



Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

COR2058146

Ms Jenny Atta
Secretary
Department of Education and Training
Jenny.Atta@education.vic.gov.au

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS 2020-22 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS REGULATORY AUTHORITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

Dear Secretary

I am pleased to provide you with the Statement of Expectations (SOE) in your role as the designated regulatory authority under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Victorian Children's Services Act 1996*, and their respective regulations; some functions of which you have delegated to the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD) of the Department of Education and Training (Department). This SOE replaces the SOE 2019-20 and applies for the period 2020-22, or until otherwise amended.

Improving the administration and enforcement of regulation

This SOE sets out my expectations of the QARD's contribution to the Government's program to reduce red tape affecting early childhood education and care services, families and communities by promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and enforcement of regulation. It also outlines my expectations on broader improvements for the QARD's performance.

As Minister for Early Childhood, I am responsible for administering the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Victorian Children's Services Act 1996*. This SOE should be read within the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in these Acts (as amended) which makes the safety and wellbeing of children attending high quality education and care services paramount.

I acknowledge that the QARD operates within the context of nationally applied laws and that the QARD has joint responsibilities to implement the National Quality Framework (NQF) with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), other State and Territory Regulatory Authorities and the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training. I further note that the NQF is currently under review.

This SOE outlines key governance and performance objectives and targets aimed at improving the administration and enforcement of regulation and thus reducing its cost impact on education and care services, families and the community. In setting out these expectations, I acknowledge the important role of the QARD in supporting the Government's Education State reform agenda.

Improvements and targets

Within the context of ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending early childhood services and improving their educational and developmental outcomes, based on consultation between the Department and QARD, I have identified key elements of governance and operational performance where there are opportunities for the QARD to minimise cost impacts on education and care service providers.

SOE Framework element of good regulatory practice	SOE Expectations	Performance measure
Risk-based strategies	Continue to apply, and identify opportunities to improve, the implementation of risk-based strategies to effectively monitor service quality and compliance with the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> (CS Act) to deliver regulatory outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of services receiving an overall rating of Working Towards NQS are inspected within 12 months of the final rating notice being issued 25% of eligible services are assessed and rated under the NQS per annum. 100% of newly approved services have a post approval inspection within 12 months 100% of newly approved services have an assessment and rating quality audit within 18 months
Compliance related assistance and advice	Provide clear and accessible compliance related assistance and advice to the Victorian early childhood education and care sector.	<p>Education and care service providers are satisfied overall with the quality of QARD's compliance related assistance and advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In QARD's annual satisfaction survey, 70% of respondents indicate that overall, they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the regulatory support and guidance their service received from QARD
Timeliness	Improve timeliness and efficiency of the quality assessment and rating processes for service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average days taken to report and issue a notice of quality rating is 45 days

Clear and consistent regulatory activities	Ensure enforcement practices are applied consistently and efficiently to minimise unnecessary regulatory burdens on regulated parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquittal of the QARD’s Review into Monitoring and Compliance Framework
Stakeholder consultation and engagement	Engage with service providers and sector representatives to support the provision of high quality services across the Victorian sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate timely regulatory advice and guidance through newsletter or similar to service providers at least quarterly • Facilitate at least two regular meetings with Early Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Reference Group.

Reporting

I expect the QARD to respond to this SOE, outlining the activities it will undertake to achieve these expectations. The QARD should publish the SOE and its response on the Department's website within three months.

I expect the QARD to incorporate this SOE into its corporate planning processes and systems to monitor its performance in achieving the SOE. I expect the QARD to report on its progress implementing the expectations, activities and performance measures and targets in its Annual Reports.

I look forward to seeing the QARD continue to work towards achieving best practice in its critical role as the regulator of early childhood education and care and school aged care services in Victoria.

Yours sincerely



Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Early Childhood