

All About OSHC

Cultural Safety for Educators -
More than a good workplace culture
*Lainey Walker, Reconciliation Action
Plan Coordinator, QCAN*

OSHC Workforce and Wellbeing
*Nicki Graham, Community Child Care
Association*

**Children's Voices - Data and Evidence in the
Approved Learning Framework update**
Dr Jennifer Cartmel

**Wellbeing strategies to prevent or
support recovery from burnout**
Be You



www.noshsa.org.au 2021 SNAPSHOT



489,800
children using
OSHC



13
average weekly
hours spent by
children in OSHC



4,608
services in
Australia



27,491
OSHC educators

About NOSHSA

NOSHSA is a federated alliance with representation across Australia. NOSHSA's State and Territory Associations are the recognised peak body's for OSHC in each of their jurisdictions. Peak bodies are recognised by governments as being able to provide pertinent advice and recommendations on behalf of their members. NOSHSA is recognised as the Australian Peak for OSHC by Education Council. The membership bases in each of NOSHSA's jurisdictions includes both small and large providers.

With you as a member, the lobbying power of NOSHSA increases dramatically. Together, our membership and voice can change policy. This is our combined strength.

How can you make the difference?

Be a part of this Australia wide organization by joining your State/ Territory OSHC Association now.

- Attend meetings and network with colleagues.
- Pass on your views to your Association so your concerns can be heard and acted upon.

NOSHSA State and Territory Branches

Queensland & Northern Territory

New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory

South Australia

Victoria

Western Australia

Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) (NOSHSA Secretariat)

Network of Community Activities

OSHCsa

Community Child Care Association

Outside School Hours Care WA (Inc.)

66 Woodend Rd,
Woodend, QLD 4305

8-10 Belmore Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

PO Box 55,
Klemzig SA 5087

Suite West 8 & 9,
215 Bell St Preston,
Victoria, 3072

OSHCwa@gmail.com

info@qcan.org.au
1300 781 749
www.qcan.org.au

network@networkofcom
munityactivities.org.au
(02) 9212 3244
networkofcommunityacti
vities.org.au/

oshcsa@gmail.com
www.oshcsa.org.au

reception@cccinc.org.au
(03) 9486 3455
www.cccinc.org.au

www.oshcwa.com

Contents

3	WELCOME
PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION	
4	OSHC Professional Standards for Educators - <i>Kylie Brannelly, QCAN CEO</i>
5	Environments, partnerships and program planning on show in new OSHC video suite
DATA AND EVIDENCE	
6	Children's Voices - Data and Evidence in the Approved Learning Framework update - <i>Dr Jennifer Cartmel</i>
7	Quality Ratings - <i>ACECQA</i>
9	New South Wales Government commissions research: 'More than "Just Convenient Care"'
10	Boost exercise and cut computers: the new best practice for Aussie kids in OSHC— <i>Dr Rosa Virgara, University of South Australia</i>
QUALIFICATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS	
11	Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care. Australia's first entry level qualification specifically for educators in Outside School Hours Care - <i>Kylie Brannelly, QCAN CEO</i>
12	Traineeships - A Professional and Sustainable Workforce - <i>Nick Michalak- Regional Director and Chief Relations Officer, Happy Haven OSHC</i>
ATTRACTION AND RETENTION	
14	OSHC National Workforce Survey: results, interpretations, guidance & what next? - <i>Barbi Clendining, Firefly HR Co-Founder & OSHC After The Bell, Co-Host</i>
18	Queensland needs more of the people our youngest people need - <i>QLD Government Initiative</i>
19	Managing Service Growth - <i>Sunnybank Hills OSHC, Queensland</i>
LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITY	
21	<i>A brief history of changes to the Diploma of School Age Education and Care</i>
WELLBEING	
23	Wellbeing strategies to prevent or support recovery from burnout - <i>Be You</i>
25	Cultural Safety for Educators - More Than a Good Workplace Culture - <i>Lainey Walker, Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator, QCAN</i>
27	OSHC Workforce and Wellbeing - <i>Nicki Graham, Community Child Care Association</i>
31	NEWS AND EVENTS



Welcome

In a year that has been full of challenges for the OSHC sector, we proudly share the 4th edition of All About OSHC with gratitude and optimism. We are thankful for the wonderful contributors to this magazine that have taken the time (often when there has been little to spare) to share their valuable thoughts, insights and ideas. Without your contributions, this edition would not be possible. Sincerely, thank you.

We have purposefully focused this edition on the OSHC workforce, aligning our themes to those of the recently launched National Workforce Strategy 'Shaping Our Future'. This is a 10 year strategy with the view to ensure a sustainable, high quality children's education and care workforce 2022-2031. The strategy includes a call to action with a timeframe that is intended to be both ambitious and allow sufficient time to consider and address many of the complex and longstanding workforce challenges experienced by the sector. The strategy also promotes that no single stakeholder group can or should be responsible for all of the actions and that the most effective and sustainable change will come about through collective will and action.

There are six (6) areas of focus within the strategy which include: Attraction and retention; Leadership and capability; Wellbeing; Qualifications and career pathways; Data and evidence and Professional recognition. NOSHSA draws upon these focus for All About OSHC and make a commitment to doing our part to advance the Outside School Hours Care sector and workforce in Australia.

Kylie Brannelly
Chairperson
NOSHSA

The contributions in All About OSHC come from a variety of sources and authors. The views expressed in these articles may not represent the express views of NOSHSA delegates.

OSHC Professional Standards for Educators

- *Kylie Brannelly, QCAN CEO*

The Professional Standards for Educators in Outside School Hours Care are based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. AITSL acknowledges the work and expertise the Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) has provided in producing this document to support educators working in out of school hours care settings.

The crucial role of the educator

Educators share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives. The Professional Standards for Educators (the Standards) reflect and build on national and international evidence that an educator's effectiveness has a powerful impact on children's wellbeing and development. Effective educators can be a source of inspiration and, equally importantly, provide a dependable and consistent influence on young people as they make choices about matters that affect them.

Professional Standards for Educators

Developing professional standards for educators that can guide professional learning, practice and engagement facilitates the improvement of educator quality and contributes positively to the public standing of the profession. The key elements of a quality educator are described in the Standards. They articulate what educators are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Foundation, Developing, Proficient and Lead.

The language used to describe each of the career stages has been thoughtfully approached. As many educators in OSHC do not hold formal qualifications when they begin their career in OSHC, the standards articulate the essential knowledge, practice and engagement foundations. The next level describes educator's progress as developing and complements the formal qualifications that educators may be working towards. At the proficient and lead levels, educators may have completed and obtained a relevant qualification.

The Standards and their descriptors represent an analysis of effective, contemporary practice by

educators throughout Australia. Their development included a synthesis of the descriptions of educators' knowledge, practice and professional engagement used by accreditation and training authorities, employers and professional associations. Each descriptor has been informed by educators' understanding of what is required at different stages of their careers. A sector specific validation process ensured that each descriptor was shaped by the OSHC profession.

Purpose of the Standards

The Professional Standards for Educators are a public statement of what constitutes educator quality. They define the work of educators and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective Outside School Hours Care provision in quality services that will contribute to enhancing outcomes for children. The Standards do this by providing a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across educators' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between educators, educational leaders, nominated supervisors, governing organisations, professional associations and the public.

The OSHC Professional Standards for Educators are freely available to all OSHC services that would like to work with them. They can be accessed here:

<https://www.oshcprofessionalstandards.org.au/>

Griffith University has been undertaking an evaluation of the OSHC Professional Standards for Educators and look forward to publishing some findings in the near future.

Environments, partnerships and program planning on show in new OSHC video suite

An engaging new series of videos, created through a collaboration between [Community Child Care Association](#) (CCC) and the [Victorian Department of Education and Training](#), is showcasing best practice in the outside school hours care (OSHC) sector.

The collection not only gives solid examples of high quality OSHC [environments](#), [partnerships with families](#), and [program planning](#), but also gives working examples of the level of professionalism shown by educators and leaders in the OSHC services which are featured.

Professionals in the OSHC sector have embraced the videos with gusto, with over 1,000 views in the first fortnight of them being launched. Further recognition of the calibre of the collection has come through international recruitment agency [Randstad](#), which has chosen to include the series in its induction package for casual OSHC educators at a national level to give them a better understanding of the high quality education and care they are expected to provide.

Designed for multiple uses, including by individual educators, teams, or as part of a larger session of professional development, the series is freely available to support not only education and care professionals in Victoria, but around Australia as well. Reflective questions designed to provoke further discussion and inspiration have been included alongside the footage to enhance the value of the videos to the OSHC sector, and to support the growth of the profession as a collective.

As well as providing an opportunity to enrich discussions on the important topics featured, the depth and nuance of the practices and conversations featured in the videos highlights the level of professionalism of the OSHC sector, and the skills and knowledge the featured educators and leaders bring to their roles.

Examples of best practice, voices of children and educator perspectives appear in the videos to show a holistic picture of a day in the life of a high

quality OSHC service, as well as giving a “behind the scenes peek” into five leading OSHC programs, CCC Executive Director Julie Price explained.

“Not only do OSHC services boost children’s wellbeing and development, they create stronger, more connected school communities where each child can truly feel they belong,” Ms Price said.

The videos showcase the important and nuanced role that OSHC services play in local communities by supporting children’s learning and helping families to achieve a balance between paid work and the care of their children, she added.

As well as supporting existing OSHC professionals, the videos serve as an advocacy piece to the broader education and care community and beyond, showcasing the complex critical reflection undertaken by educators as they seek to create nurturing environments for children that encourage hands-on learning, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, while promoting social, emotional and physical development.

“As the Victorian peak body for the OSHC sector, we see the real difference OSHC makes in local communities. These videos demonstrate how high quality OSHC services create a healthier society, both now and in the future,” Ms Price adds.

To access the videos, the development of which was funded by the Department of Education and Training Victoria, please see the links below.

- OSHC [environments](#): Examples and inspiration
- OSHC [partnerships with families](#): Examples and inspiration
- OSHC [program planning](#): Examples and inspiration

To learn more about the support available to OSHC services in Victoria via CCC, [please see here](#).

Children's Voices - Data and Evidence in the Approved Learning Framework update

- Dr Jennifer Cartmel

The chief investigators updating the Australian Learning Frameworks (ALFs) recently provided an update in their stage 2 progress report. During this stage they shared the Discussion Paper, which identified current strengths, as well as opportunities for clarification, expansion and updating the Frameworks ALFs.

Investigators requested stakeholders provide feedback on the Discussion Paper through both online surveys and written submissions. Children and young people were also invited to respond to specially crafted questions through words and drawings. The investigators received a great response, including 1933 completed surveys, 65 written submissions and 159 children and young people's responses.

After the initial feedback period, they conducted 5 Delphi Panel's with attendees from across Australia. These panels drew together ECEC and OSHC colleagues as well as industry stakeholders. The panels used

a series of open-ended questions to identify similarities and differences in views and understandings and helped the team begin to work towards 'expert' consensus. In Round 2 the "consensus" Delphi panel made up of the consortium members met to consolidate the final recommendations.

All the feedback received throughout Stage 2 will help inform the recommendations for updating the ALFs.

Stage 3 commences in December 2021 and will involve the piloting and testing of the draft updates across 15 ECEC and OSHC services across Australia. The sample will be spread across states and territories, jurisdictions (eg. government, private, community based) and those that cater for different economic and linguistically diverse communities to ensure the updates are examined across multiple and contextually different sites.)

<https://www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/departments-and-schools/macquarie-school-of-education/our-research/research-groups/approved-learning-frameworks-update>



Quality Ratings

- ACECQA



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority™



In August, ACECQA released its latest quarterly National Quality Framework (NQF) [Snapshot](#). Chris Mason, Senior Manager of Workforce, Engagement and Research at ACECQA provides an overview of how outside school hours care (OSHC) services are performing against the National Quality Standard.

As at 30 June 2021, there are just over 4,600 OSHC services approved under the NQF, operated by just under 1,500 service providers. Most (81%) of these are single service providers, while just eight providers operate more than a third (35%) of all OSHC services.

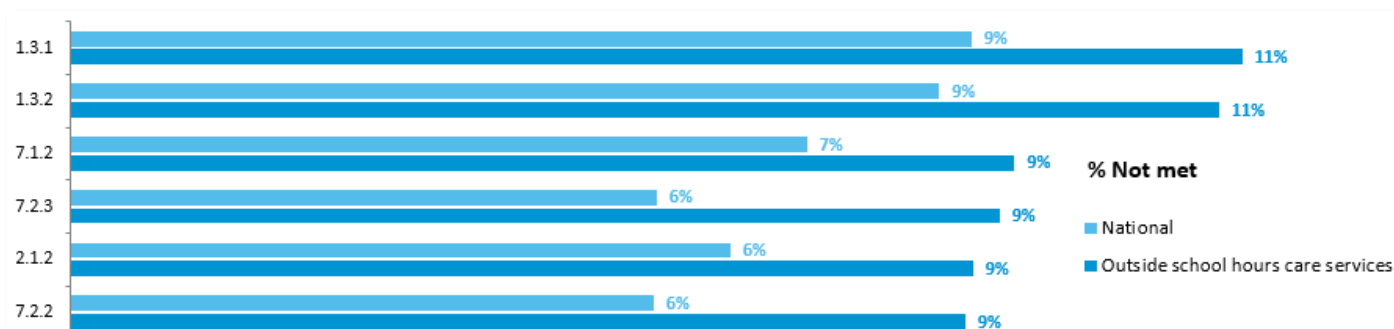
The *Education and Care Services National Law* and National Regulations govern the minimum standards and requirements that all providers of services regulated under the NQF must meet. The National Quality Standard (NQS) is then used by all state and territory regulatory authorities to assess and rate services.

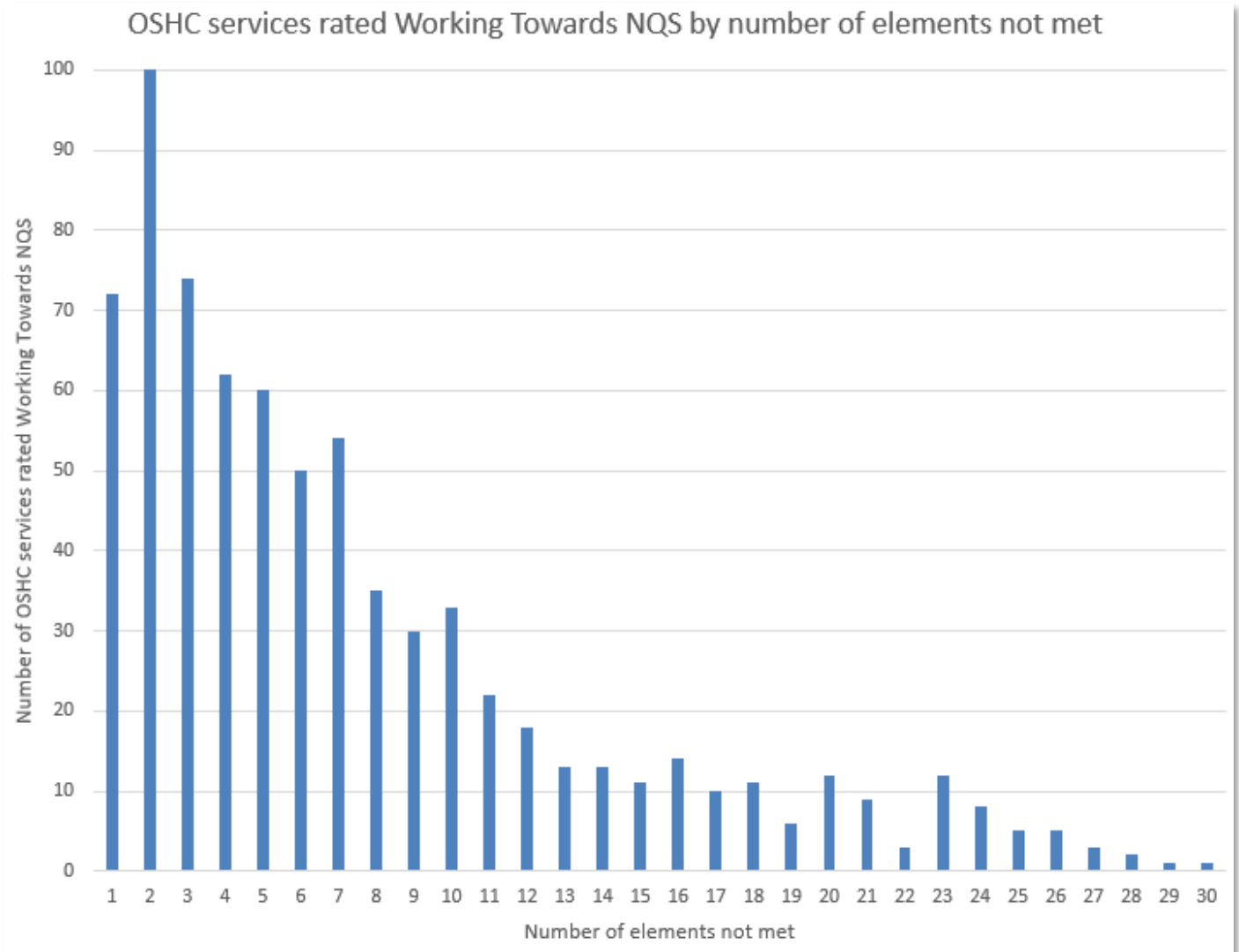
Our latest NQF Snapshot shows that 82% of OSHC services are rated Meeting NQS or above, up from 75% a year ago and 70% three years ago. To be rated Meeting NQS overall, all elements across the seven quality areas must be met. This means that a service may be rated Working Towards NQS based on not meeting a single element or not meeting several elements.

The figure below provides the breakdown of performance against the most challenging elements of the NQS. The six elements that OSHC services find most challenging are:

- Assessment and planning cycle (1.3.1)
- Critical reflection (1.3.2)
- Management systems (7.1.2)
- Development of professionals (7.2.3)
- Health practices and procedures (2.1.2)
- Educational leadership (7.2.2).

These are the same six elements that all services overall find most challenging.





Of the 752 OSHC services rated Working Towards NQS, a third have been given the rating due to not meeting three or fewer elements of quality. As shown in the figure below, more than 70 OSHC services are rated Working Towards NQS due to not meeting a single element of quality, representing 10% of all OSHC services rated Working Towards NQS. This emphasises that many OSHC services are very close to meeting the high bar set by the NQS.

Our website includes a wealth of information and guidance to support all services to [meet the NQS](#), as well as [information sheets](#), [educational games](#), [videos](#), specific resources on [educational leadership](#), and of course the overarching [Guide to the NQF](#).

In addition to the pdf version of the Snapshot, we continue to enhance the online, interactive version with additional analysis, as well as publish the full dataset in Excel. I hope that these are helpful resources and, on behalf of ACECQA, would like to thank you for your continued commitment and important contributions to the education and care of children during the COVID-19 global pandemic.



GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK



First published – February 2018
Last updated – January 2020

New South Wales Government commissions research: ‘More than “Just Convenient Care”

The Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) sector is captured within the broader Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. This however has been problematic for OSHC services which are often misunderstood by the public, regulators and other parts of the sector.

A new literature review challenges these misconceptions and positions OSHC as an important and evolving sector that has been on a significant growth trajectory for the last decade. This review, commissioned by the New South Wales Government of Education outlines 13 important recommendations. While it will be the New South Wales Government of Education that uses the recommendations to help inform their policy work moving forward, it is a useful study for all governments to consider in their policy work.

In the review, ‘*More than “Just Convenient Care”*’ leading academic researchers Associate Professor Dr Jennifer Cartmel and Dr Ian Bruce Hurst from Griffith University make the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: More research needs to be conducted in partnership with priority groups to better understand their engagement with OSHC.

RECOMMENDATION 2: More research needs to be conducted in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to better understand their engagement with OSHC.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Greater awareness needs to be created about the educational and developmental benefits of OSHC.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Research needs to be conducted into the educational and developmental benefits of OSHC.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Explore ways to promote OSHC as a site of play and friendship to children.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Support OSHC services to improve their approaches to working with older children.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Review existing inclusion supports for mainstream OSHC services to build the capacity of services to care for children with high support needs.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Explore possible benefits of providing transportation between specialist schools and mainstream OSHC.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Explore increased provision of OSHC at specialist schools.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Greater awareness needs to be created about the educational and developmental benefits of OSHC with school principals and management.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Explore ways of supporting school principals to recognise the benefits of positive partnerships with OSHC coordinators and providers.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Introduce the use of Professional Standards for OSHC educators.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Review the qualification requirements for OSHC services to ensure that the workforce has the skills and knowledge to care for children with high support needs.

The literature review can be accessed here https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/information-for-parents-and-carers/outside-school-hours-care?mc_cid=5c81ac0dad&mc_eid=UNIQID#OSHC3

Boost exercise and cut computers: the new best practice for Aussie kids in OSHC

- *Dr Rosa Virgara, University of South Australia*



University of
South Australia

Thousands of school children will participate in a world first initiative to increase physical activity and cut screen time in [Outside School Hours Care \(OSHC\)](#) centres across the country.

The biggest of its kind anywhere in the world, the study involves researchers from [University of South Australia](#), University of Newcastle, University of Western Australia, University of Wollongong and Flinders University. The study will address growing concerns about children's sedentary behaviour marked by an increase in regular screen time.

Awarded \$1,499,839 through the [NHMRC's Medical Research Future Fund](#) (MRRF) the researchers will work with 192 Australian OSHC centres to implement and evaluate newly established best practice guidelines for children's physical activity and use of screens.

With more than half a million Australian children attending [Outside School Hours Care \(OSHC\)](#) and research showing that [31-79 per cent of OSHC sessions are sedentary](#), it is an important and timely move.

In Australia, [less than one in four children](#) achieve the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. On average, primary school-aged children (aged 5-14) [spend more than two hours each day](#) sitting or lying down for screen-based activities.

With around 10 per cent of Australian primary school children attending OSHC every week, the guidelines have the potential to affect many children on a regular basis.

Lead researcher, UniSA's [Professor Carol Maher](#), says the initiative could be a game-changer for OSHC centres, helping them better support the health and wellbeing of Australian children in their care.

"For a long time OSHC centres have been concerned about getting the right balance of physical activity and screen time for children in after school care," Prof Maher says.

"Currently, physical activity and screen time practices in Australian OSHC centres are not guided by policy. As a result, practice varies enormously-

"We know that children's activity patterns, including their physical activity and screen time behaviours, have wide-ranging impacts on their physical and psychological health, school performance and wellbeing, so it's really important to get this right."

"For the past five years, we've consulted with more than 500 OSHC directors to develop the first national guidelines for children's physical activity and screen time in OSHC. And now, we're at the point of helping OSHC centres implement and embed these into daily practice."

The new guidelines* encourage free outdoor play which is consistent with research that shows that over half of children's physical exercise is accumulated through this type of physical activity.

OSHC centres will be recruited from South Australia, Western Australia, and the Hunter New England region of NSW, with the first cohort expected to begin early mid year 2022.

For further information contact: Prof Carol Maher
T: +61 8 8302 2315 E: Carol.Maher@unisa.edu.au

"We know that children's activity patterns, including their physical activity and screen time behaviours, have wide-ranging impacts on their physical and psychological health, school performance and wellbeing, so it's really important to get this right."

Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care. Australia’s first entry level qualification specifically for educators in OSHC - *Kylie Brannelly, QCAN CEO*

On 25th August, 2021 the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) approved the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care as a Nationally Accredited qualification.

The development of this course was led by the secretariat of the National Outside School Hours Services Alliance and involved extensive consultation with the Australian OSHC sector. The consultation process sought to identify the relevant units that should be included in the qualification. Through this consultative process, the following twelve (12) units were selected as core units for the qualification.

- CHCSAC006 Support children to participate in school age care
- CHCPRT001 Identify and respond to children and young people at risk
- HLTWHS001 Participate in workplace health and safety
- HLTFSE001 Follow basic food safety practices
- CHCSAC007 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care
- CHCEDS049 Supervise students outside the classroom
- CHCCCS009 Facilitate responsible behaviour
- CHCSAC008 Work collaboratively and respectfully with school age children
- CHCSAC009 Support the holistic development of children in school age care
- BSBTWK201 Work effectively with others
- CHCLEG001 Work legally and ethically
- HLTAID012 Provide First Aid in an education and care setting

As required of the qualification packaging of fifteen units (15), there are a further 3 electives required to complete the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care.

In addition to extensive consultation, ASQA requires significant validation activities to be undertaken when accrediting national courses such as the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care. Some of these requirements are:

- the course must not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.
- the accredited course is based on an established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.
- the accredited course leads to a VET qualification and has course outcomes that are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification descriptor identified for the course

The Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care will be available for enrolment in 2022. The Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care will be deleted from the national training package when the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care is available for implementation.

For further information about the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care, please go to <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/10983NAT> and click to Contacts details

Traineeships - A Professional and Sustainable Workforce

- Nick Michalak- Regional Director and Chief Relations Officer, Happy Haven OSHC

The OSHC Sector, particularly in South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT, are seeing a gap in approved qualifications resulting in a qualified educator shortage. Happy Haven OSHC isn't exempt from this. With a large proportion of our educator pool being University students studying education, placements throughout the year, particular 3rd and 4th year placements (qualified educators) put a massive strain on an already depleted team. We found that this strain had negative flow-on effects to our educators, children, families and schools that we operate at. Our directors and staff were stretched to their limits, finding it difficult to find work-life balance. The children of our service were seeing an unfamiliar face, which often resulted in dysregulated behaviour, adding to stress of educators, but also families, who would be dealing with unfamiliar educators and not feel as though the service had a regular staffing team. As a result of this, complaints would often filter through to schools about staffing issues, however the reality is, that we aren't alone with this issue.

A couple of years ago, one of our Regional Directors, Tony Smith, recognized this shortage and wanted to find a solution. "The Happy Haven Trainee Program was born from the overarching desire to build a professional and sustainable workforce through community". We recognized that we needed to capture school aged students through years 11 and 12 and encourage them through their own studies that a career in OSHC is worthwhile to pursue. It was at this point that our Professional Development Coordinator, Jo Clark, championed this project and worked collaboratively with ACCCO, MASNational and the Department for Innovation and Skills to develop this pathway for both school-based trainees and adult trainees.



We were able to provide our Trainees, with flexible learning options and innovative communication approaches. This was a really important factor for Happy Haven as many of our Trainees are in rural areas. We were able to provide this through online learning, Teams and ZOOM calls, regular service visits, but also provided face-to-face training days.

It wasn't only, the trainees and Happy Haven that saw the benefits of this program. Parent feedback was encouraging. "From a parent's perspective, the program has been a fantastic success ... I am also very pleased that Happy Haven have chosen to remunerate their young trainees instead of just classifying it as pure work experience, as this is a fantastic incentive for the trainees which I think they have all embraced."

The Department for Education's Industry Engagement Consultant highly valued the program. Of note was the student's ability to engage in face-to-face VET programs, particularly in clearly identified pathways to employment as recognised by Government research, the collaborative model which values each stakeholder's role and the increased ability to access work/vocational placements and post-school pathways.

When working at our services, our student-based trainees are above ratio. This has had wonderful impacts on the children including richer engagement with the children, higher levels of collaboration and increased supervision.

Happy Haven OSHC have seen many of our student trainees, complete their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), complete their Certificate III or IV, and now continue to work as employees of Happy Haven OSHC. Whilst this hasn't filled the void for Qualified Educators, it has provided these students with an employment pathway that many want to continue working in and provides them with the opportunity for

further study to continue their Diploma and become the future leaders of Happy Haven OSHC.

Our 24 adult diploma trainees are progressing well with us seeing our first graduates by Christmas 2021. These trainees have been engaged within different areas of the business to provide additional hours above operational requirements. Some of these areas of work include, Inclusion Support, Vacation Care Planning, Traineeship mentoring and Wellbeing visits.

This program has seen Happy Haven OSHC receive state wide recognition as the winner of the 2021 SA Training Awards- Medium Employer of the Year. Happy Haven was also a finalist in two other categories, the Industry Collaboration Award and our student-based trainee, Kayla Rainsford was a finalist for the Trainee of the Year. This recognition has proven that we are on the right track with the level of training and commitment of all involved.



OSHC National Workforce Survey: results, interpretations, guidance & what next?

Barbi Clendining, Firefly HR Co-Founder & OSHC After The Bell, Co-Host

This article has been provided by independent HR consultants, Firefly. The article is based on a recent survey they conducted to gain some insights into workforce and the impacts of COVID 19 on the OSHC sector and in particular reflects broad feedback shared by educators in Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT. The survey conducted is not part of an academic or formal protocol.

NOSHSA will be undertaking further research about the impacts of COVID 19 and mandatory vaccinations and will endeavour to share some of these insights in future editions of All About OSHC.

It's all over the place right now, whether you're looking at information from the profession or watching the news. Everywhere you look, people are talking about labour shortages. The 'great resignation' for 2022 has also been a popular topic in recent months, spanning many industries and professions.

We are living in a unique period when there are more jobs than people to fill them. Before COVID-19, a workforce issue had been observed within the education sector (OSHC, ECE, and schools). COVID-19 has now compounded the problem much more, with the workforce issues projected arriving far earlier and faster than expected.

There is a problem. That is undeniable, but it is on a large scale.

Greg Savage (<https://www.gregsavage.com.au/>), one of Australia's most renowned and respected recruiting consultants, recently spoke about how his own son's employment (a local Sydney pub, while he is studying) is paying \$1000 sign-on incentives to bar staff. That's how fierce the rivalry for employees and people is.

It's difficult to compare the OSHC workforce to



those of other businesses since we have our own set of standards, including qualifications, working with children checks, criminal history checks, vaccination requirements, and, of course, ensuring child safeguarding practices are in place.

From working and recruiting in the profession, we have conducted a recent survey with responses

from all over Australia regarding the OSHC workforce.

I wanted to hear directly from educators about their actual feelings and ideas regarding OSHC, as well as where they envision themselves in the field (staying, leaving, progressing, contemplating other options).

I wanted to know what was driving their decisions for the future, and the findings were not what I expected. As a former educator and director, I immediately thought of the long hours and irregular shifts as a major reason why educators would leave. This did not appear to be the case. I also assumed, based on my previous experience, that salary rates would be a big role in educators contemplating departing. There was



something else that jumped out even more than this.

What I found from the results?

Northern Territory

Results appeared to focus on support – many felt they were not supported by management (or in their own management) and pay was a factor to others. Majority thought they would not likely be in the profession in 5 years, with COVID-19 playing no part in this decision. To help retain educators in the Northern Territory, the results showed they would like to see more respect

towards them as Educators and professionals especially from key stakeholders around them.

Tasmania

Results again had a similar focus with management being the main cause for educators wanting to leave the profession, or obstruction to their own management from other stakeholders also stood out here. All respondents said they would still be working in OSHC in 5 years and contributed supporting children to the main reason for doing so.

Educators felt to help them to stay in OSHC they would need to have evenly balanced workloads, their professional opinion listened to and respected, wanted to be provided the tools and resources to complete their roles and all felt the need for families to understand the workload and responsibility working OSHC brings. All respondents said COVID-19 has made no impact on how they feel about OSHC as a career.

South Australia

What a resilient bunch of respondents! Nearly all had no plan to leave OSHC (however many cited they will be changing employers / Approved Providers). If they were to leave, the main trends seemed to be due to low pay and increasing workload, a change of profession (such as teaching), lack of respect from employers, an issue of finding quality staff to work alongside them and be supported, lack of respect and hours – if not at a senior position such as Director / Assistant director, the part time hours were difficult for some.

Keeping the South Australian educators in the profession was definitely a clear one – the children. The passionate answers that shone through were beautiful. Others also highlighted the following would help keep them in the profession: higher pay; ability to be able to do the job within the paid hours; a supportive employer being valued more in the school community and a positive and supportive culture.

Nearly all said no or maybe (but unlikely) to leaving in the next 5 years with many saying that

COVID-19 had in fact had an impact – but not how we think – in a positive way, with many highlighting it has made them more passionate and it has been good to see the value and importance of OSHC, especially as being deemed as essential.

ACT

Results from the ACT were the opposite to the other states, with seeing a trend in a high proportion have contemplated leaving and nearly all respondents do not see themselves working in OSHC in 5 years time. COVID-19 has also affected how many respondents felt about working in OSHC and it has made nearly all question whether they want to stay in the profession.

The main reasons for leaving from the ACT was the workload – ‘so much work – so much paperwork’, and educators feeling overwork with too much pressure and responsibility for the low pay. They felt undervalued and not provided with the support or professional development opportunities.

To stay in OSHC, respondents felt higher pay would be the main factor to nearly all that answered. They were looking for better pay, conditions, supportive approved providers and time to complete all requirements.

I wanted to emphasise the above States and Territories as I feel the below states already attract a lot more data and in turn, I have been brief in my responses.

New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia

What percentage of survey respondents have contemplated leaving the OSHC profession?

- 61% of have contemplated leaving the OSHC profession.
- 15% want to change Approved Providers / Employers.
- 26% do not want to leave.

Main factors contributing for wanting to leave?

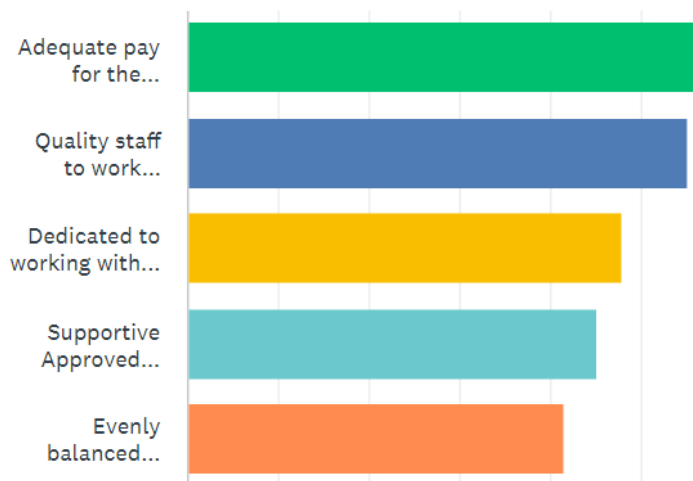
- Pay for these four states sat as the main factor.
- Burnout was the other main factor for all



four states.

- Career opportunities, lack of professional growth (many citing they want to stay and grow in OSHC – if they can).
- Stress.
- Lack of flexibility
- Studying other areas (such as teaching)
- Management issues, negative work environments, lack of respect.
- Too much responsibility, lack of hours to complete work or lack of support within the service from other educators (no others to work alongside).
- Tendering processes (for NSW) appeared to be a very high response and the stress and uncertainty that this can bring with it.
- Family – the hours aren't very family friendly.
- Mandatory vaccinations.

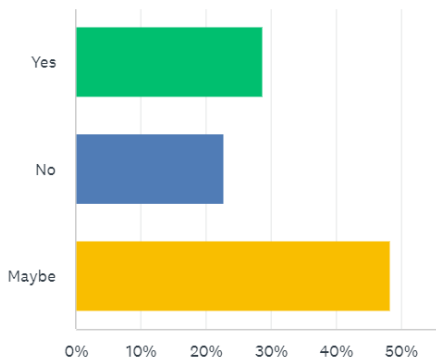
Main factors contributing for wanting to stay?



- Adequate pay for the responsibility held.
- Quality staff to work alongside.
- Dedicated to working with children
- Supportive Approved Provider / Employer.
- Evenly balanced workload.
- Supportive work culture and leadership.
- Flexibility.
- Continuous learning opportunities and

growth.

Do you think you'll still be in OSHC in 5 years?



- 29% Yes
- 23% No
- 48% Maybe

Factors for whether staying were: own family balance; if support is provided; finding a balance between on and off the floor; children; respect from management given; COVID-19 mandatory vaccinations and whether anything changes; self-demotion (wants less responsibility);

So, what does Firefly HR do with all this information?

This is a learning opportunity for management, employers, and approved providers. There are Educators that wish to contribute to quality and share their thoughts and are looking for strong and supportive leadership. Educators want to be recognised and valued. We usually hear about wages, and yes they too play an important role.

“Even the governor of the Reserve Bank Philip Lowe urges employers to pay more” according to a recent [piece](#) by Jenna Price in the Sydney Morning Herald. Low wages, he claims, are one of Australia's core problems, endangering equity and social cohesiveness.

We need to question why we do what we do, why processes are the way they are, what flexibility are we providing to educators (and ourselves), consider the work culture and environment (is it positive?), what opportunities for growth are there, and more.

When was the last time you reached out to your

team and genuinely asked them about how they are feeling, what they are struggling with, what can you do for them? Being heard and listened to is a great starting point.

It isn't always easy, but it is something we need to do.

If you are a stand-alone service, you have yourself to think about (your own mental health and capabilities – there is only so much we can do as one person).

If you are in an organisation with multiple services, you may get a no from management or find it hard as there is so many other factors to contend with.

However, we must persevere in both types of services. Perhaps if we hear no, we can offer the facts in a different way? I'd been told no numerous times, but I persevered. This, I believe, is how we get that desired change.

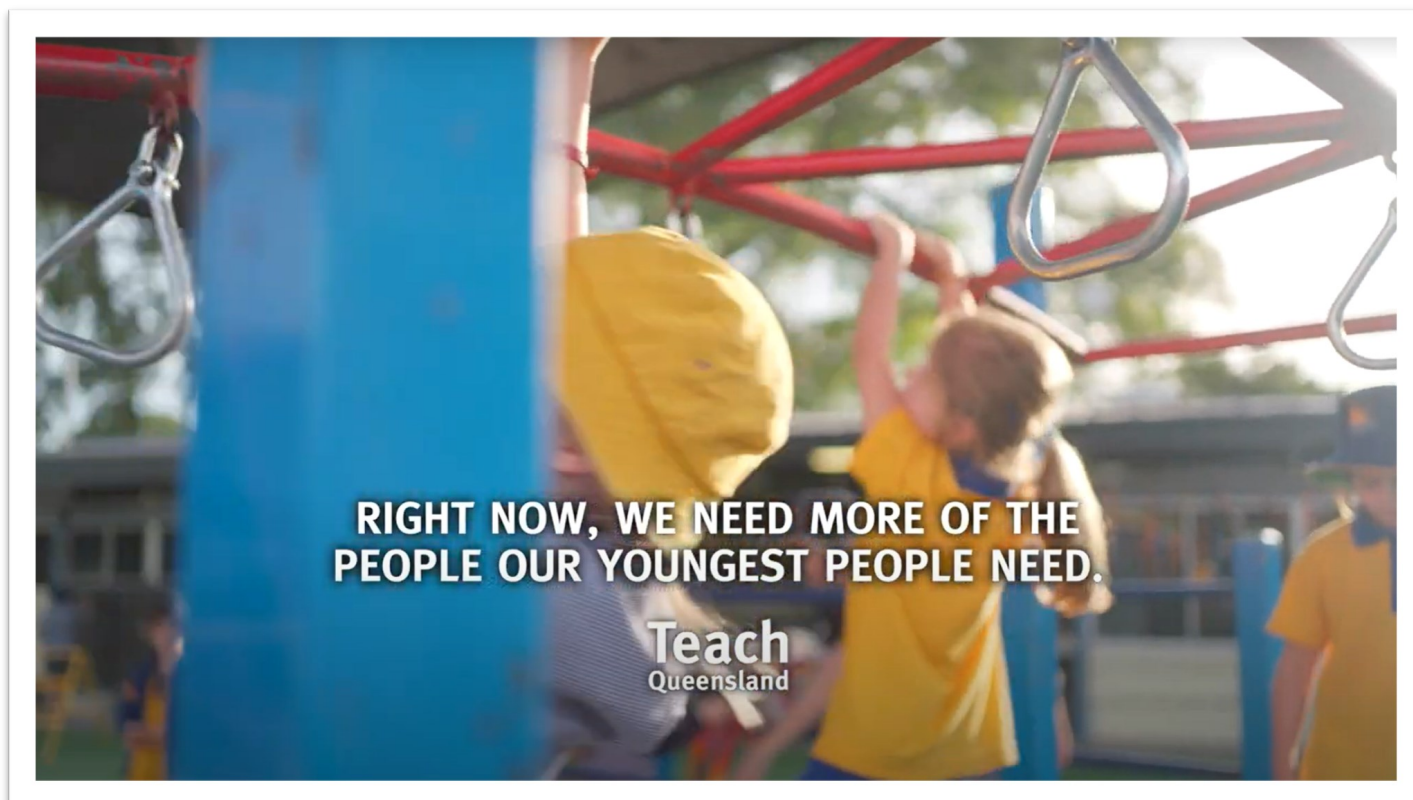
I'm a big believer in innovation (change + action = innovation) and I'm sure all employers would love to hear you are being innovative – so these small changes you are suggesting, them taking action – can be seen as an innovative workplace (*semantics? Persuasive? Sometimes it is just how things are delivered and worded / presented*).

Believe me, I only say this as I have delivered so many requests for change, incredibly wrong, and I did not get the desired response and often a negative roadblock instead (I persisted though). I also have a motto of 'you don't know, if you don't try' – and this has also played to so many positive opportunities. What is the worst that will happen, someone will say no? If we don't do anything, we have an even bigger problem on our hand of a diminishing quality workforce.

Whether an Educator, Management or Employer. This information is a starting point on what can be done with our teams in our services, something to critically reflect upon and to use for continuous improvement. I have grandeur ideas for OSHC and am looking forward to seeing what is next for the profession.

Queensland needs more of the people our youngest people need

- *Queensland Government Initiative*



To help meet the increasing demand for teachers and educators across Queensland, the Department of Education recently launched an [Early Childhood Teacher and Educator Recruitment Campaign](#), which will run until November 2021.

The campaign targets school leavers and their influencers (parents/carers), and career changers through social media and digital advertising, and features authentic teachers and educators from across the sector.

To view the campaign, please visit the [Teach Queensland website](#). This website also links to useful information on the early childhood website, including videos, images and interviews with the educators featured in the campaign. You will see more content added over the coming weeks as we continue to develop the website.

There is an Outside school hours care specific campaign which asks prospective educators:

Are you looking for a career that is different every day? You could be one of the people our youngest people need.

There is a video which aptly captures the sector's unique attraction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a54SN9D4g2w>

This is a great initiative of the Queensland Government to advance professionalism and inspire school leavers, their influencers and career changes to work in Outside School Hours Care.



Managing Service Growth

- *Sunnybank Hills OSHC, Queensland*

Sunnybank Hills State School OSHC has been open since February 2016 and is located on one of the largest Primary Schools in Brisbane. The service is proudly operated under the schools P&C Association as the Approved Provider, with a supportive Executive and General Committee, plus an OSHC Sub Committee set up in addition to the main committee to oversee the Operational Structure.

In the short five and half years of operating the service it has grown from its original license capacity of 100 children to now 380 children (for ASC). Small amendments to the capacity were made in the beginning due to limited space around building works being undertaken on the school site, but once these works were completed and various spaces became available the waiting list was reduced and care offered to families to meet our community's needs.



Having recently expanded your service to 380 places, what have been your thoughts about expanding your team?

We knew we would need more staff for our increase from 230 to 380 children over the last two years, therefore in planning for the staffing we reviewed the areas we would be using and the ages of the children in our care across the service. For our service this meant assigning staff for our Prep group, as we have approximately 50 Preps each afternoon, and then to each area we use for after school care, such as the playground, hall,

oval and our indoor spaces. Whilst this was not necessarily the same staff each day due to their availability, it was still a number of staff that we needed to consider for planning in our recruitment process.

When the recruitment process began we arranged for our new staff to join the team in an onboarding process to buddy up with current staff to ensure the new team members would have the opportunity to learn on the job and get to ask many questions along the way. Our onboarding process also consisted of some online learning through QCAN TEAMS as well as tracking each new team member ensuring they were getting the experience in all of the areas we work across each afternoon and with a different current staff member. This way they could meet new team members and see how others manage various situations with the children and the environment.

It meant a lot of behind the scenes work with operational procedures, but in the end it allowed for a smooth transition for a group of new staff all coming onboard at the same time.

What have been your strategies for attracting educators to work in your service?

Over the last two years we have made connections with our local high school and TAFE institutions to support our large turnover of staffing. This turn over is due to teaching staff moving on with their careers and also changes in various staff availability as they advance through their studies; including not being available while on prac placements and through general absence, especially through the pandemic challenges.

This year we jumped on board really early and

'We enjoy sharing the talents of the staff with our children and in turn they get to learn some new skills along the way.'



sent emails and a flyer to the high schools in the area to share with their Year 12 students before they got too busy with exams and end of year celebrations. By the New Year we will welcome another 12 new faces to our team as once again we farewell some of our team who have been with us since opening.

What have been your strategies for retaining educators in your service?

Flexibility is the key. Whilst we ask that staff be available for at least three shifts to support continuity, it comes down to their availability and commitments. We aim to provide a workplace that they can experience skills to further their careers as well as provide the day-to-day opportunities for our children.

We enjoy sharing the talents of the staff with our children and in turn they get to learn some new skills along the way. In doing this the staff are sharing their passion which in turn makes their time at work enjoyable and rewarding, especially seeing the children's interest expand all because of them.

What are the challenges and how have you been able to overcome them?

No one can help this, but it is a struggle when a few staff call in sick, you have seven away on prac placements and add a windy or rainy day and the fun begins. We always manage to make things work, planned or unplanned. Our service has a large group of support staff embedded in our operational planning each day and on days like these, it's all-hands-on deck. The extra support step into ratio coverage until ratios allow for these roles to return, where possible.

We are still fine-tuning things such as ensuring

everyone is kept up to date with the news shared every day at team briefings. There is always something to work on and manage when you have a large team.

Any advice for other services embarking on an expansion of their workforce?

Before making the increase, have everything in place to prepare for the move forward. Whilst our work is ever evolving around the children and our environments, it is important to know that the team are all on the same page with information and processes. We have made many changes as we trialled procedures along the way and some of these did not come to hand until we had the numbers of children in care. Looking at your operational structure is also crucial to ensure that your senior management team who are working 'behind the scenes' on all the administration, rostering, programming (BSC, ASC, VAC) and even food preparation, plus so much more are supported. All of these roles need to be assigned to ensure the operational structure flows. Support from all these key stakeholders will ensure the Educators will also have smooth systems in place due to the roll-on effect of information sharing and reporting structures for all involved. This includes looking after yourself as a Manager and networking with similar size services and building a support network that you can turn to in times of need.

In fact, being a larger service for us actually made things more streamlined. Having more staff allowed for smoother operations across the service – it was just getting to this point that was a challenge for us as we made changes as we went along, but we got there in the end.

Fiona Scott, OSHC Manager, Sunnybank Hills State School OSHC (The SHAC)



A brief history of changes to the Diploma of School Age Education and Care

The role of an OSHC Coordinator (aka Director and Service Manager) has become increasingly complex since qualifications for these positions were first recommended in 1995 with the development of the National Standards for Outside School Hours Care. While the National Standards for Outside School Hours Care were not a regulated regime, in regards staff qualifications/training, the standards stated:

There is general acceptance within the children's services industry of the principle that quality care is dependent on relevant staff training. The need for adequate numbers of qualified staff in child care services is based on recognition of the fact that the care of large groups of children for significant periods of time requires specialist knowledge and skills.

Formal training specifically related to outside school hours child care is not yet widely available although curriculum and course development is currently being undertaken to address this.

While qualifications should form part of standards and regulations, development of such standards needs to take into account the fact that a significant proportion of staff employed in OSHC services have minimal or unrelated qualifications. State courses which are developed should include processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

In advance of the development of specific OSHC qualifications or child care courses covering the age range 0-12, qualifications in child care, early childhood teaching or primary teaching and recreation should be considered as acceptable in the sector.

Mandatory qualifications should include a phase in period.

The Standard also required OSHC coordinators to be qualified. Consequently, the Diploma of Outside School Hours Care was developed, and has evolved significantly since its first release. The table below outlines the differences in the current CHC50221 Diploma of School Age Education and Care and the superseded CHC50213 Diploma of School Age Education and Care.

Further information regarding these qualifications can be accessed at <https://training.gov.au>

Further information regarding the training packages that these qualifications belong to can be accessed at <https://www.skillsiq.com.au/>

CURRENT CHC50221 Diploma of School Age Education and Care	SUPERSEDED CHC50213 Diploma of School Age Education and Care.
Packaging rules: Total number of units = 23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 core units 8 elective units 	Packaging rules: Total number of units = 25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 core units 7 elective units

<p>Core units:</p> <p>BSBLDR523 Lead and manage effective workplace relationships</p> <p>CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs</p> <p>CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety</p> <p>CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity</p> <p>CHCLEG003 Manage legal and ethical compliance</p> <p>CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice</p> <p>CHCPRT001 Identify and respond to children and young people at risk</p> <p>CHCSAC006 Support children to participate in school age care</p> <p>CHCSAC007 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care</p> <p>CHCSAC008 Work collaboratively and respectfully with school age children</p> <p>CHCSAC010 Foster holistic learning, development and wellbeing for school age children</p> <p>HLTAID012 Provide First Aid in an education and care setting</p> <p>HLTFSE007 Oversee the day-to-day implementation of food safety in the workplace</p> <p>HLTWHS003 Maintain work health and safety</p> <p>SISXDIS001 Facilitate inclusion for people with a disability</p>	<p>Core units:</p> <p>CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety</p> <p>CHCECE001 Develop cultural competence</p> <p>CHCECE004 Promote and provide healthy food and drinks</p> <p>CHCECE009 Use an approved learning framework to guide practice</p> <p>CHCECE011 Provide experiences to support children's play and learning</p> <p>CHCECE016 Establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment for children</p> <p>CHCECE018 Nurture creativity in children</p> <p>CHCECE019 Facilitate compliance in an education and care services</p> <p>CHCECE020 Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour</p> <p>CHCECE021 Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children</p> <p>CHCECE024 Design and implement the curriculum to foster children's learning and development</p> <p>CHCECE026 Work in partnership with families to provide appropriate education and care for children</p> <p>CHCPRT001 Identify and respond to children and young people at risk</p> <p>CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care</p> <p>CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care</p> <p>CHCSAC003 Work collaboratively and respectfully with children in school age care</p> <p>CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care</p> <p>HLTAID004 Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting</p>
<p>Major differences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of units in the current Diploma of School Age Education and Care has reduced by two. This is due to the duplication in some of the ECE and SAC units that were in the superseded qualification. 2. The eleven (11) ECE units in the superseded qualification have been removed from the qualification. This is due to ECE units no longer being able to be assessed in an Outside School Hours Care environment. The recent update of the Children's Services qualifications in the Community Services Training Package resulted in substantial changes to the ECE units to focus on distinct early childhood environments for children from birth to 5. 3. The removed units have been replaced with more appropriate management and leadership focused units appropriate for the role of a Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader in an Outside School Hours Care service. 	

Wellbeing strategies to prevent or support recovery from burnout

- *Be You*

It's perfectly normal for many educators to be experiencing burnout right now. The pandemic has posed many challenges over the past two years and has led to an increase in stress for many people.



There are strategies we can use to support ourselves and others when we feel burnt out. School age care is a unique work context. You are constantly making numerous decisions about education and care as well as interacting with your team and the families in your learning community. While you're putting your energy into creating a positive environment for children and young people, it's also important to focus on your own wellbeing to prevent or support recovery from burnout.

What does burnout feel like?

Burnout can happen when we experience chronic stress. Burnout can include:

- emotional exhaustion
- emotional or mental separation from our job
- a reduced sense of accomplishment at work.

This can leave us feeling listless, tired and struggling to cope.



What can you do?

An important step educators can take towards reducing their chances of burnout is managing stress. Strategies you could use include:

- Learning about and recognising the [signs of stress](#) in your body
- Engaging in activities that help you unwind such as exercise or mindfulness
- Reaching out to supportive colleagues, friends or family to discuss challenges
- Prioritising sleep and good nutrition
- Building self-advocacy – in asking for help at work and speaking up when role and workplace stressors are impacting your wellbeing
- Giving yourself time and space to work through difficult emotions
- Seeking support from a mental health professional

What are some workplace strategies?

There are many things that workplaces can do to prevent employee burnout and help with the recovery of chronic stress. These strategies include:

- Supportive supervision and access to mentoring
- Regular professional learning opportunities to build educator capabilities and confidence - for example in responding to child behavioural challenges
- Monitor workloads and reduce them if possible for staff experiencing high levels of stress
- Encourage and support help-seeking
- Support positive relationships between educators, children, and families

- Build a healthy workplace culture based on kindness, collaboration and teamwork
- [Mindfulness](#) initiatives
- [Individual and team wellbeing plans](#)
- Access to and promotion of an Employee Assistance Provider

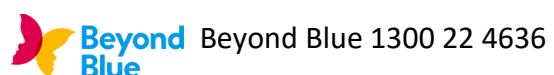
A dedicated [staff mental health and wellbeing policy](#) is a long term strategy to help prevent burnout. While the pandemic has presented additional risk factors that can contribute to burnout, the wellbeing of educators needs to be supported both now and into the future. There are always high emotional demands on school age care educators due to the nature of the profession, which can contribute to burnout.

Support for educators experiencing burnout

If you are concerned that a colleague may be experiencing burnout it is important to start a conversation. Help them to identify stressors that can be reduced and connect them with support if needed.

Equally, if you feel that you aren't travelling as well as you could be, it's important to reach out for support. If you think that you may be experiencing burnout, it is important to talk to a mental health professional as some of the signs of burnout are similar to mental health issues and conditions like depression and anxiety. General Practitioners are a good first point of contact to discuss your concerns.

If reading this article has raised any difficult feelings for you, please reach out to your support networks. There is also always someone you can talk to on the end of these phone lines:



Cultural Safety for Educators - More Than a Good Workplace Culture

- *Lainey Walker, Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator, QCAN*



Within our services we do the utmost to protect our stakeholders from physical harm or hazard, with much of our workforce having a strong understanding and awareness of Workplace Health and Safety. In more recent times we've seen our definition of safety broaden to encompass the mental health and wellbeing of our educators, with the increased utilisation of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

Across the sector you will find many services dedicating significant time and resources to establishing a good workplace culture. Workplace culture refers to the service's values, beliefs,

attitudes, and practices, but at its core what we ultimately want from our workplace culture is a team that enjoys their time at work and feels safe, supported and valued. Achieving a positive workplace culture requires consistent and ongoing investment, which inherently results in a better service for all stakeholders.

So, where does cultural safety fit? Does a good workplace culture guarantee a culturally safe workplace for educators? Unfortunately, it is not quite that simple.

Cultural safety is defined as "an environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe, as well as

physically safe ... where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are, and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience of learning together (Williams, 1999)."

It is certainly no easy feat establishing and maintaining cultural safety when negotiating between dozens of individual's personal cultures and beliefs, on top of the perspectives, opinions and needs of our other stakeholders and community members. This negotiation can become even more complex when something as fundamental as one's identity is politicised, which is often the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or members of the LGBTQIA+ community. How do we support our educators to feel culturally safe when their identity is viewed as political? How do we strike the balance between ensuring the wellbeing of our workforce, whilst also acknowledging the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders? The simple, yet also not so simple answer is respect. Williams (1999) refers to "shared respect" and "learning together" in their definition of cultural safety. It is ultimately a willingness to share and learn together that will help us promote cultural safety within our workplaces. In an interview with Work Safe QLD, Mark Watego explores the use of cultural capability in creating mentally healthy and safe workplaces. Watego outlines "cultural humility" and states "when we're engaging with other cultures [it is important to] put ourselves in the state of humility as the learner and to understand the person's story and experiences, it's theirs and so if we are truly interested in engaging then the whole point is about putting yourself in that learner position".

A willingness to listen and a respect for diverse perspectives serves as a healthy foundation for cultural safety. However, what does this look like in practice? Some key considerations include (but are certainly not limited to):

- Are there provisions for cultural practices within service policies and procedures e.g.

Sorry Business and Ramadan? Are cultural practices disparaged as inconvenient to business needs? How would you respond if an educator needed support regarding cultural matters?

- Is one's cultural identity assumed or denied on the basis of their physical appearance?
- Are there opportunities for a portion of the professional development budget to be allocated towards cultural competence and/or anti-bias training?
- Does your service have a Reconciliation Action Plan with a commitment to take action against racism? Does your whole team collaborate to develop and update the service's anti-bias policy?

Cultural safety is not static nor is it something that is earned and possessed indefinitely; like any relationship it requires constant maintenance, ongoing reflection and a willingness to identify potentially problematic personal practice. We have a responsibility to ensure our stakeholder's identities are not challenged or denied, rather validated and celebrated! Within the work we do as Outside School Hours Care educators we place significant emphasis upon identity, which is evident within our Approved Learning Framework - My Time, Our Place. As a sector we are dedicated to supporting our children's sense of identity and wellbeing, can we say the same for our educators?

References

Williams, R. (1999). Cultural safety - What does it mean for our work practice? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 23. 213 - 214

Watego, M. (2020). *Using cultural capability to create mentally healthy and safe workplaces*. Work Safe QLD. <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/resources/campaigns/safe-work-month-2021/resources/presentations/using-cultural-capability-to-create-mentally-healthy-and-safe-workplaces>

OSHC workforce and wellbeing

- Nicki Graham, Community Child Care Association

We are social creatures, embedded in our communities and culture. It should be no surprise that positive wellbeing emerges when individuals are well supported by their workplaces and the wider policy and regulatory systems nested around them. However, when it comes to supporting OSHC educators there is little written about how providers can support the wellbeing of their staff, nor what educators can do themselves and what they should expect from others.

One important implication about wellbeing is the strong association it has with workforce outcomes like retention, professional recognition and sector sustainability. This is, of course, secondary to the moral imperative we have for supporting individuals to achieve positive wellbeing in their lives and work.

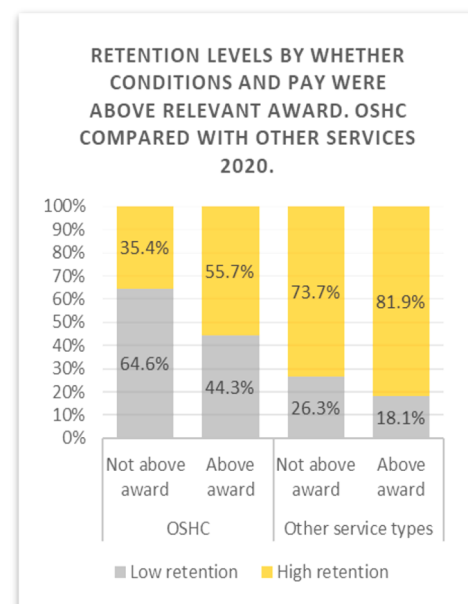
Over the past few years, Community Child Care Association has been monitoring the emerging literature, conducting research and consulting with the early education and care sector, including OSHC, to track and determine the gaps in the system that are needed to promote wellbeing. The impacts of the pandemic, fires, and floods made this work vital. For this reason we conducted a broad analysis to formulate a hypothesis about the types of things that build educator wellbeing. What we found was what could be described as a “complex system”. Many factors all play a part in supporting wellbeing and moreover, levels of wellbeing impact on many different things. The model below depicts our pieces of the wellbeing pie.

Job security, pay and entitlements

Wages and entitlements are strongly linked to retention. In part this is due to how this relates to



our wellbeing – it’s not everything but feeling valued and being remunerated adequately can go a long way in supporting decisions to stay. Data from the Trends in Community Children’s Services Survey 2021 (TICCSS) showed that OSHC services who had high retention were much more likely to have paid their staff above award pay and conditions, provide additional administration hours for program planning, and above award leave entitlements including study leave (ACCS 2021). Conversely, OSHC services who didn’t provide above award pay and conditions were more likely, than even other types of services, to have low retention.



Job security is also important. Service viability and permanent positions both contribute to this. In contrast, casualization of the workforce and insufficient funding create unstable conditions. The gig economy – the reliance on short-term contracts, freelance work – has been emerging as a dubious solution for many different industries, OSHC included. However, while this may be fine for food delivery, when it comes to work that supports children, ongoing contracts with regular hours, leave entitlements and good conditions are better at ensuring retention and employee wellbeing. But the effects of job security don't end with educator wellbeing. Retention supports higher quality through ongoing stable relationships between educators and children. It also helps support genuine relationships as it removes insecurity and financial stressors experienced by non-permanent casual educators.

Resources and time

OSHC educators involved in our research spoke of the stress at not having dedicated spaces for their program, some not even having storage space to set- and pack-up. OSHC programs that are well equipped with engaging, open-ended and culturally diverse resources and environments support children's positive engagement and educator's professional wellbeing.

Educators and co-ordinators also talked to us about organisational resources including tools that support induction, planning, inclusion, reporting critical incidents/concerns and supporting families and children. These should be considered essential requirements in every service. However, educators tell us it is not always clear what can be done to support inclusion or critical concerns, who is responsible for these, and responsible persons often don't have enough time allocated to dedicate to navigating, exploring, reflecting and planning for these additional areas. This intensified during the pandemic. Co-ordinators involved in our research spoke about how supporting new staff with induction was constrained:

Ensuring clearly defined roles, well-resourced environments and supporting workplace conditions reduce workplace stress and enable educators to implement unconstrained pedagogical practice. Educators and co-ordinators who are supported to complete all work within

What problems are you currently facing?

"The availability of current staff and recruitment of new staff. Staff not being available for mentoring of casual staff due to being placed in the ratio."

their work hours have greater wellbeing and work-life balance.

Education and training

Qualifications enable individuals to realise their full potential and make autonomous choices about their wellbeing. Training equips employees to deal with the challenges in their work. Over the past year we heard stories of services unable to recruit staff, some requiring untrained staff to fill vacancies on the proviso that they immediately begin traineeships. Without formal, recognised training it is very stressful to understand the regulations let alone plan, program and care for the, on average, 70 children in OSHC programs.

The biggest impacts on training and qualifications can be made through state and national regulations. In this space we are hopefully going to see some improvements. The 2024 NQF Review will go over the national qualification requirements for OSHC with an emphasis on the importance of a "highly qualified, experience and sustainable sector workforce" (ACECQA 2021, p. 55).

Another project, mentioned in the ACECQA Workforce Strategy, was the development (within 6 years) of a national registration system for educators who are not teachers. The benefits of a registration system will help employers undertake individual checks of qualifications and may include professional development requirements. For educators and co-ordinators having well trained staff with better professional recognition will improve overall wellbeing.

Collegiality and cultural safety and Sense of agency and worth

These are two interrelated aspects that can in part be supported by individuals, teams and workplaces. A sense of agency is an internal feeling, linked to positive mental health, that you can control your actions and decisions, and their consequences. While employees can make positive steps for their own mental health,

workplaces help this too by having policies, procedures and programs in place. These can include employee assistance program (EAP), clear expectations about behaviour, parental leave, family violence supports and related policies. Having a sense of agency and feeling culturally safe and supported enable people to contribute their ideas and perspectives which are important for wellbeing, belonging and feelings of professional self-determination.

Another aspect of positive mental health and relationships is collegiality. This is the quality of teams working together seamlessly and positively. Collegiality is linked with enhanced quality care for children (Nislin et al. 2016). This may be due to the fact that providing high quality care requires the ability to generate ideas that support children's ever evolving and unique needs. However, idea generation (or innovation) only becomes practice through collaboration with others. Research has found strong correlations between innovation and employees reporting they feel supported by their team, being able to contribute to decisions and feeling comfortable to talk about their ideas or new learning with their colleagues (Axtell et al., 2000; Inanc et al., 2015; OECD, 2017).

Collegiality is also associated with higher motivation and lower staff turnover (Grant et al. 2018). So we know that it has benefits in terms of service viability, it creates workers who are happy and motivated to achieve high quality and they want to stay.

Leadership

Leadership fosters wellbeing when it enables all these different elements and when governance of staff is fair, collaborative and underpinned by great communication. This can be constrained by the value and recognition of the OSHC service by schools, the regulatory systems which favour market competitiveness over quality and the policies and procedures of approved-providers. OSHC co-ordinators involved in our research talked to us both about the important benefits and difficulties when working with their school leadership. One co-ordinator talked about having the ability to call in teachers from the school to assist with emergency staffing gaps! An approved provider indicated that the recognition of the OSHC service's value to the school community helped them to cope with the stress caused during their

staff shortages.

Having a philosophy, mission and goals, clear pedagogical leadership, approved providers providing collaborative reciprocal partnerships are

What is working?

Recognising the value that OSHC plays in the school community – services sometimes have a closer connection with families and children than the school teachers

all key to greater understanding of educator wellbeing.

OSHC educators should expect to be supported in their positive wellbeing at work as much as employees in any sector, but perhaps more so because their work with children and families is so valuable. Children, from all over Australia will benefit if we can ensure our educators wellbeing is a priority.

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Queensland

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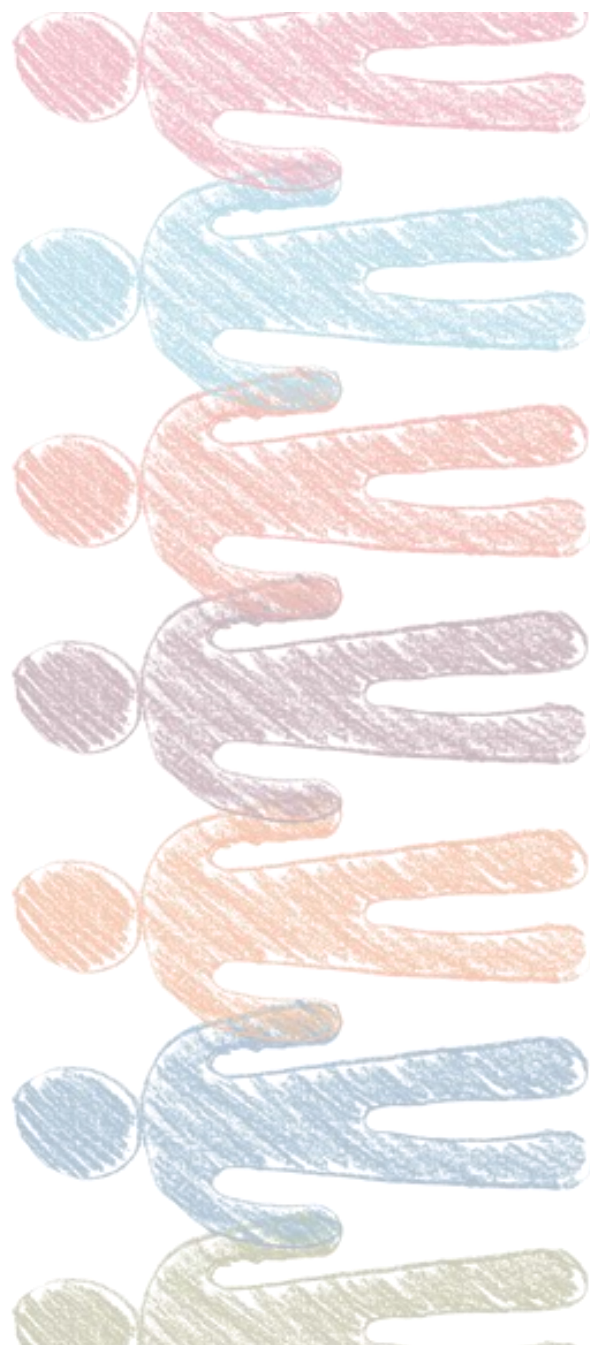
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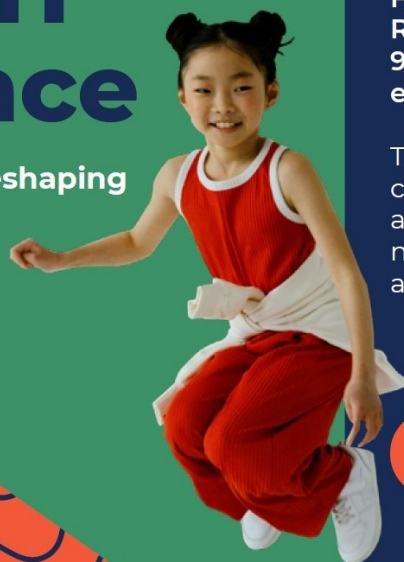
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CONTACT US

Queensland & Northern Territory

Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) (NOSHSA Secretariat)

66 Woodend Rd, Woodend, QLD 4305

info@qcan.org.au

1300 781 749

www.qcan.org.au

New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory

Network of Community Activities

8-10 Belmore Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

network@networkofcommunityactivities.org.au

(02) 9212 3244

www.networkofcommunityactivities.org.au

South Australia

OSHCsa

PO Box 55, Klemzig SA 5087

oshcsa@gmail.com

www.oshcsa.org.au

Victoria

Community Child Care Association

Suite West 8 & 9, 215 Bell St Preston, Victoria, 3072

reception@cccinc.org.au

(03) 9486 3455

www.cccinc.org.au

Western Australia

Outside School Hours Care WA (Inc.)

OSHCwa@gmail.com

www.oshcwa.com

