachers were recognised in this Nation Review of Teacher Registration, as early childhood education professionals have not been explicitly recognised in the past, so this is a commendable step forward.

ECTA has provided the opportunity to their members to review the consultation paper and have provided a summary of responses to each focus question below.

How well are the implementation and content of the eight elements of the Framework working?

The eight elements of the framework provide a clear and consistent vision for teacher registration bodies in all states and territories, while allowing each state/territory to retain their own policies and practices. However, ECTA feels that there should be a National Registration Body which oversees and processes teacher registration for the teaching profession in Australia. The Australian community is a transient one, and teachers are no exception to this. As a profession we need to have a healthy sharing of teachers across states/territories to ensure quality of teaching throughout the nation.

ECTA supports maintaining the current minimum qualification requirement for registration as being at least four years of higher education, including completion of an initial teacher education program accredited in Australian, or an overseas qualification assessed as equivalent by the relevant teacher registration authority.

How has the embedding of the Teacher Standards in the Framework supported teacher quality? In particular, how have the Teacher Standards influenced the way in which teachers move from provisional to full registration and through renewal of registration?

Embedding the Teacher Standards in the Framework has certainly had a positive impact for teachers in primary and standalone kindergartens, as it has assisted the documentation process for teachers to use as evidence to move from provisional to full registration. However in early childhood education and care settings this is still an issue. For four year qualified early childhood teachers in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, and those working within an approved kindergarten program in ECEC settings, it will be difficult for them to move from provisional to full registration under the current supervision requirements.

Many four year qualified teachers in ECEC settings are the only registered teacher, or they are in a similar position as others that may also be four year qualified in their workplace. The current requirement for provisional teachers to be mentored by a

teacher who is on full registration, is problematic for context of the early childhood education and care setting, especially in regional, rural and remote regions.

How could current teacher registration arrangements be improved to strengthen both teacher registration implementation and teacher quality?

ECTA would support the implementation of a formal mentoring program (mandatory 12 month period) for beginning teachers. This could be provided by the Initial Teacher Education programs or via the employing organisation itself if they had the staffing to support this. In both instances funding would need to be allocated and provided for this to be a sustainable approach.

Assisting beginning teachers to be paired with an appropriately qualified early childhood mentor that can connect and support with them regularly to make this transition would be beneficial. This possibly could be done through the use of information communication technologies or regular site visits. Funding would need to be provided to make this feasible for professionals located in regional, rural and remote regions.

How could improvements be implemented, acknowledging different legislative, regulatory, administrative and resourcing contexts? What are some expected benefits and success measures?

As stated earlier in our response, ECTA believes that a National Registration Authority which oversees and processes teacher registration for the whole teaching profession in Australia would be beneficial. This would resolve the current issues which currently arise through the process of mutual recognition across multiple jurisdictions, where teachers need to apply and pay fees in each jurisdiction. This current process creates unnecessary financial burdens on teachers that are transient through the country.

Should nationally consistent approaches to the registration of early childhood education teachers be considered?

Early Childhood Teachers should be included and there should be a nationally consistent approach to the registration of these teachers. There should be a consistent minimum standard of a four year tertiary education specific to early childhood education (either a four year Education degree or a three year undergraduate degree in a field related to the area of teaching, plus a post qualification in Early Childhood Education). This minimum standard must be preserved to protect the integrity of the profession.

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

High quality early childhood education has long been recognised through research as being directly linked with positively lifelong outcomes. Teachers that are early childhood specific qualified and registered, is of utmost importance to maintaining high quality programs in both school and non-school settings. Therefore, it is

important that early childhood teachers working in non-school settings are bound by the same professional standards as those in school settings.

It is important to note that the evidence collected to demonstrate how teachers meet the standards in the two different educational settings, would differ as they would need to be contextualised as these settings are addressing different curriculum and different pedagogical approaches.

A nationally consistent approach would certainly raise the community expectations and value of early childhood teachers in non-school settings to match those in school settings. This may also assist in building positive professional relationships between early childhood teachers in both school and non-school settings to ensure there is a smooth transition between the two settings.

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

Of particular concern to ECTA is the differences in language used between the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and the policies, practices and national early childhood frameworks (for example, the Early Learning Years Framework, the Building Waterfalls Curriculum, the National Quality Framework and the National Quality Standards). Consideration must be given particularly around the assessment and data collection requirements of *Standard 2.3 Curriculum Assessment and Reporting* as early childhood education has very different assessment techniques than that of formal schooling. This needs to be recognised and contextualised.

Another significant concern is that many four year qualified teachers in ECEC settings are the only registered teacher. The current requirement for provisional teachers to be mentored by a teacher who is on full registration, is problematic for context of the early childhood education and care setting, especially in regional, rural and remote regions. There is a dire need for support to be provided to early childhood teachers in locating an appropriate reviewer and mentor.

Thank you
Jodie Riek

On behalf of the members of the Early Childhood Teachers' Association