



Early Childhood Teachers' Association Inc.

20 Hilton Rd Gympie Qld 4570

Phone: 04 1815 7280 Fax: 07 5481 1148

Email: info@ecta.org.au

Website: www.ecta.org.au

ABN: 31 930 635 743

Dear Justice Giudice,

The Early Childhood Teachers' Association (ECTA) is a Queensland based professional association that advocates for early childhood professionals working across the early childhood sector in schools, child care, community kindergartens and family day care. ECTA has a current membership of 670 early childhood professionals.

ECTA welcomes the opportunity to provide the following submission with respect to the current review of Award coverage for employees in early childhood education.

Early childhood educators in non school-based services are currently employed under two separate and disparate awards. Teachers in community kindergartens are currently employed under the Early Childhood Teacher Award (State). Under this award, teachers have access to pay and conditions similar to colleagues in schools. Like their colleagues employed in the schooling sector, these teachers possess a teaching qualification recognised by the Queensland College of Teachers thus enabling them to qualify for registration as a teacher in Queensland.

Teachers in community kindergartens have a long tradition of excellence in early childhood education and are considered to have parity of esteem and recognition within the community and wider education fraternity with teachers in schools. ECTA strongly opposes any move to reclassify these teachers under an award that reduces the current parity in terms of pay, conditions and esteem.

The current national agenda focusing on the delivery of universal access to a kindergarten program for all children recognises the importance of employing four-year university qualified teachers in the early years. This is surely a commitment to improving the status and standing of teachers working in early childhood settings. Teachers in community kindergartens set a high standard in terms of the quality of early childhood programs offered. This should be recognised as a benchmark for other early childhood industrial awards.

Having said this, it is important to note that under the current award, the ordinary hours of duty for a teacher in a community kindergarten shall not exceed 37.5 hours per week of which not more than 27.5 shall relate to the teaching of an educational program. We have grave concerns that teachers may be required to teach two groups of children for 15 hours per week to align with the national agenda. This could increase the teaching component by 2.5 hours per week. It can only be assumed this will require a reduction of the same from preparation planning times which will require out of work hours to increase accordingly.

Compare this to the hours of duty stipulated for a teacher in a state school being 25 hours per week with no more than 22 hours 10 minutes of rostered face to face teaching and associated professional duties and no less than 2 hours of rostered preparation and correction time. Teachers in child care work a 38 hour week and are required to teach an Educational Program for children for no more than 27.5 hours per week. Teachers may be engaged in supervising children during their remaining ordinary hours of duty. The variation across awards for teachers with the same qualifications is evidence of the need to raise the status, pay and conditions for teachers in non-school settings to that of teachers in schools.

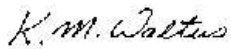
ECTA firmly believes that if the conditions currently recognised for teachers in community kindergartens are reduced or made less attractive under a Children Services award, the risk of being unable to attract and retain qualified professional staff to educate young children will become a reality.

The qualifications of teachers in community kindergarten exceed the minimum requirement outlined in the Child Care Act 2002 and Child Care Regulations 2003. Placing these teachers under the lower remuneration of a Children Services Award would be a major setback to staff and threaten the viability of many centres.

ECTA also represents teachers working in child care and employed under children services awards. The pay and conditions for teachers in these services fall a long way short of teachers in community kindergartens. ECTA believes that teachers working in child care settings with qualifications equivalent to other teachers in kindergartens and schools should have parity of pay and conditions and recognition in terms of their status and standing as teachers.

ECTA believes that any review of industrial awards relating to early childhood settings should focus on improving the status and standing of all early childhood professionals with particular recognition for teachers.

ECTA strongly urge you to consider the above submission during your review.



Kim Walters

ECTA President