

IN THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION

Matter Number: AM2018/9

Applicant: Independent Education Union of Australia

Fair Work Act 2009 s.158 – Application to Vary a Modern Award

STATEMENT OF SUSAN IRVINE

I, Susan Irvine of [REDACTED] in the State of Queensland, say:

1. I have prepared two expert reports in the associated proceedings in Matter No. C2013/6333 and one expert report in Matter No. AM2018/9.
2. On 16 June 2019 I received correspondence by way of an email from the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) requesting that I prepare a further report in relation to this matter. Annexed hereto and marked Attachment 2 is a copy of that correspondence.
3. My report is attached to this Statement and is marked Attachment 1.
4. The attached report should be read in conjunction with previous expert reports outlined in paragraph 1.

[REDACTED]

Signature of Susan Irvine

19 June 2019

Date

Lodged by: Applicant	Telephone:	(02) 8202 8900
Address for Service: GPO Box 116, Sydney NSW 2001	Fax:	(02) 9211 2455
	Email:	michael@ieu.asn.au

IN THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION
IEU Equal Remuneration Order/Work Value Case
Associate Professor Susan Irvine
Follow-up Report
19 June 2019

1. This brief report is an addendum to the three statements that I have prepared as evidence in the IEU Equal Remuneration Order/Work Value Case and follows my appearance at the Fair Work Commission on Wednesday 12 June 2019.
2. The report addresses questions raised during the hearing regarding the impact of early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy reforms and associated changes over the last decade on the day-to-day work of early childhood teachers (ECTs) teaching in centre-based ECEC services (i.e., long day care centres and preschools).
3. Particular consideration has been given to the impact of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and its various elements, the overarching professionalisation agenda in ECEC (SCSEEC, 2012) and related focus on quality teaching in all education contexts (TEMAG, 2014).

The NQF in context

4. The NQF is the centrepiece in a raft of reforms designed to “improve educational and developmental outcomes for children attending early childhood education and care... services under the National Quality Agenda (COAG 2009).
5. This is a holistic and integrated policy framework that needs to be considered as a whole to understand its impact on teachers’ work in ECEC. The different elements have been designed to work together to drive quality improvement in ECEC (Irvine & Price, 2014).
6. For example, setting the baseline for service provision, the National Law and Regulations raised qualification requirements for all educators in ECEC. This included the need for long day care centres to engage a degree qualified ECT, with most needing to engage a second ECT from 2020. The employment of more qualified ECTs is a key strategy to enhance the quality of educational programs and practices in ECEC services.
7. The legislation and regulations underpin the National Quality Standard (NQS) which identifies higher quality ‘aspirational’ standards. The NQS shifts the focus from structural inputs (e.g., qualifications, ratios) to children’s experiences and outcomes in ECEC. The NQS emphasises early learning and raises expectations regarding educational programs and practices.
8. The reference point for educational programs and practices is the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF), Australia’s first national early years curriculum. The EYLF promotes a discourse of education, referencing concepts such as curriculum, pedagogy and learning outcomes. All educators, regardless of qualification, are expected to work with the EYLF. However, the regulatory requirement for more qualified ECTs, implementation of the EYLF and strengthened focus on educational programs and practices are all

linked. The driving intent has been to improve young children's educational outcomes, responding to Australia's poor performance in the landmark OECD Starting Strong II Report (OECD, 2006).

9. The NQF sets higher expectations for educators' professional practice, detail practice that is typically associated with teachers. The expectation is that ECTs will lead effective teaching and learning with their group of children, most often the preschool group, and make a positive contribution to educational programs and practice across the centre in both formal and informal leadership roles.
10. Expectations regarding the role of other educators in teaching and learning differ, commensurate with their role and qualification. For example, an assistant educator holding a vocational qualification (Certificate III) is expected to work with the EYLF, with direction and support from a lead educator (Diploma) or ECT. In jurisdictions where preschool funding is available to long day care centres, diploma qualified educators work with the EYLF (or approved State preschool curriculum), with direction and support from an ECT. This is not dissimilar to the school context, where teacher aides work with the Australian Curriculum, with direction and support from a teacher.

The impact of reforms on the day-to-day work of early childhood teachers in ECEC

11. True to original intent, the introduction of the NQF has increased expectations regarding the professional practice of all educators working in ECEC.
12. Evidencing increased expectations, many ECEC services formerly rated as 'high quality' under the previous accreditation system, were initially rated 'Working Towards' or 'Meeting' under the NQF.
13. Current NQS Snapshot data collected by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority shows continuing quality improvement in ECEC since the introduction of the NQF (ACECQA, 2018).
14. Arguably, the EYLF has had the greatest impact on the day-to-day work of educators and teachers in ECEC. However, recognising the range of pre-service qualifications and differences in the nature and focus of these (e.g., AQF Level 7 - professional, AQF Level 3 and 5 - para-professional), there are different expectations for how the EYLF will be used by teachers and non-teachers.
15. In day-to-day teaching, ECTs are expected to engage more deeply with a wider range of educational theories. Shifting from a narrow developmental lens, the EYLF identifies a range of theories to inform teaching and learning, including socio-cultural, socio-behavioural, critical and post-structural theories. ECTs are expected to draw on their deep knowledge of different theories to plan and implement teaching, and to document, assess and report on children's learning in ECEC.
16. The EYLF identifies a range of effective early years pedagogical practices. Emphasis on play-based learning is balanced with an equal focus on intentional teaching or what was labelled instructional support in the Australian E4Kids Study (Tayler, 2016). Recognising

the impact of level and specialisation of teaching qualification (Tayler, 2016; Warren & Haisken-DeNew, 2013), more is expected from ECTs. In their day-to-day work with children, ECTs are expected to exercise their professional judgment and select teaching approaches to maximise individual learning, drawing from an expanded suite of evidence-informed teaching strategies. Higher expectations of ECTs is plainly evidenced by the requirement for an ECT to teach the preschool education program where this is funded by government, regardless of service type (e.g., preschool, long day care centre).

17. The EYLF introduced outcomes-based education in Australian ECEC, identifying five high-level learning outcomes. This marked a significant shift in curriculum planning in ECEC, requiring all staff to learn how to plan engaging learning experiences based on the EYLF principles and practices and contributing to the new national learning outcomes. Acknowledging their training as curriculum experts, more is expected from university qualified ECTs.
18. The EYLF introduced the terminology of 'assessment of learning', most often associated with schools and not previously used in Australian ECEC. Borrowing from the school context, the rationale was that assessment is an integral component of effective teaching and learning. The EYLF requires monitoring, assessment and documentation of children's learning progress, against five high level learning outcomes. As in schools, all staff contribute to this documentation (e.g., assistant educators, lead educators, ECTs). However, in day-to-day practice more is expected from ECTs. This includes the expectation that ECTs leading the preschool education program will regularly engage in formative and summative assessment of learning, and use this to develop a transition statement for each child in their group reporting on learning over the preschool year. The transition statement is shared with the child's family and primary teacher to support successful transition to school.

The associated impact of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

19. Increased expectations of ECTs in all education contexts, including ECEC, are reinforced by the introduction of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).
20. Introduced as a key component in the quality teaching agenda, the APST identifies seven professional standards to support effective teaching and learning, which closely align with the NQS, in particular, quality standards relating to educational programs and practices (QA1). In a growing number of jurisdictions, ECTs are required to be registered in ECEC, and need to provide evidence they are meeting the APST and NQS. Following the release of *One Teaching Profession* (AITSL, 2018), it is expected that Australia will move towards national registration of ECTs in ECEC.

The impact of more diverse groups of children and need for individualised teaching and learning.

21. The policy focus on expanding access to higher quality ECEC as a universal approach to strengthen early learning, and as a form of early intervention to improve outcomes for

children experiencing disadvantage, has publicly promoted the value and importance of this work and raised expectations for teaching performance.

22. A key objective underpinning Australia's commitment to universal preschool was to increase the participation of children from a range of target groups in high quality early education. This is evidenced in the National Partnership Agreement:

Especially for the first two years of implementing universal access (2009 and 2010), national priorities include: increasing participation rates, particularly for Indigenous and disadvantaged children; increasing program hours; ensuring cost is not a barrier to access; strengthening program quality and consistency; and fostering service integration... (COAG, 2008, p. 5).

23. National funding requires the employment of a four-year degree qualified ECT to teach the preschool education program, in standalone preschools and, where supported, in long day care (e.g., Queensland, Victoria).
24. There is now strong interest in expanding preschool education to provide two years of early education led by a qualified ECT prior to school entry, beginning in low-income and disadvantaged communities (Early learning, Everyone benefits, 2019). Victoria is the first state to commit to this expansion, following the lead of other countries such as England, Scotland and New Zealand.
25. More broadly, increasing diversity in Australian society is visible in ECEC, where educators and teachers are working with more diverse children and families. This has served to increase the demands and complexity of work for all staff.
26. The NQF requires all educators to engage in inclusive practices in ECEC. The EYLF defines inclusion as:
- “taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference” (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).
27. Reflecting the research on effective teaching and inclusive practices, the NQS and EYLF promote the need for, and benefits of, individualised teaching and learning approaches. All educators are expected to nurture positive relationships with individual children, build on individual strengths, facilitate learning interests and engage in intentional teaching to promote and extend individual learning.
28. Acknowledging the level and specialisation of training, more is expected of ECTs in ECEC. This is implicit in the NQF (linking the elements) and is made explicit through the APST which requires teachers to differentiate their teaching to optimise children's learning. It is also explicit where funding requires the employment of an ECT to lead the educational program (e.g., universal preschool).

29. The alignment of quality standards and professional teaching standards is clear, working together to establish higher expectations of ECTs.
30. For example, the NQS sets the expectation that “each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program” and that “educators... are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child” to maximise their learning. Underpinning the work of ECTs, the APST identifies the expectation that teachers will know their students and how they learn. There is detailed explanation of what this looks like in practice, linked to teacher registration. For example, this includes “designing and implementing teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds”.
31. The NQF is proactive in promoting respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and ways of knowing and being. The EYLF sets expectations that all educators will promote respect for diversity, promote reconciliation, embed Indigenous perspectives in educational programs, and demonstrate cultural competence. The APST has an explicit focus on teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and sets out detailed requirements to ensure that teaching is responsive to individual child and local community and cultural settings.
32. The NQS sets the requirement that “every child is supported to participate” in the educational program. The APST requires teachers to design and implement teaching activities that support the participation and learning of children with a disability and details expectations regarding day-to-day inclusive teaching.
33. The NQF is the sum of its parts and relates to other educational reforms in Australia, including the introduction of professional standards for teachers. These reforms share a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the education continuum, and have raised expectations for those working in these contexts.
34. There has been a related shift in ECT teacher education programs, ensuring that ECTs can meet the expectations set in both the NQF and APST.
35. The regulatory requirement for more ECTs to teach in ECEC is designed to leverage their advanced teaching knowledge and skills to strengthen educational programs and practices in ECEC.

References

ACECQA, (2018). NQF Snapshots. Retrieved from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/snapshots>

AITSL, (2018). One teaching profession: Teacher registration in Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/national-review-of-teacher-registration/report/one-teaching-profession---teacher-registration-in-australia.pdf>

COAG, (2008). National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Retrieved from http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/education/other/past/early_childhood_education_NP_2009.pdf

COAG (2009). National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care. Retrieved from http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NQF/nap_national_quality_agenda_early_childhood_education_care_signature.pdf

DEEWR, (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Early Learning Everyone Benefits. Retrieved from <https://www.everyonebenefits.org.au/>

Irvine, S. & Price, J. (2014). Professional conversations: A collaborative approach to support policy implementation, professional learning and practice change in ECEC. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 85-93.

OECD, (2006). *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/starting-strong-ii_9789264035461-en

Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, (2012). *National Early Years Workforce Strategy 2012 – 2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-workforce-strategy-0>

Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, (2014). *Action now: Classroom ready teachers*. Retrieved from <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/tools-resources/resource/action-now-classroom-ready-teachers>

Taylor, C. (2016). *The E4Kids Study: Assessing the effectiveness of Australian early childhood education and care programs. Overview of findings at 2016*. Final report to the Partner Organisations of the Effective Early Educational Experiences (E4Kids Study). Retrieved from http://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2310907/E4Kids-Report-3.0_WEB.pdf

Warren, Diana and Haisken-DeNew, John P., *Early Bird Catches the Worm: The Causal Impact of Pre-School Participation and Teacher Qualifications on Year 3 National Naplan*

Cognitive Tests (October 2013). Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 34/13. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2344071>

Subject: Equal Remuneration / Work Value Application
Date: Sunday, 16 June 2019 at 12:25:26 Australian Eastern Standard Time
From: Michael Wright <michael@ieu.asn.au>
To: Susan Irvine [REDACTED]
CC: Arthur Dowdle <arthur@ieu.asn.au>
Priority: High
Attachments: PastedGraphic-3.tiff

Dear Associate Professor Irvine,

Re: Equal Remuneration / Work Value Application

We refer to the above matter and previous correspondence/conversations between union officers and yourself. We ask that you prepare a further Report for the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) that can be tendered at the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

There is an ongoing expectation that you will adhere to the Federal Court of Australia Expert Evidence Practice Note (GPN-EXPT), which has been provided previously (and which can be downloaded [here](#)).

As was discussed at the Fair Work Commission whilst you were a witness, the IEU is required to file additional evidence by no later than Wednesday 19 June 2019.

Work Required

IEU requests that you prepare a report that further explores aspects of your third Statement dated 22 November 2018 (a copy of which is available [here](#)).

In particular we ask you to explore the following matters:

1. how have the changes that you have identified in your Report as broad changes affecting the work value and complexity of the work of early childhood teachers impacted on their work *on a day-to-day basis*?
2. At para 56 (page 16) of your Report you state:

56. *Like the Australian Curriculum for Schools, the EYLF includes a focus on increased discipline knowledge, teachers as highly skilled pedagogues, individualised and personalised learning approaches and ongoing documentation and assessment of children's learning progress against predetermined learning outcomes.*

It has been asserted (or at the very least inferred) that one particular aspect of the change in curriculum, a change to an individualised and personalised learning approach, have not impacted the early childhood sector and the work of early childhood teachers.

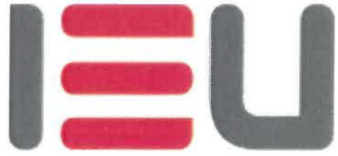
Do you agree or disagree with this proposition? On what basis do you agree or disagree? If it has impacted on impacted the early childhood sector and the work of early childhood teachers, what is the extent of that impact?

Thank you again for giving your time and expertise to the Fair Work Commission and the various parties involved in the matter.

Please call Michael Wright on 02 8202 8900 should this correspondence require any further elaboration or discussion.

Regards,

Michael Wright



Dr Michael Wright | Senior Industrial Officer
NSW Independent Education Union, Independent Education Union of Australia
GPO Box 116
SYDNEY NSW 2001
The Briscoe Building
485 - 501 Wattle Street
ULTIMO NSW 2007
P 02 8202 8900 | F 02 9211 1455
www.ieu.asn.au