

# Quality Assessment & Regulation Division

## Annual Report 2020



### Data Reliability Statement

Data included in this report is primarily sourced from the National Quality Agenda IT System. Data regarding previous years may be slightly different than previously published, as records may be updated for accuracy.

### Rounding

Percentages may not always sum up to 100% due to rounding.

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## Message from our Executive Director

I am pleased to present the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division Annual Report for 2020.

2020 was an extremely challenging year for early childhood services as well as the broader community. Throughout the bushfires at the start of the year and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD) has worked hard to ensure that the whole early childhood sector was informed and supported. Ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children has always been our focus.

This report sets out how QARD met its strategic objectives and legislative obligations in 2020, while prioritising compliance and investigation visits into serious incidents, notifications or complaints. It sets out QARD's work to support providers and services of all sizes, operated by individual providers or multi-service providers, as well as peak bodies and families. It outlines the work that QARD did with the Department of Health and Human Services

(now the Department of Health) to ensure that government health advice and COVIDSafe settings were understood and implemented across all early childhood services.

All assessment and rating visits had to be suspended in Victoria from April until November 2020 to limit the number of visitors to services and to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children and educators in services. Once assessment and rating visits were able to resume in November, QARD implemented a new assessment and rating process, involving a greater desktop review of documents before the visit as well as online meetings with service leadership. This approach allowed the visit to the service to focus on observing practice, minimising the impact of assessment and rating visits on service operations.



Throughout the bushfires ...  
and the COVID-19 pandemic,  
QARD has worked hard  
to ensure that the whole  
early childhood sector was  
informed and supported.

The sector has remained resilient in Victoria, however there was a four percent decrease in the total number of new services approved in 2020 compared with the previous year, most likely due to the effects of COVID-19 on the market. As in past years, the number of approved long day care (LDC) services has grown faster than other care types under the National Quality Framework (NQF), as well as the number of places (53% of total centre-based places). Just over 70 per cent of all services are now run by multi-service providers, which is consistent with the overall increase with the proportion of private for-profit operators in the market. Other management types remained stable.

In May 2020, amendments to the *Children's Services Act 1996* (CS Act) and new Children's Services Regulations 2020 commenced, aligning the children's services regulatory regime with the NQF, where appropriate.

The initial impact on existing services was minimal as transitional arrangements apply until 1 January 2022, and many services were closed due to the closure of the recreational facilities in which many children's services are located.

During 2020, there were also important changes to the NQF to strengthen the regulatory requirements and oversight of transport arrangements, when children are under the care of an education and care service.

Thank you to all QARD staff and the early childhood sector for all their efforts in face of these immense challenges; their commitment and professionalism has been inspiring.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Madeleine Smith who decided to step down from her role as Executive Director of QARD after nine years in the position. Madeleine will be well known to many of you and has made an enormous contribution to the lives of children in Victoria, having helped to create the NQF and overseen its implementation in Victoria. She will continue at the Department in the role of Director of Operations until early 2022.

I look forward to working closely with you all to continue improving outcomes for children.

**Greg Norton**  
Executive Director

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division



## Responding to the challenge of COVID-19

**The first positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Melbourne in January 2020, and the first confirmed case in an early childhood service on 1 April 2020.**

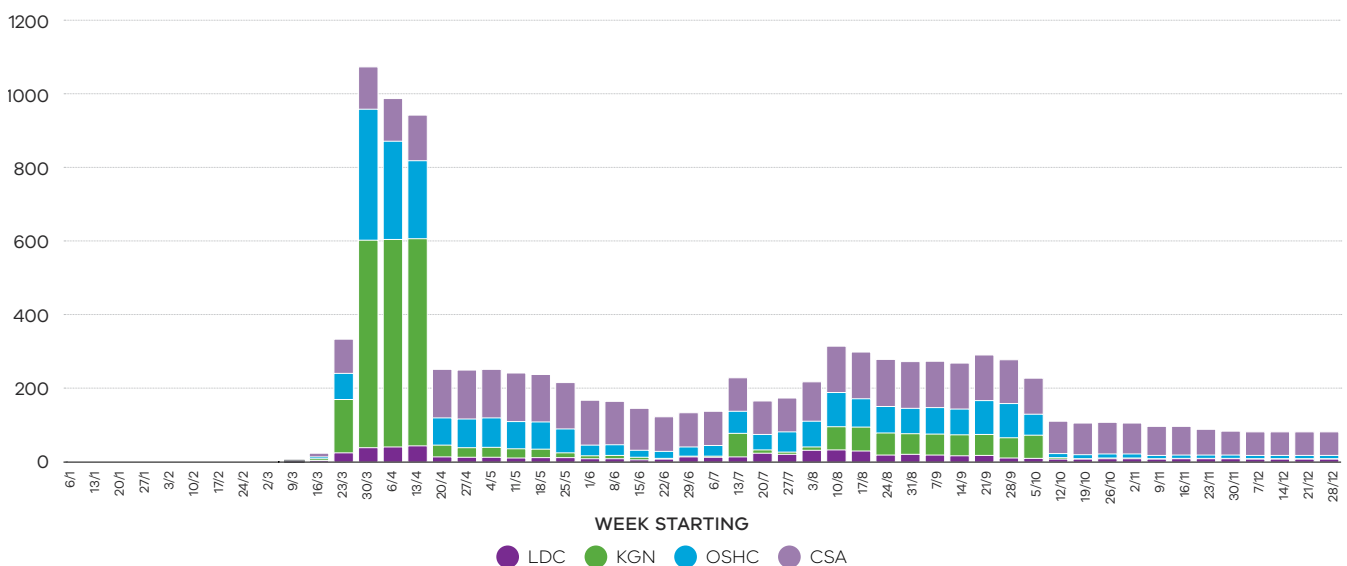
In late March and early April 2020, as the first stage of restrictions were put in place, many services voluntarily closed due to the broader impact of COVID-19. As restrictions eased, support packages from the Commonwealth and State Governments were introduced, and health advice confirmed that early childhood services were safe to remain open with risk mitigation strategies in place, the daily number of services that voluntarily closed reduced dramatically.

Between 1 April and 16 November 2020, 136 education and care services closed on the direction of the Department of Health (DH) due to a case of COVID-19 associated with the service. Of these, 27 family day care (FDC) services notified of a positive case, relating to 44 FDC educator residences. After 16 November 2020 there were no further cases detected in early childhood services until 2021.

Throughout 2020, QARD worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS now the Department of Health) to monitor and respond to COVID-19 in early childhood services, and to support early childhood communities to provide safe educational environments for children and families. Following a confirmed case attending an early childhood service, DHHS recommended that the service close until all public health actions were completed and deemed when the service could resume ordinary operations. Authorised officers from QARD provided individualised case management support and worked with services to ensure that risk-mitigation strategies were in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This included site visits, regular telephone contact and virtual meetings.



#### Centre-based services closed due to impact of COVID-19 March to December 2020



**Data source:** Quarter 4 2020, National Quality Agenda IT System, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

Throughout the year authorised officers supported all services, telephoning 4,500 education and care services across the State to provide public health advice, answer questions and monitor compliance with COVIDSafe protocols. QARD staff also worked on the Department's 1800 COVID-19 advice line, the duty phone lines in each of the nine QARD regions across the state, and the Enquiries and Support telephone line, responding to queries from providers, services and families.

Even during periods of COVID-19 restrictions, authorised officers and investigators from QARD continued to ensure the safety of children in early childhood services, by assessing all notifications that posed a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children in early childhood service and taking any action needed.

Senior QARD executives met regularly with peak bodies and large providers to share information, address their concerns and put appropriate systems in place. The Regulatory Reference Group (RRG) comprising 20 key industry representatives also continued to meet during this time.

QARD partnered with other Victorian Government departments and regulators, most importantly DHHS, to provide reliable guidance to providers and services on COVIDSafe protocols, and infection control information. We also worked closely with WorkSafe to ensure the safety of early childhood staff working in services during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

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**The Victorian Department of Education's QARD Outbreaks and Closures team have provided high quality support, communication and guidance throughout our COVID-19 response.**

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*Natalie Boehm Head of Safety, G8 Education*

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**The team were always just a phone call away, any time of the day (or night) which has enabled us to rapidly respond to confirmed cases, and to work collaboratively to support our team members, children, families and communities through closures and changes in restrictions.**

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*Natalie Boehm Head of Safety, G8 Education*

QARD met regularly with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), and Regulatory Authorities in the other States and Territories to share information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how to best support and regulate the sector.



## Case study 1: Support for border communities

In early July 2020, the New South Wales (NSW) government announced a snap border closure between NSW and Victoria to contain the spread of COVID-19 infections.

QARD immediately contacted all education and care service providers operating within the area of the proposed border bubble to determine if the families and educators working at kindergartens, LDC, and out of school hours care (OSHC) services would be impacted by the border closure.

A small number of services indicated that both families and educators would be affected as they lived in NSW and travelled to Victorian services.

As one example, QARD was advised that a bridge in NSW, located near the Aboriginal settlement in Cumragunja, had been closed. A service in the area advised that closing this crossing would have a significant impact on travel time for children accessing ECEC services located in Victoria, potentially affecting attendance. Collaborative working with the NSW Government enabled the bridge to be reopened to allow community members and the bus to travel directly to and from the service.



We have received excellent support from DET's QARD Outbreaks and Closures team during COVID-19. The team has been responsive, efficient and informative, always going above and beyond to answer questions as we navigate the complexities of COVID-19 restrictions and incidents. After a recent COVID-19 exposure at one of our services located on a school site, the team supported us through meetings with the Department of Health, the school and our families, and provided relevant feedback from the regulatory division to inform our actions.

*Sigi Hyett CEO, Northern Schools Early Years Cluster*





## About the regulator

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### Strategic objectives

QARD's objectives and strategic plans are informed by broader departmental objectives and:

- the Statement of Expectations (SoE) from the Minister for Education (the Minister)
- the Department's strategic intent and strategic plan 2018-2022
- obligations and duties of the regulatory authority under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law), the Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations) and the *Children's Services Act 1996* (CS Act) and Children's Services Regulations 2020 (CS Regulations)
- the National Law and CS Act objectives.

### Statement of Expectations

The administration and enforcement of our regulatory framework is guided by the SoE issued by the Minister which, along with the QARD response, is published on the Department's website. A Regulatory Risk Committee provides oversight of progress against the SoE. To read the SoE online see: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/which.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/which.aspx).

We continually evolve our approach to strengthen regulatory performance, and to ensure both the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending early childhood services as well as improving educational and developmental outcomes. This report outlines our initiatives and regulatory performance against our objectives.



## Quality Assessment and Regulation Division objectives

### Confidence in the regulator:

Effective administration of our legislative frameworks to maintain community confidence in the system of regulation overseeing the provision of Victorian early childhood education and care.

### Being a high-performing regulator:

Exemplifying best regulatory practice to efficiently deliver regulatory outcomes.

### Engaging with the sector:

Engaging and guiding services to facilitate the provision of high-quality education and care services.

### Supporting reforms and initiatives:

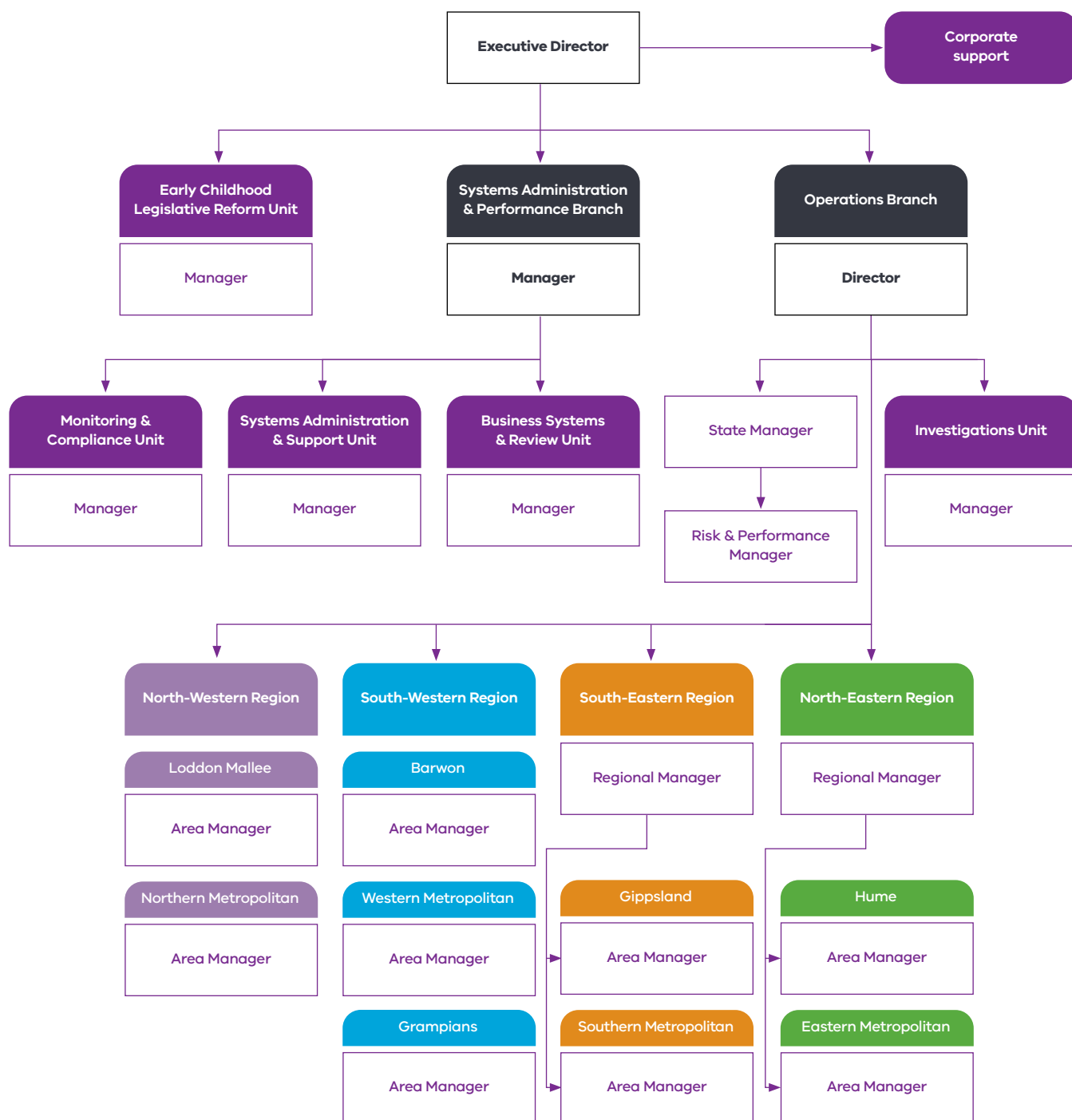
Being responsive to government reforms and initiatives, and community priorities.

### Excellent workforce:

Developing a high-performing, valued and empowered workforce.

# Governance framework

QARD's governance framework is designed to ensure accountable and transparent management of regulatory risk, as well as oversight of performance, and engagement of staff in the formulation of regulatory policy and practice.



\*As at September 2021.

## Our operations

Part of the Early Childhood Education Group of the Department, QARD regulates services operating under the NQF and the CS Act and CS Regulations in Victoria under delegation from the Secretary. QARD comprises two centrally-managed branches, two policy units and nine regional teams.

### Operations Branch

The Operations Branch manages and supports nine area-based regional teams. The teams comprise authorised officers and support staff who assess and rate NQF services against the NQS, conduct inspections to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements of the National Law and CS Act, as well as investigating alleged non-compliances. Regional teams engage with the sector through forums and other opportunities to support and guide providers of early childhood services.

#### QARD Regional Teams:

##### North-Western Victoria

- Loddon Mallee
- Northern Metropolitan

##### North-Eastern Victoria

- Eastern Metropolitan
- Hume

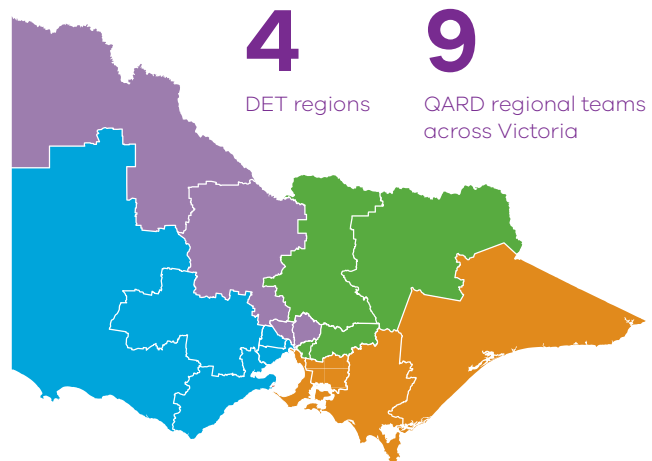
##### South-Western Victoria

- Barwon South West
- Grampians
- Western Metropolitan

##### South-Eastern Victoria

- Gippsland
- Southern Metropolitan

**Investigations Unit (INVU):** located within the Operations Branch, this unit leads and manages serious and complex investigations. The unit conducts investigative planning, provides advice and recommendations on investigations, sanctions and other compliance matters. The unit also prepares and provides training and development material to support authorised officers in their regulatory functions.



#### QARD regional teams:

- **North-Western Victoria**
  - Loddon Mallee
  - Northern Metropolitan
- **North-Eastern Victoria**
  - Eastern Metropolitan
  - Hume
- **South-Western Victoria**
  - Barwon South West
  - Grampians
  - Western Metropolitan
- **South-Eastern Victoria**
  - Gippsland
  - Southern Metropolitan

### Systems Administration and Performance Branch

#### Service Administration and Support Unit (SASU):

provides a first point of contact for prospective, new and existing providers of early childhood services through the administration and assessment of applications, notifications of change of circumstances, and assessment of applicants' fitness and propriety.

**Business Systems and Review Unit (BSRU):** maintains QARD's information management, provides user support, undertakes systems improvement, reporting, data analytics, business planning, budget planning, risk assurance and governance.

### Executive

**Monitoring and Compliance (MCU):** manages and supports matters involving significant non-compliance and supports appropriate enforcement action.

**Legislative Reform (LRU):** provides legislative policy advice and support on the National Law and National Regulations (where Victoria is the host jurisdiction) and the CS Act and CS Regulations. It also leads strategic stakeholder engagement and communications functions.

**Corporate Support:** provides corporate and operational support for QARD in relation to people development and training, Freedom of Information requests, briefing requests and emergency management.



## Regulatory framework

**QARD is responsible for the approval and regulation of almost 4,600 early childhood services in Victoria. We regulate providers of early childhood services in Victoria with the objective of driving continuous improvement of quality in the provision of education and care.**

The Department's regulatory functions are established by the National Law and National Regulations, and the CS Act and CS Regulations.

As the regulatory authority for Victoria under the National Law, and the regulatory authority under the CS Act, the Secretary of the Department has delegated this responsibility to staff members of QARD.

Of the almost 4,600 early childhood services in Victoria at the end of 2020, around 4,300 were education and care services approved under the NQF, and around 300 were children's services approved under the CS Act.

## National Quality Framework

The NQF promotes high quality education and care services through a legislative framework which comprises:

- the National Law
- the National Regulations including the National Quality Standard (NQS).

Administratively, responsibility for implementing and administering the NQF is shared between State Regulatory Authorities and the National Authority, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).



## National Quality Framework objectives

- Ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services.
- Improve educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services.
- Promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services.
- Reduce the regulatory and administrative burden for education and care services by enabling information to be shared between participating jurisdictions.
- Improve public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services.
- Establish a system of national integration and shared responsibility between participating jurisdictions in the administration of the NQF.

## Children's Services Act 1996 objectives

Amendments to the CS Act that commenced in May 2020 aligned that Act with the National Law, where appropriate, including replicating the first three objectives of the NQF to promote high quality children's services.



## About the sector

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### What we regulate

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... high quality education and care is crucial for the development of cognitive and emotional skills ...

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Our regulatory approach is designed to facilitate and motivate service providers to provide high quality services that ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children as well as improving children's educational and developmental outcomes.

As the foundations for children's long-term development are laid in these early years, high quality education and care is crucial for the development of cognitive and emotional skills such as reasoning, problem solving, and how to get along with others. The pivotal time for the development of vision, emotional control and language is before the age of three, and the development of social skills is before the age of six.

Participation in high quality early childhood education therefore supports children to develop important skills such as creativity, resilience and communication.

Victoria's early childhood education sector also plays a significant role in facilitating workforce participation by parents, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Education and care services regulated under the NQF

### Centre-Based Care

Delivered on premises suitable for education and care, including:

#### Kindergarten/ Pre-School

- Program for young children delivered by qualified early childhood teachers.
- Children go to a kindergarten program in the year before starting school, usually when they are four years old.
- Some services also offer kindergarten programs for three-year-old children as part of the new three-year-old program funded by the Victorian Government.
- The kindergarten program for three-year-old children is being progressively expanded in Victoria.

#### Long Day Care

- Delivered by early childhood teachers and diploma level-qualified educators.
- Primarily aimed at children aged 0–6 years of age.
- Most often part-time or full-time education and care programs which are created around the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child.

#### Outside School Hours Care

- Usually located at or close to primary schools.
- Care provision for primary school aged children (typically 5 to 12 years) before and after school and during school holidays
- Education and care may also be provided on student free days and school holidays.

### Family Day Care

- Program is based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child.
- Can be provided to children from birth through to school age.
- Generally provided by a single educator in their own home.
- May be available overnight/weekends for families who are on-call or work shifts.

## Statistical overview



**1,890**

approved providers  
operating early  
childhood services  
in Victoria



**4,578**

approved early  
childhood services  
in Victoria



**415,000**

children attending  
NQF services



**290,591**

approved early  
childhood places  
in Victoria

**1,724**

approved providers  
operating NQF  
services in Victoria

**320**

providers  
operate more than  
one NQF service

**1,404**

single-service NQF  
providers

**198**

approved  
providers operating  
CS Act children's  
services

**26**

providers  
operate more than  
one CS Act service

**172**

single-service  
CS Act providers

**32**

approved  
providers operating  
both NQF and CS  
Act services

**4,140**

centre-based  
services

**159**

family day  
care services

**279**

CS Act  
children's services

**196,000**

children in centre-  
based care (long  
day care and  
occasional care)

**30,000**

children in  
kindergarten (long  
day care settings)

**50,000**

children in  
kindergarten (all  
other settings)

**107,000**

children in outside  
school hours care  
(including vacation  
care)

**32,000**

children in family  
day care

**283,552**

for centre-based  
services

**7,039**

under the CS Act

*\*Approved places not  
collected for FDC*

**Note:** Multi-service providers' refers to providers that provide more than one service nationally. Number of children in kindergarten refers to number of children enrolled in funded kindergarten in the year before school, using Victorian Department of Education and Training data. Number of children attending ECEC services refers to children 0-12 years attending Australian CCS approved child care services (excluding children enrolled in funded kindergarten), using national data.

## Children's Services regulated under the *Children's Services Act 1996*

Children's services regulated under the CS Act are specifically excluded from regulation under the NQF. All children's services provide centre-based care and include occasional care services, limited hours services, school holidays care services that operate for less than 28 days per year, early childhood intervention services, "mobile" services and former Budget Based Funded services.

While the scope of services regulated under the CS Act did not change, the children's services law reform that commenced in 2020 made changes to service licensing/approval categories. The licence type of all children's services operating at the commencement of the new regulatory regime was converted to one of two new service approval types, with effect from 17 May 2020:



### Limited Hours Service

- Each child is cared for or educated for not more than three hours a day, and not more than a total of six hours a week.
- This service type incorporates children's services with a former Limited Hours Type 1 licence.



### Occasional Care

- All other children's services that are not Limited Hours services.
- Provides care primarily on an ad hoc or casual basis which is not usually full-time, all day or on an ongoing basis.
- No limit to the number of hours children can be educated and cared for each week.
- Most of the children are not school children.
- This service type incorporates children's services with a former Standard, Limited Hours Type 2, School Holidays care or Integrated licence.





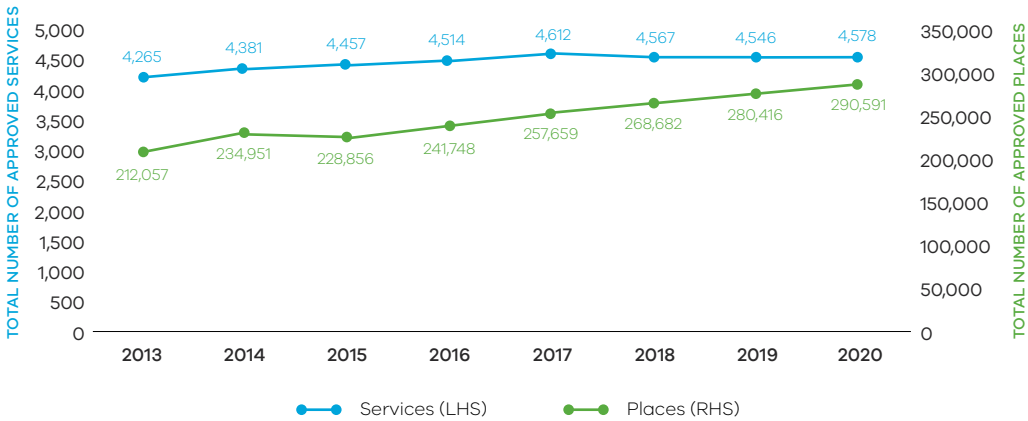
# Sector profile

At the end of 2020 there were 4,578 approved early childhood education and care services in Victoria providing 290,591 approved places.

Overall, the number of approved services in the early childhood sector has been stable, with an additional 32 services in 2020 compared with 2019. In line with previous years, there has been continued growth in the number of places available, as can be seen in Figure 1 below.

**4,578**  
approved early  
childhood  
education and  
care services in  
Victoria at the  
end of 2020

Figure 1: Number of approved ECEC services and places, 2013-2020



**Note:** ‘Places’ only relates to centre-based services under the NQF and children’s services regulated under the CS Act. Places data for FDC services is not collected. The number of places reflects services’ approved capacity.



Approved places at a centre-based service or children's service is the maximum number of children that can be educated and cared for by the service at any one time. Some services, like kindergartens, may also operate multiple daily sessions, so while approved for 60 places, they may operate twice daily for a total of 120 children.

The total number of children's services under the CS Act has been declining in recent years, due to a range of factors including declining demand, changes in funding programs, competition from NQF services (which can now receive child care funding for short sessions of care).

**Table 1: Number of approved CS Act services and places, 2013-2020**

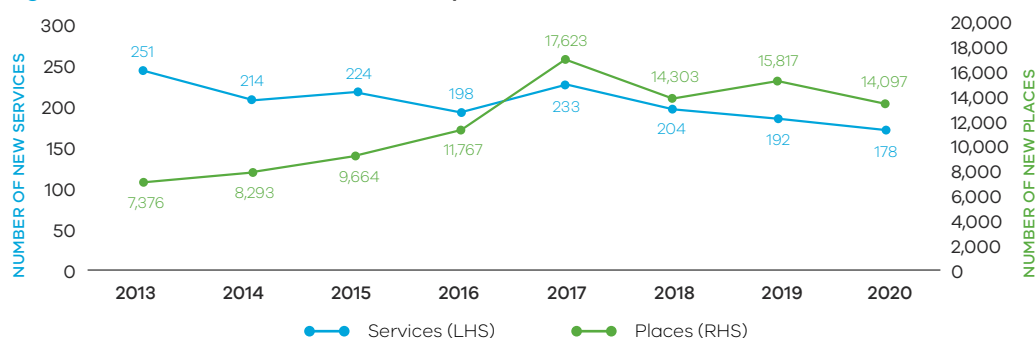
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Services</b>	457	453	430	406	379	358	317	<b>279</b>
<b>Places</b>	11,248	11,078	10,569	10,103	9,516	9,140	8,002	<b>7,039</b>

The number of new NQF services approved each year has fallen from 2017 onwards, although the number of places has remained relatively stable after a decline in 2018. Of the new NQF places in 2020, 71 per cent were provided in long day care.

**71%**

of the new NQF places in 2020 were provided in long day care.

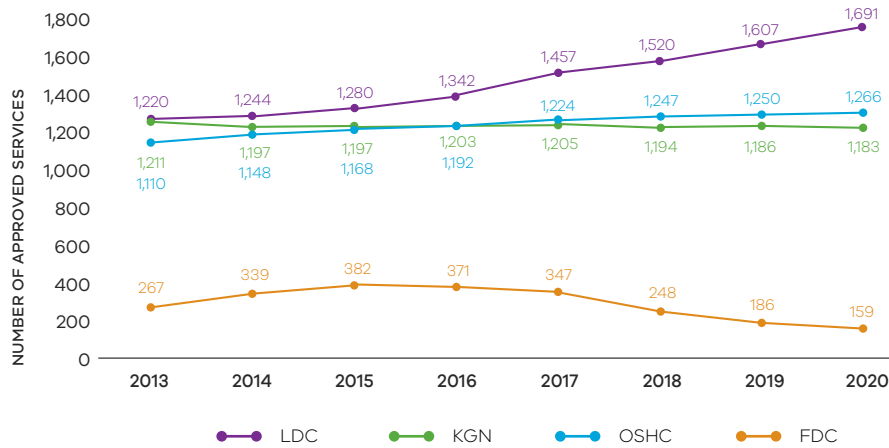
**Figure 2: Number of new NQF services and places, 2013-2020**



**Note:** Number of new services refers to services approved in that year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

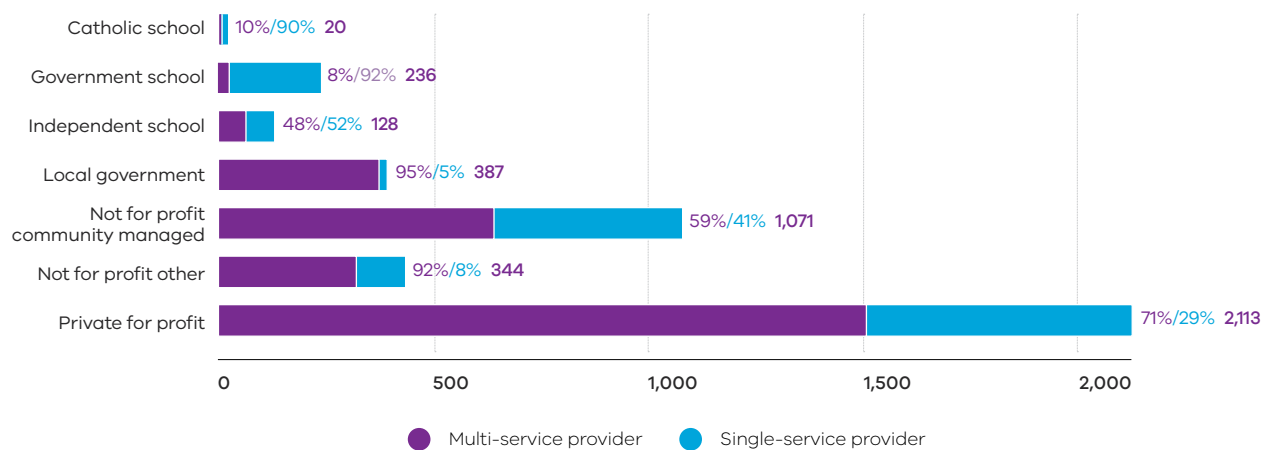
While the number of LDC services continues to increase, the numbers of FDC services are declining, as can be seen in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Number of approved NQF services by care type, 2013–2020**



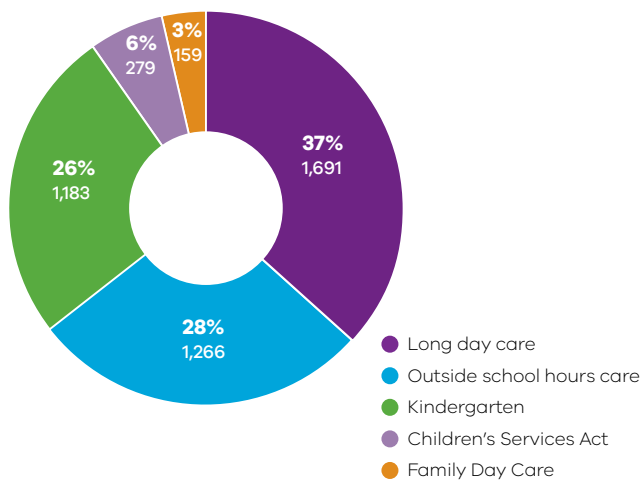
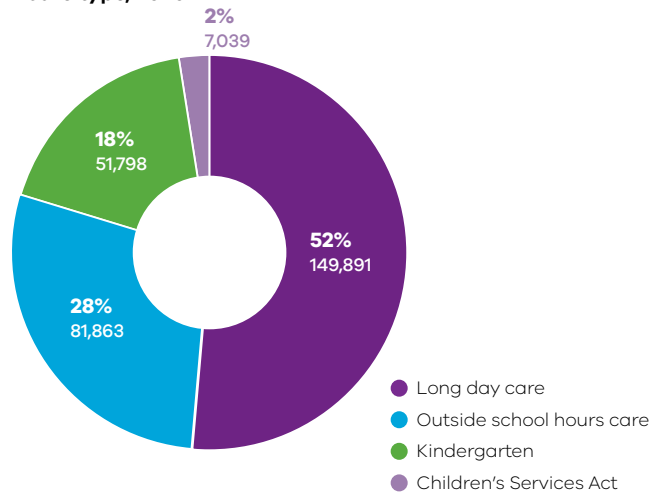
For NQF services, private for profit is the largest single provider management type, operating 2,113 services (49 per cent) of all NQF services in 2020, as can be seen in Figure 4. Of these, 1,492 (71 per cent) are run by multi-service providers, many of whom have services in other jurisdictions. Private for-profit type providers continue to grow steadily as a proportion of the sector, with the other management types remaining stable.

**Figure 4: Number of approved NQF services by provider management type, 2020**



**Note:** 'Multi-service providers' refers to providers that provide more than one service nationally.

There is slow but steady increase in private for-profit providers across both the NQF and the CS Act services (see Appendix Table 3).

**Figure 5: Number of approved services by care type, 2020****Figure 6: Number of approved centre-based places by care type, 2020**

**Note:** 'Places' only relates to centre-based NQF services and services regulated under the CS Act. Places data is not collected for FDC services. The number of places reflects services' approved capacity.

**Table 2: Number of approved services and places by care type, 2020**

Care type	Approved services	Approved places
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,578</b>	<b>290,591</b>
<b>NQF</b>	<b>4,299</b>	<b>283,552</b>
<b>Centre-Based Care</b>	<b>4,140</b>	<b>283,552</b>
Long day care	1,691	149,891
Kindergarten	1,183	51,798
Outside school hours care	1,266	81,863
<b>Family Day Care</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>CS Act</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>7,039</b>

**Note:** 'Places' only relates to centre-based services and services regulated under the CS Act. Places data is not collected for FDC. The number of places reflects services' approved capacity.



## Overall quality rating comparisons by care type

An objective of the NQF is to promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services, which is assessed by authorised officers during assessment and rating visits.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria in 2020, assessment and rating visits were suspended from April until November 2020, thus the assessment and rating data for 2020 cannot be compared to that of other jurisdictions that were not subject to COVID-19 restrictions for a long period, nor compared to previous years.

The introduction of the NQF requirement for services to deliver a program based on an approved learning framework has raised the benchmark for educational programs and practice.

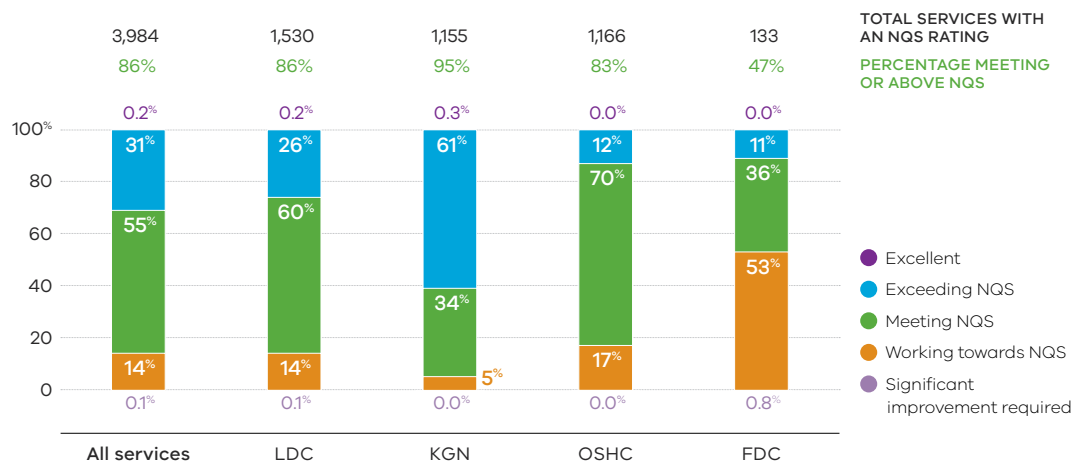
The quality of the ECEC sector continues to improve, with the 86 per cent of services rated meeting or above in 2020.

**Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice** is one of the most challenging quality areas for education and care services to meet. 91 per cent of services in Victoria received a rating of Meeting NQS or above in 2020, compared to 88 per cent of services nationally. The relatively stronger performance of Victorian services in Quality Area 1 can be attributed to the stronger performance of kindergartens and their historical focus on educational programs and practice delivered by early childhood teachers. 28 per cent of Victorian services across all care types were rated Exceeding NQS in Quality Area 1 in 2020.

# 86%

of ECEC  
services rated  
meeting or  
above NQS  
in 2020

**Figure 7: Overall quality ratings by care type and rating level, 2020**

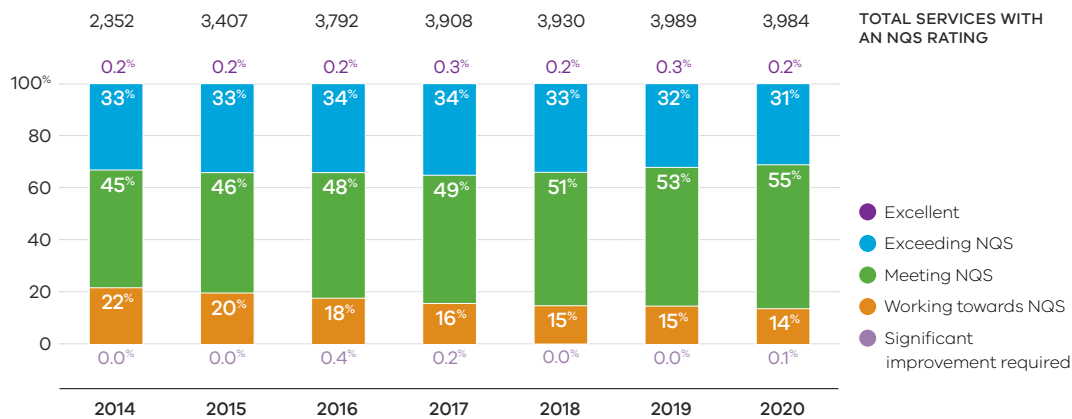


Victoria is performing well compared to other jurisdictions on a national basis with 86 per cent of all care types receiving a rating of Meeting NQS or above in 2020, as can be seen in Figure 7. Kindergartens again lead with 61 per cent receiving a rating of Exceeding NQS. There were two services that received the rating of Significant Improvement Required (SIR) and six that received an Excellent rating, the highest rating possible under the NQF.

# 61%

of  
kindergartens  
received a  
rating of  
Exceeding  
NQS in 2020

**Figure 8: Overall quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020**



Overall, there has been a steady increase in the number of all services receiving a rating of Meeting NQS or above since 2016, and a corresponding decrease in those receiving a rating of Working Towards NQS, as can be seen in Figure 8. There has also been a slight decline in the number of services achieving a rating of Exceeding NQS.



## Centre-Based Care overview

### Long Day Care

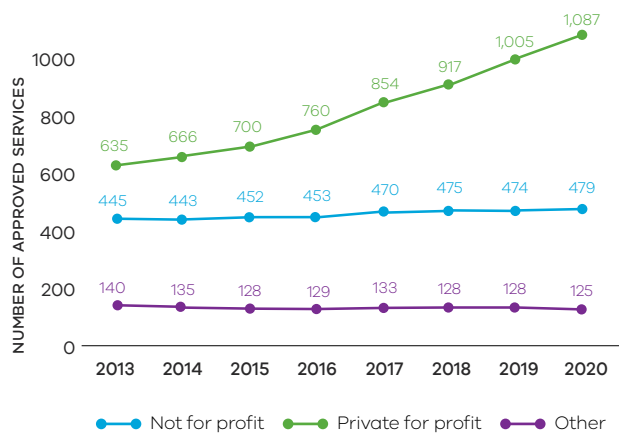
The LDC sector makes up the largest component (39 per cent) of services under the NQF, offering half (53 per cent) of NQF approved childcare places in Victoria. Most LDC services (85 per cent) are funded on a per capita basis to provide a four-year-old kindergarten program.

**Table 3: Average number of places for new NQF services approved within each year by care type, 2013–2020**

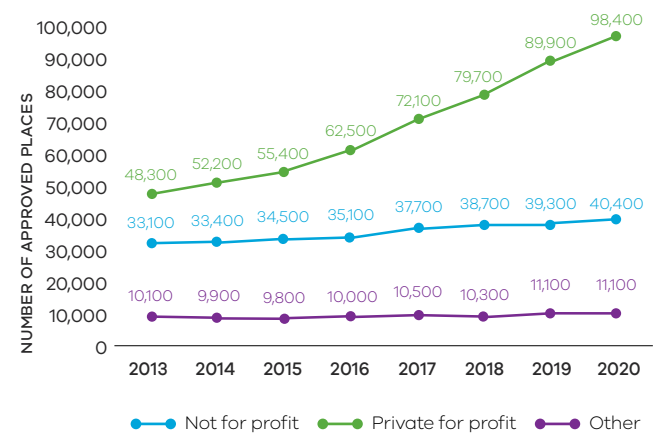
Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>NQF</b>	60	59	59	74	83	75	85	<b>83</b>
Long Day Care	93	97	79	98	104	105	112	<b>103</b>
Kindergarten	48	51	58	51	44	50	48	<b>58</b>
Outside School Hours Care	47	45	47	52	60	53	51	<b>55</b>
<b>CS Act</b>	Na	Na	27	22	26	30	26	<b>18</b>

There has been steady growth in the number of approved private for profit LDC services (see Figure 9) and the number of approved places in LDC as a result (see Figure 10).

**Figure 9: Number of approved LDC services, 2013–2020**

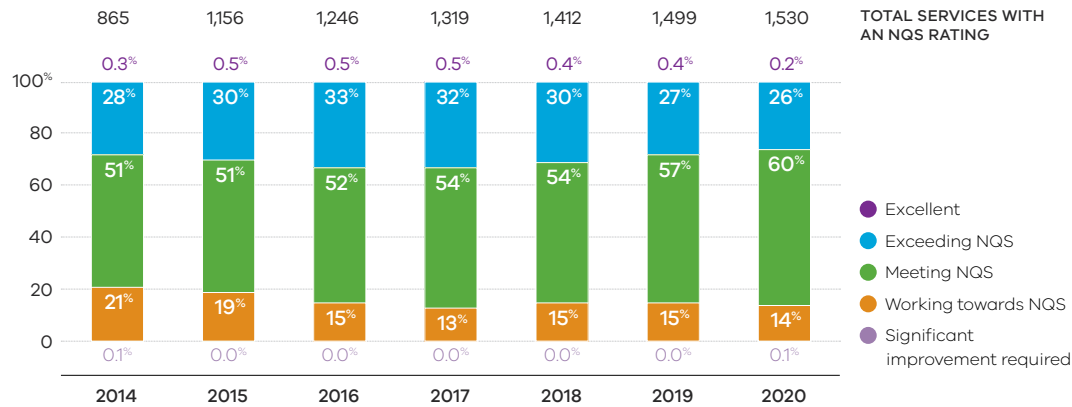


**Figure 10: Number of approved LDC places (rounded), 2013–2020**



## Long Day Care quality rating

**Figure 11: Number and proportion of LDC services with quality ratings at the end of the year, by rating level 2014-2020**

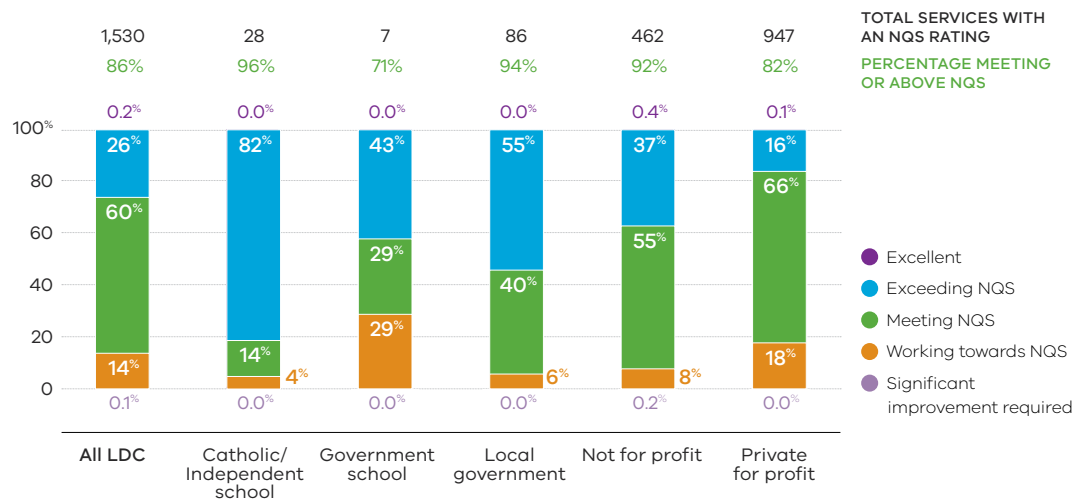


Overall, there has been a positive trend with an increasing number of services receiving a rating of meeting NQS or above.

While there has been a small decline in the proportion of services receiving a rating of Exceeding NQS over time in Victoria, this is in line with the national trend, following changes made in 2018 to the new guidance for the Exceeding NQS rating.

**53%**  
of NQF  
approved  
childcare places  
in Victoria are  
in the long day  
care sector.

**Figure 12: Overall LDC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**

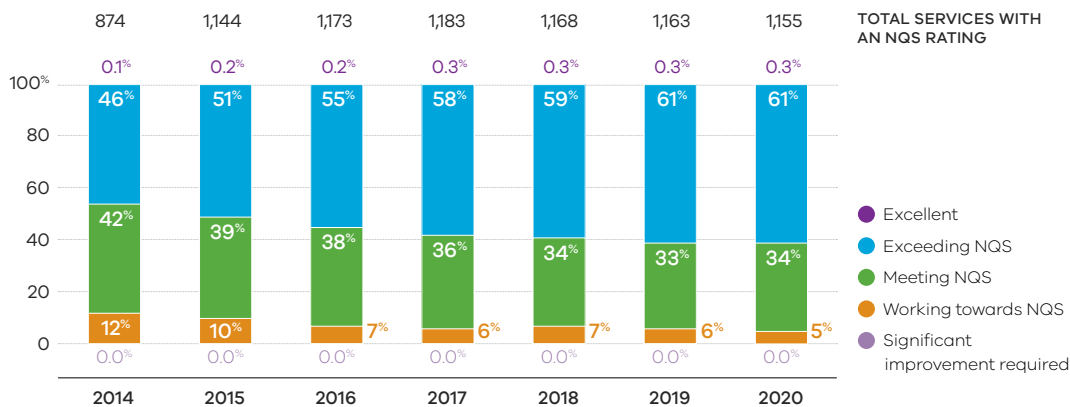


## Kindergarten

The standalone kindergarten (KGN) sector in Victoria has been stable over time. The sector is almost exclusively operated by not-for-profit and local government managed providers (89 per cent of all services as at 2020). Of these, 66 per cent of services are managed by providers that operate more than one kindergarten service in Victoria.

Victoria regulates the highest number of standalone kindergartens across Australia, with 1,183 approved services at the end of 2020, compared with New South Wales (758 services), Queensland (513 services) and South Australia (409 services).

**Figure 13: Number and proportion of kindergarten services with quality ratings at the end of the year, by rating level, 2014–2020**

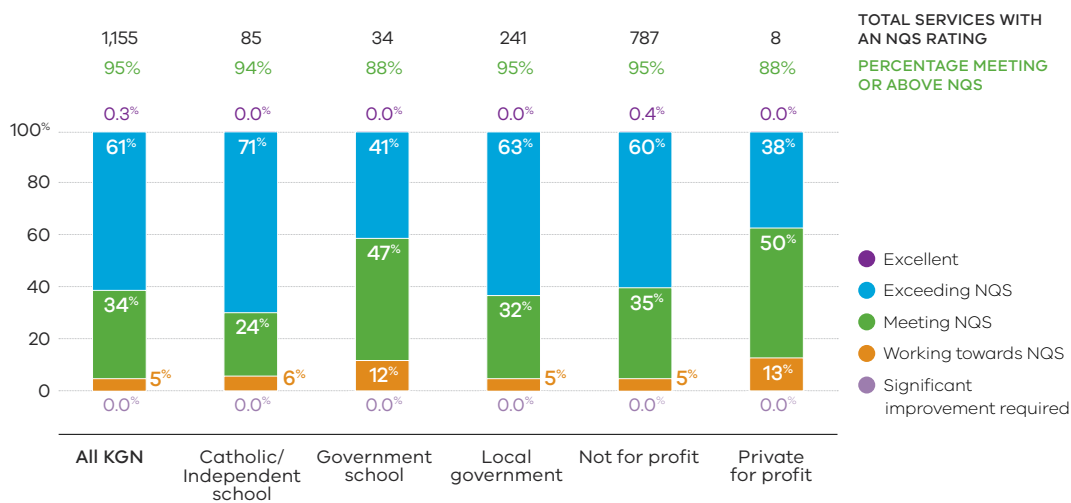


Kindergarten services have the highest quality ratings compared with other service types, in both Victoria and nationally. The vast majority (95 per cent) of services in Victoria had a rating of Meeting NQS or above at the end of 2020 (see Figure 7).

Kindergarten services tend to have a higher proportion of services rated Exceeding NQS compared to other service types.

Almost all rated kindergarten services are Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS in Quality Area 3 Physical environment, Quality Area 4 Staffing arrangements, Quality Area 5 Relationships with children and Quality Area 6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

Services that receive funding to provide four-year-old kindergarten programs (including services that provide LDC) perform better in all quality areas. The difference is most marked in Quality Area 1 Educational Program and Practice, Quality Area 2 Children's Health and Safety and Quality Area 7 Governance and Leadership, compared with LDC and kindergarten services that do not receive this funding.

**Figure 14: Overall kindergarten quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**

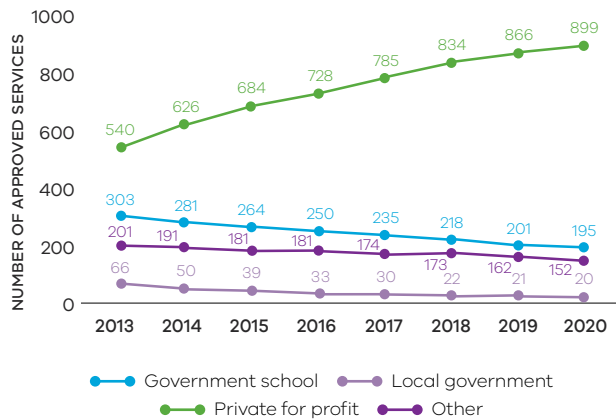
Within the high-performing kindergarten care type, kindergarten programs operated by Catholic or independent schools performed the best, with 75 per cent receiving ratings of Exceeding NQS and 96 per cent receiving a rating of Meeting NQS or above. This is even stronger than local government operated services with 75 per cent receiving Exceeding NQS ratings.



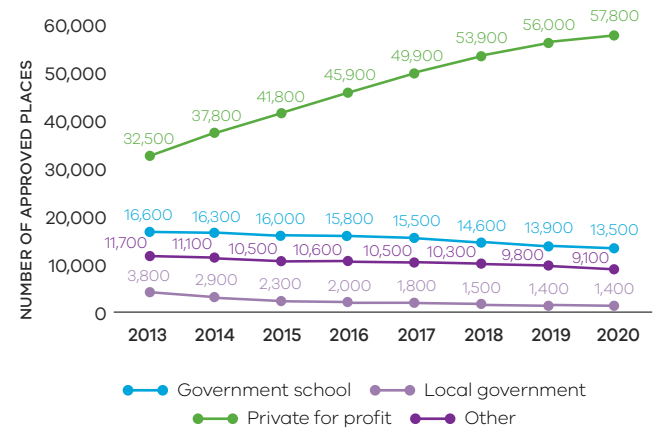
## Outside School Hours Care

There is a trend toward schools engaging third party providers to deliver their OSHC programs. The main operators in Victoria are private for-profit providers with 899 services in 2020. Multi-service, private for-profit providers manage two-thirds (70 per cent) of OSHC services, while government schools managed 15 per cent of these services in 2020.

**Figure 15: Number of approved OSHC services, 2013–2020**

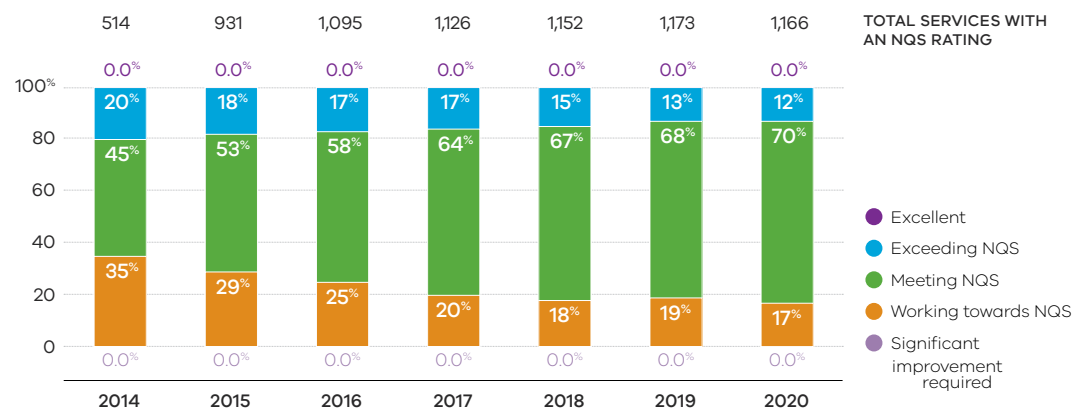


**Figure 16: Number of approved OSHC places (rounded), 2013–2020**



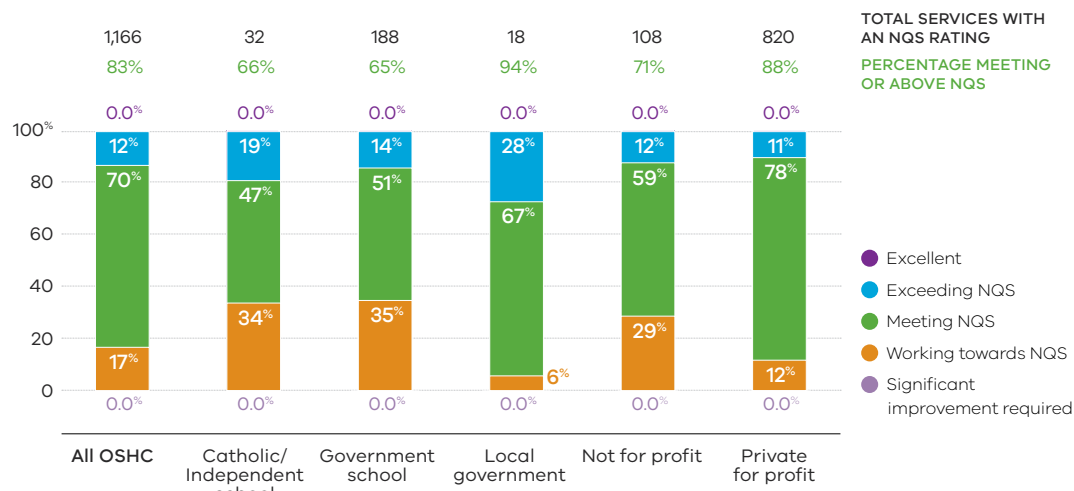
## Outside School Hours Care quality rating

**Figure 17: Number and proportion of OSHC services with quality ratings at the end of the year, by rating level, 2014–2020**



Victoria has amongst the highest proportion of OSHC services Meeting or Exceeding NQS compared with other jurisdictions. Eighty-three per cent of OSHC services in Victoria had a quality rating of Meeting NQS or above at the end of 2020, compared with 79 per cent nationally.

The proportion of OSHC services rated as Working Towards NQS has continued to decrease over time and those rated as Meeting NQS has continued to increase, as the OSHC sector has matured in Victoria. The much smaller local government segment achieves the highest overall quality rating outcomes.

**Figure 18: Overall OSHC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**

**70%**  
of OSHC services  
in Victoria are  
managed by  
multi-service,  
private for-profit  
providers with  
**899 services**  
delivered in 2020

In particular, Victorian OSHC services have performed better than the national OSHC average in the following quality areas:

- **Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities** – Ninety-seven per cent (97%) of rated services Meeting or Exceeding NQS compared with 93 per cent nationally
- **Quality Area 3 – Physical environment** – Ninety-five per cent (95%) of rated services Meeting or Exceeding NQS compared with 91 per cent nationally
- **Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice** – Eighty-nine per cent (89%) of rated services Meeting or Exceeding NQS compared with 85 per cent nationally.



## Family day care

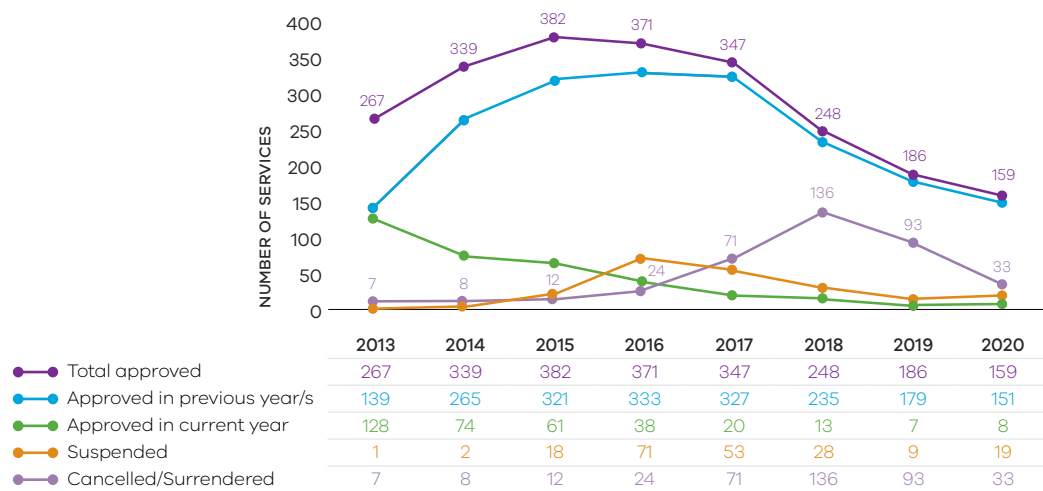
Family day care (FDC) is regulated under the National Law. Traditionally, the FDC model was a popular way for local providers such as municipal councils to increase access to affordable and flexible early learning and care for their communities.

The rapid growth in the number of approved FDC services seen between 2013–2015 has slowed, with the number of services falling each year since the peak of 382 services in 2015 to just 159 at the end of 2020. As part of a significant compliance effort, a large number of approvals were cancelled or surrendered in 2019 (93) and a further 33 service approvals were cancelled or surrendered in 2020. Nineteen service approvals were suspended following enforcement action.

# 159

family day care services were approved in 2020, continuing the downward trend from the peak in 2015 of 382 services

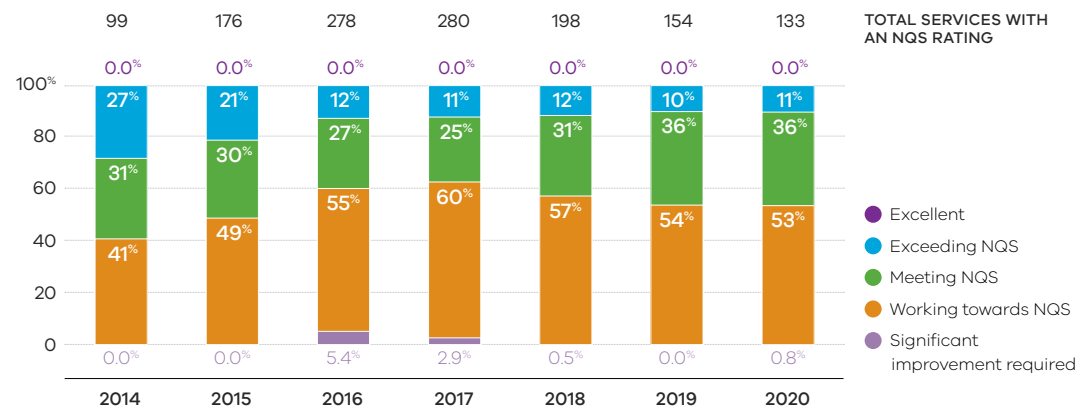
**Figure 19: Number of FDC services, 2013–2020**



## Family day care quality ratings

Sections of the FDC sector have experienced challenges achieving the quality of service provision compared with other care types. However, indications of improving quality can be seen with gradual increases in proportions of FDC services with a Meeting NQS rating (and declines in the Working Towards NQS rating).

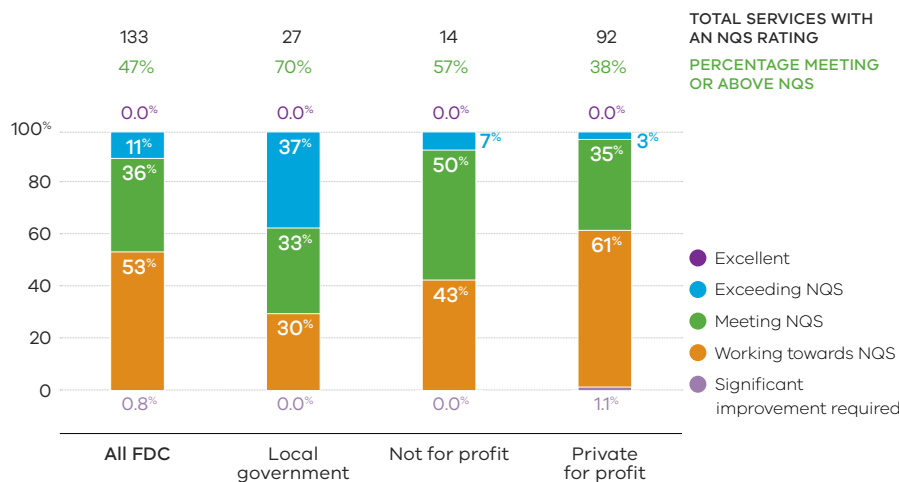
**Figure 20: Number and proportion of FDC services with overall quality ratings at the end of the calendar year, by rating level, 2014–2020**



There remain broader quality issues with FDC services, with the percentage of services receiving a Working Towards NQS rating remaining stable in the past three years. Following QARD's work to improve the integrity and quality of the FDC sector, the number of FDC services receiving a Significant Improvement Requirement (SIR) rating has reduced and remains at less than 1 per cent.

Local government operated FDC services with a quality rating continued to out-perform those operated by private for profit, with 70 per cent rated in 2020 receiving a rating of meeting or above NQS, compared with 38 per cent of the for-profit services (see Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Overall FDC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**



# 70%

of local government family day care services received a rating of Meeting or above NQS, compared with 38% of for-profit services

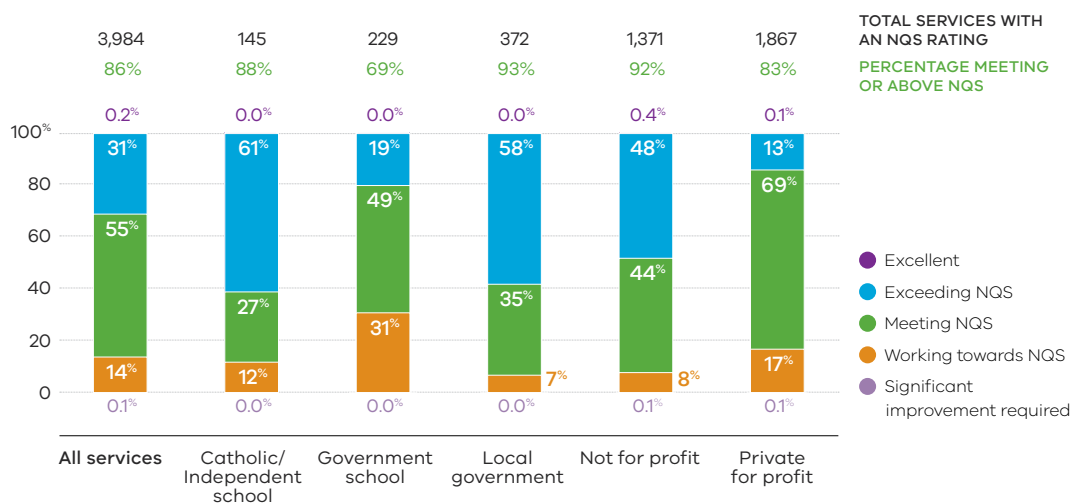


## Overall rating comparisons by provider type – all service types

Local government and school providers operate one in five services. The not-for-profit sector is a major provider of kindergarten services, which historically have received higher quality ratings compared to other care types.

Quality ratings in 2020 were consistent with those in 2019, with all providers performing well across all care types. 86 per cent of services in Victoria were rated as meeting or above NQS, compared to 84 per cent of services nationally.

**Figure 22: Overall quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**







## Supporting the sector

QARD seeks to improve early childhood education and care for children in Victoria through providing targeted education sessions, guidance and individual support to services.



## Enquiries and support

QARD provides a dedicated Enquiry and Support telephone line and email to respond to enquiries from the ECEC sector and other stakeholders.

In 2020, 12,042 calls were received and managed from educators, service staff and members of the public making enquiries about service operations or requirements. Depending on the nature of these enquiries, callers are provided information, directed towards resources or referred to an authorised officer for detailed guidance or support. The increase in calls received in 2020, compared to 2019, can be attributed to enquiries made regarding service operational and notification requirements resulting from the impacts of COVID-19.



## Quality Assessment and Regulation Update newsletter

QARD produces a monthly email newsletter to inform providers and services of current regulatory issues and opportunities for improvement. Due to COVID-19 challenges there were only three editions of the Quality Assessment and Regulation Update newsletter published. Each newsletter was distributed to around 4,500 sector contacts.

Topics covered in 2020 included:

- guidance on coronavirus, and the impact on services
- guidance on additional Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) requirements (that took effect on 1 January 2020)
- emergency management
- safety issues including bushfires, smoke and air quality issues, water activities, glass safety, transportation
- educator resources, requirements and professional development opportunities
- reminders about immunisation, health and hygiene, licensing Issues
- law reform, including the Children's Services law reform and the 2019 NQF Review.

Throughout 2020 the Department provided frequent emails to the early childhood sector covering COVID-19 related health advice and restrictions, and this also included regulatory information where relevant.

## Information sessions

### New applicants

The Service Administration and Support Unit (SASU) provides approved providers or stakeholders working with them (for example architects and consultants), the opportunity to consult about their proposed designs of new buildings or renovated premises. These consultations offer guidance about the suitability of the proposed design for meeting regulatory requirements. In 2020, QARD conducted seven consultation meetings to offer such guidance, in addition to responding to correspondence seeking advice on the design of education and care services.

SASU delivers assessment sessions throughout the year for applicants for provider approval to operate centre-based and family day care services. The primary purpose of these sessions is to inform the assessment of the fitness and propriety of an applicant. The sessions also serve to reinforce the regulatory obligations of, and requirements on, individuals involved in the provision of early childhood services.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, SASU developed new online assessment sessions to replace the previous face-to-face sessions. These sessions were facilitated using the Webex meetings platform where applicants were required to respond to a range of questions, completed through online assessment surveys. These online sessions proved successful and will continue to be offered as the preferred method for engagement with applicants, while QARD looks to enhance its facilitation and assessment tools.

### Regional sessions

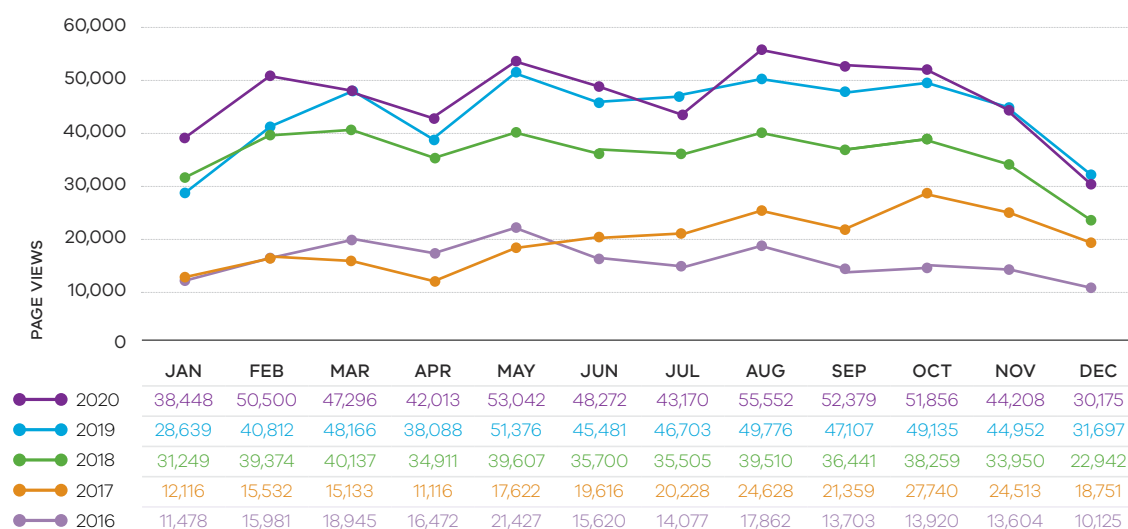
The QARD regional teams and authorised officers engage regularly with local services and educators to ensure a better understanding of the NQF and encourage compliance with regulatory obligations. They provide information sessions focused on current issues and areas of change, such as the NQF and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, and encourage dialogue and information sharing among our team, services and partners.



## Early childhood website

QARD uses the DET website ([www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood)) to provide resources and guidance to providers and services. In 2020 website traffic increased by approximately 7 per cent over the strong base, with an average 46,400 page views per month compared to 43,500 in 2019.

**Figure 23: QARD Regulation pages on DET website – page views per month, 2016–2020**



The majority of website traffic came from search engines (86 per cent), while ten per cent of our audience visited us directly by using a URL, five per cent resulted from referral traffic (websites that linked to Regulation pages), one per cent from email links, and a further one per cent from social media.





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QARD senior executives met with peak bodies and representatives on a fortnightly or weekly basis, to provide support during the COVID-19 crisis

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## Sector reference groups

Relationships continued to strengthen with stakeholders in 2020 despite the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions. The Early Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Reference Group, consisting of 20 key industry representatives, met in November 2020 via an online platform to discuss trends and issues within the sector. The face-to-face meeting normally held in March each year was not held in 2020 due to the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to this group, QARD senior executives met with peak bodies and representatives on a fortnightly or sometimes weekly basis, to support them during the COVID-19 crisis.

## Red-tape reduction

QARD continually works to improve processes and reduce red-tape. We provide ongoing support for improvements to the NQA ITS public portal through a workplan coordinated and managed by ACECQA to streamline and standardise data capture for service providers.

Changes to the CS regime in 2020 simplified licensing arrangements for providers which means that licences are no longer fixed term and renewed annually, but perpetual as under the NQF.



## Stakeholder satisfaction survey

In 2020, QARD conducted its third annual stakeholder satisfaction survey to gauge the quality of its compliance-related assistance and advice. Information received from the survey is used to improve QARD's delivery in these areas. The survey was distributed to all services and providers under both regulatory regimes. 1076 responses were received in 2020 compared to 905 responses in 2019.

Qualitative responses indicate that QARD continues to be accessible and receptive to the sector.

### Overall satisfaction with QARD's regulatory support and guidance



**76%**

satisfied (+12%)

**17%** neutral (-9%)

**7%** dissatisfied (-3%)

### Providing compliance assistance and advice



**87%**

of respondents agreed that QARD staff are knowledgeable and responsive when providing information (+3%)

### Experience of regulatory practices



**85%**

of respondents were satisfied with their experience of QARD's regulatory practices (+5%)

### Effective and efficient systems and processes



**84%**

of respondents (strongly and somewhat) agreed that QARD uses effective IT solutions and that the public portal is easy to use (+2%)

### Communicating with and engaging stakeholders



**89%**

of respondents agreed that QARD communicates simply using relevant formats and provides opportunities to engage with stakeholders (+4%)



**90%**

respondents agreed that regulatory requirements were clear (+3%)



**87%**

of respondents agreed that compliance assistance and advice were clear (+5%)

**Note:** Bases used to calculate percentages vary depending on number of responses provided. Some measures are composite measures.



## Regulatory performance

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**QARD is committed to exemplifying best practice regulation across its regulatory functions and activities.**

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### Risk-Based Regulator

Our primary objective as the regulator of early childhood services is to ensure they protect children's safety, health and wellbeing and deliver quality education and care to support children's learning and developmental outcomes.

We are committed to exemplifying best practice regulation across our regulatory functions and activities. To meet our regulatory objectives and deliver outcomes efficiently and effectively, we apply risk-based approaches to focus attention on areas or problems that present the greatest risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

Our actions are responsive and proportionate to the problem being addressed.

QARD is responsible for:

- assessing an applicant's suitability to operate an early childhood education and care service
- assessing the suitability of premises for providing education and care services, supporting and guiding service providers and staff to meet their regulatory obligations
- assessing and rating service quality against the NQS through the assessment and rating process
- receiving and investigating notifications of incidents and complaints
- monitoring compliance with and enforcing requirements of the National Law and Regulations and CS Act and CS Regulations.



## Applications and notifications

QARD is responsible for assessing and determining new applications, notifications of change of circumstances and applicants' fitness and propriety.

### Applications

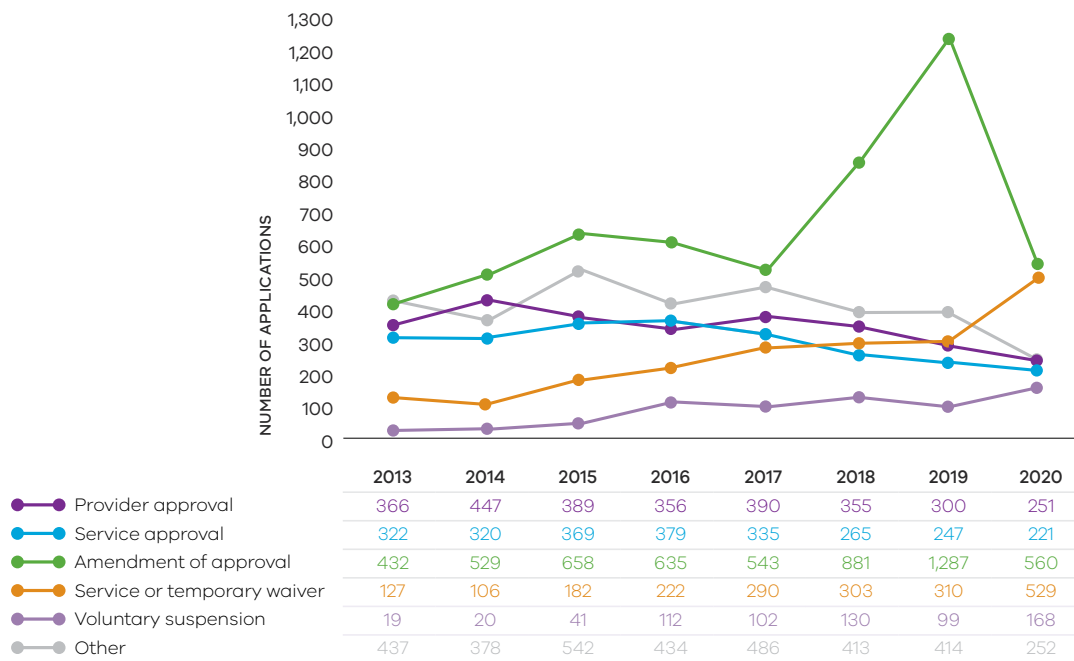
There was an overall reduction of approximately 25 per cent in the number of applications submitted to QARD in 2020 (1,981 applications) compared to the previous year (2,657 applications). Applications for amendment to provider or service approvals (amendment applications) continue to account for the majority of applications received (approximately 27%). However, overall amendment applications saw a significant drop of approximately 57 per cent compared to 2019, particularly for service approval amendments.

Applications for amendment to approval are used for changes to maximum number of approved places, removal of existing conditions, service name changes, and changes to approved provider details. Some application types, such as amendments to approvals by the regulatory

authority, are internally generated to facilitate system driven administrative processes. The reduction in these application types in 2020 was due in large part to the work undertaken in 2019 to place conditions on service approvals relating to the Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR). The reduction was also influenced by the changing circumstances of prospective providers and services, and the operational status of existing services resulting from COVID-19.

Conversely, waiver (service or temporary) and voluntary suspension application types both saw large increases of approximately 71 per cent compared to 2019. These increases can largely be attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 throughout the majority of last year, which resulted in challenges experienced by services in meeting staffing qualifications (ECT and first aid requirements) and temporary closure of services.

In 2020, there were 251 applications for new provider approvals, and 221 applications for new service approvals, which continues a trend in these two application types. 101 new provider applications were granted and 18 refused, and 205 new service applications were granted and 5 refused. For full details please refer to appendix tables 13 and 14.

**Figure 24: Number of applications submitted by application type, 2013–2020**

## Notifications of change of circumstances

QARD receives and processes notifications of changes of certain circumstances and information about services regulated under both the NQF and the CS Act. These notifications include changes in the management or control of an approved provider or responsible persons at the service, surrenders of service or provider approval, and change of information about an early childhood service.

There were about 11,000 notifications of change of circumstances received by QARD in 2020, up from

8,960 in 2019. Sixty-four per cent (64%) of these notifications in 2020 were related to changes to services, with the majority of them related to the changes in nominated supervisors of services. Twenty-eight per cent (28%) of these notifications in 2020 were related to change of contact details, most of them related to services' contact details. Many of these related to OSHC services that did not operate during the pandemic.

The number of notifications related to changes to hours or days of operation of services almost doubled in 2020, largely due to closures during the pandemic.



## Assessment and rating

In general, assessment and rating is a core regulatory activity for delivering the NQF's continuous improvement objective. The assessment and rating process involves authorised officers conducting a service visit to discuss and observe practice, and to assess service quality against the 40 elements of the NQS in accordance with the National Law. Following analysis, authorised officers then determine a quality rating and report the outcome to service providers including identifying areas for improvement. Prior to the rating being finalised, the approved provider is issued with a draft rating report and may provide feedback. This process aims to promote continuous improvement and to improve knowledge, and access to information about the quality of education and care services for parents and the community.

In 2020 however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, assessment and rating visits were suspended in metropolitan areas. When assessment and rating visits recommenced in November, processes were amended to align with health advice and personal safety. This meant that authorised officers requested and assessed documents prior to the

service visit and held leadership discussions virtually or by telephone. These documents were in addition to the existing desktop review of the service's quality improvement plans, history of compliance and other relevant information. Physical visits continued, but for a maximum of four hours, and focussed on observations, reviewing sample documentation and testing evidence at the service collected as part of the pre-visit assessment.

## Excellent rated services

At the end of 2020, six Victorian services were rated as Excellent, three kindergartens and four LDC services. An Excellent rating, the highest level rating possible under the NQF, is assessed and determined by ACECQA following application from a service. The service must be rated Exceeding NQS in all quality areas in order to apply for an Excellent rating.

Those services were:

- Albert Park Preschool Centre
- Balnarring Pre-School
- Bonkers Beat Music Kinder & Childcare Aspendale
- Clarendon Children's Centre Co-operative
- Cambrian Preschool
- Gowrie Victoria Broadmeadows Valley.

## Case study 2: Spotlight on excellence – Balnarring preschool

**Balnarring Preschool was first awarded the Excellent rating in July 2017 then again in September 2020.**

The service is located in Balnarring on the Mornington Peninsula, close to the beach. Managed by a community run, not-for-profit organisation, two programs are offered: a Bush and Beach Kinder where children learn about living and learning with nature, and a program focusing on First People's Perspectives where First People's culture is incorporated into daily program plans on Boon Wurrung Country on the beach and in the bush.

Balnarring Preschool was recognised by ACECQA in 2020 for its collaborative partnerships with professional and community organisations, and inclusive partnerships with children and families that celebrates culture and diversity, especially First People. It was also recognised for its positive workplace culture and organisational values, sustained commitment to professional development and support of educators, and practice and environments that enhance children's learning and growth.

The service has established an annual community festival, in collaboration with local First Peoples, to honour and celebrate Australia's First Peoples within

the broader community. This annual festival provides an opportunity for community members to continue their learning and understanding of the world's oldest living culture through stalls, entertainment and cultural workshops including storytelling and bush tucker walks. They also organize an annual conference day focusing on learning from First Peoples and outdoor environments. N'Arwee't Carolyn Briggs, a First Peoples Children's book author, entrusts the children from the service to illustrate her books annually.

In addition to community links, the Balnarring Preschool has also actively supported staff and the broader sector professionally by creating a teacher club for graduate and experienced teachers to reflect on specific topics, share thoughts, discuss challenges and pedagogical practices. A staff member has been president of the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network since its inception in 2013, after developing an interest in services providing a nature-based learning program.

For these, and in so many other ways, the ACECQA Board acknowledged Balnarring Preschool's commitment to exceptional quality education and care and re-awarded the excellent rating for a further three years.

## Significant Improvement Required

At the end of 2020, Victoria had two services with a Significant Improvement Required (SIR) rating for not meeting the NQS and there being a significant risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

Services with this rating face sanctions, and increased oversight and/or have restrictions placed on their operations. In early 2021, both these services were re-assessed and rated, achieving Working Towards NQS and Meeting NQS ratings respectively.

## Reviews of ratings

The National Law allows service providers to request a review of the service's rating if the provider disagrees with the rating given. The review of ratings by the regulatory authority is referred to as a 'first tier review'. Five ratings given in 2020 resulted in a first tier review, compared with 12 ratings given in 2019, however this may reflect the lower number of assessment and rating reports published.

Approved providers have applied for a first tier review for less than two per cent of ratings in the last five years. If the approved provider is still not satisfied after the first tier review, they may apply to the National Authority (ACECQA) for a further review (a 'second tier review') by a ratings review panel. There was one second tier review of a service in Victoria undertaken by the ratings review panel for each of the years since 2018.

**Table 4: Proportion of ratings with a first or second tier review, 2016–2020**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Second tier reviews	0	0	1	1	1
First tier reviews	12	15	14	12	5
Ratings given	838	979	1003	999	257
Proportion of ratings resulting in a first tier review	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.9%

**Note:** Count of ratings given excludes partial reassessment and re-ratings. Ratings relate to those finalised in that year, where some visits were completed in the previous year.

## Case study 3: A Journey from Working Towards NQS to meeting NQS

Kaniva is a small farming community of around 800 people in the Wimmera, approximately 25 kilometres east of the South Australian border. The approved provider, West Wimmera Shire Council, operates the Kaniva Kindergarten and offers a preschool program for 64 children, many of whom travel long distances to attend.

The service was assessed and rated in 2016, receiving a rating of Working Towards NQS (WTNQS) in two quality areas. QARD recommended that the service participate in the Department's Kindergarten Quality Improvement Program (KQIP) which provides intensive and targeted support to WTNQS services. The service took up this opportunity, participating in the six-month program for staff in management and leadership roles such as nominated supervisors and educational leaders. As part of this program, participants received professional development workshops, individualised support from mentors, online collaboration spaces, digital learning resources and networking resources.

Following this experience, the Preschool teacher reflected on her own professional practice and decided that she wished to improve her practice in program

documentation. She spoke to an authorised officer, who was visiting the service as part of a routine compliance visit, about her idea. The authorised officer encouraged her and gave her details of a course offered by Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership in Melbourne that focused on educational leadership. The teacher was keen to attend but concerned about driving such a large distance alone. To support her and the service, the Council Manager drove her to Melbourne (a six hour return journey) to attend the course, despite the Council's limited budget and her many other commitments.

Following this experience, the service has been committed to a journey of continuous improvement and received a rating of Meeting NQS in all seven quality areas when it was assessed again in November 2020. Even more impressive, the service was able to demonstrate the exceeding themes across multiple quality areas, such as critical reflection and practices embedded in service practice. This is a wonderful example of how quality can be fostered in even the smallest service when providers, services and Department work together.

## Monitoring and compliance

QARD implements a range of compliance strategies to motivate compliance with legislative requirements. In 2020, authorised officers completed a total of 2,244 compliance inspection visits to services. 2,161 were to services operating under the NQF and 73 were to services operating under the CS Act. Ten visits were made to alleged unapproved services.

**Table 5: Number of compliance visits completed per 100 services by care type, 2018–2020**

Care type	2018	2019	2020
Long day care	86	88	<b>70</b>
Kindergarten	42	40	<b>38</b>
Outside school hours care	55	54	<b>36</b>
Family day care	69	76	<b>38</b>
CS Act service	47	40	<b>26</b>

**Note:** A compliance visit is defined here as any of the following visit types in NQA ITS: application/assessment, change of ownership, complaint, incident, investigation and post-approval. Some compliance visits relate to services that were cancelled or surrendered by the end of each year.

## Managing compliance risk

Where services fall into serious non-compliance, QARD will take enforcement action, including imposing conditions on service approvals, suspending or cancelling provider and service approvals, or taking prosecution action.

## Notification of serious incidents

The National Law and CS Act outline the circumstances under which services must notify QARD of a complaint or an incident. These include:

- the death of a child
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child
- any incident where the attendance of emergency services was required
- any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an early childhood education and care service appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for.

In addition, QARD is required to be notified of incidents affecting the hours and days of operation of a service, any circumstance that poses a risk to a child and matters related to FDC venues.

### Case study 4: A quality improvement journey

In early 2020, the service submitted a number of notifications in relation to incidents including children being left unsupervised and found elsewhere in the service, being fed known allergens and sustaining injuries. Each of these issues were investigated by QARD, which found a lack of commitment to addressing these issues on the part of both management and some educators.

In a later visit, QARD identified further compliance issues in relation to the educational program, hygiene and resources. Authorised officers found children's handprints all over the glass doors and windows, snotty finger marks at the glass doors and other issues that put the health, safety and wellbeing of both children and educators at risk, yet no attempts had been made by educators to keep the space clean. These hygiene issues were especially concerning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After finalising the investigation, authorised officers attended a staff meeting to discuss the educators' responsibilities, and their duty of care to children.

After this meeting, the newly appointed nominated supervisor spoke to the authorised officers, explaining her vision for improving the service. A strong relationship developed, and the nominated supervisor contacted the authorised officer many times to discuss the changes in practice at the service. The authorised officer also attended several meetings with the provider's management team, which prompted further positive change at the service.

The service management team and educators have since maintained their contact with the authorised officer, advising her of changes at the service and proudly showing her what they have been working on. The authorised officer has seen the improvements and has suggested further changes or reflections the educators could make. The service is on its journey of continual improvement, and the relationship between the authorised officer and the service has been crucial in creating a really positive working relationship that supports better outcomes for children.

**Table 6: Number of reported serious incidents per 100 NQF services by care type, 2018–2020**

Care type	2018	2019	2020
Long day care	150	158	<b>148</b>
Kindergarten	61	57	<b>44</b>
Outside school hours care	38	46	<b>31</b>
Family day care	40	56	<b>48</b>
CS Act service	3	3	<b>3</b>

**Note:** Some serious incidents may relate to services that were not operating at the end of each year.

The number of serious incidents reported has remained relatively stable in the last three years, with only a small reduction in 2020, with 3493 notifications compared to 3895 in 2019.

Incident notifications, excluding serious incidents, more than doubled in 2020, from 1549 recorded in 2019 to 4590 in 2020. Of these notifications, around 3000 were related to service closures or reduced numbers of children attending due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the extended COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria, schools and recreational facilities were closed, which impacted OSHC services and children's services in particular, though many kindergartens were also closed.

Of the remaining notifications, approximately 1000 were related to circumstances that posed a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children at the service. This category includes a wide range of situations including accidents, injuries, illness ('gastro', rashes, unwell children), incidents where children were unaccounted for, facilities issues (gas leaks, water leaks, emergency services attending), inadequate supervision and others.

All incident notifications are assessed by QARD for further action.

## Complaints

QARD receives complaints about services both directly from parents and members of the public, and through notifications from service providers. Providers are required to lodge a notification of complaints they have received from parents at a service. All complaints are assessed and investigated as required.

In 2020 QARD received 1542 complaints in total; 1,529 about services operating under the NQF, seven about services operating under the CS Act and six regarding alleged unapproved services.

Complaint notifications decreased by 14 per cent from 1323 in 2019 to 1162 in 2020. A large proportion of these were about LDC services, which represents the largest segment of the ECEC market in Victoria, with similar numbers of notifications lodged in both 2019 and 2020 (around 950).

## Case study 5: Compliance through education

In January 2020, QARD received a notification of an incident where one of the educators had been physically rough with one of the children.

When authorised officers attended the service to investigate the notification they found that there was an issue with the service's culture: educators found it difficult to speak up and report incidents of inappropriate discipline or other concerns.

As part of the investigation authorised officers attended an all staff meeting. They explained the Child Safe Standards, the reportable conduct scheme and all the other responsibilities educators had to protect children. They discussed what had occurred and the importance of treating children with respect, as well as the need to speak up to protect children's wellbeing.

Finally the authorised offices provided the educators the perspective of the child who had been affected by the incident to prompt reflection. All educators engaged actively in these discussions, and at the end of the meeting the authorised officers gave them additional scenarios to encourage further discussion about how they could manage a similar situation in the future.

The nominated supervisors at the service, involved in the meeting, contacted the authorised officers the following day to advise that the educators had been talking all day about these issues raised, and that they felt the discussions at the meeting had made a real impact. The educator at the centre of the investigation subsequently left the service, and there have not been any similar issues occur since.

## Enforcement

QARD takes a responsive approach to its enforcement actions which are escalated depending on the provider's response to identified non-compliance. Enforcement actions are proportionate to the seriousness of the non-compliance, risk and the potential harm to the safety and wellbeing of children attending a service.

We use a range of regulatory tools to address non-compliance ranging from providing information and guidance through to prosecution before a court or cancelling a provider's approval to operate.

In 2020, the Regulatory Authority issued 55 statutory sanctions. The sanctions included 17 cancellations of provider approvals, 14 compliance notices, six emergency action notices, 15 amendment of service and provider approvals, 1 enforceable undertakings and 2 completed prosecutions. Issues in family day care services remain significant with 28 of the sanctions in 2020 issued to family day care services and educators.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, investigators and authorised officers continued to investigate notifications and complaints to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of children in services across the State.




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# Reforms and initiatives

## Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020

The Children’s services law reform reduced red tape by replacing fixed term licences with perpetual provider and service approvals.

As host of the National Law, Victoria leads the national Legislation Working Group which develops legislative and regulatory proposals in accordance with policy decisions of the Ministerial Council.

The Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 (Amendment Regulations) introduced new requirements for approved providers of education and care services that offer, or arrange, transportation of children—for example, transport to and from the service and a child’s home or other location.

Transportation may present additional risks to children, especially during transition between a vehicle and a service premises or other location. To better manage these risks, the

Amendment Regulations strengthened oversight arrangements of transport that occurs when children are under the care of an education and care service.

Since 1 October 2020, approved providers of education and care services that offer, or arrange, transportation of children (other than as part of an excursion) must have in place transportation-specific policies and procedures. New requirements for transport-specific risk assessments and obtaining written authorisations were also introduced, and there were minor corresponding changes relating to excursions that involve transporting children. Further minor consequential changes were made to the requirements for keeping records of transport authorisations in 2021.



## NQF Review 2019

The second five-yearly review of the NQF began in 2019, led by a national working group chaired by New South Wales. A dedicated website was established at [www.nqfreview.com.au](http://www.nqfreview.com.au) to support community engagement on the review, including on the first phase of public consultation on an initial Issues Paper. However, during 2020, work on the second public consultation phase was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

A Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (CRIS) setting out proposed options for regulatory change and their potential impact on the sector and families was prepared, but not released for public consultation until March – April 2021. There was again a high level of engagement with the online information sessions held in Victoria, with more than 450 people attending one of nine sessions. Victorian respondents completed 478 sector surveys (17% of the total received) and 60 family surveys (10% of total received) in addition to 3 submissions. This number does not include providers that operate nationally or in multiple jurisdictions.

Feedback received through the CRIS consultation surveys and submissions will be analysed before being included in the Decision Regulation Impact Statement (DRIS), that will assist government decision making on the review.

## Children's services law reform

Following a national decision in 2017 to keep occasional care, former Budget Based Funded and mobile services outside the scope of the NQF, the Victorian children's services regulatory regime was reformed to align it with the NQF, where appropriate. Changes to the CS Act, and new CS Regulations, came into effect together on 17 May 2020.

The reform simplified licensing arrangements for service providers and ensures more consistent minimum standards across all Victorian early childhood services. The reform reduced red tape by replacing fixed term licences with perpetual provider and service approvals (that no longer need to be renewed). Approved providers may now operate multiple services, and service approvals may be transferred between approved providers. Also, an approved provider under the NQF can apply for a service approval to operate a children's service without having to apply for a separate provider approval under the CS Act.



Many children's services were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions requiring the closure of the recreational facilities in which they are located.

All current licensees on 17 May 2020 became approved providers, and their licences were converted to a service approval for one of the two new service types:

- **Limited hours** services that provide education and care to each child for not more than three hours per day and six hours per week
- **Occasional care** services with no limit on the hours that children can attend.

QARD issued every provider and children's service with new licensing documentation, and has developed information, resources and guidance to support children's services to understand and prepare to meet the new regulatory requirements.

During 2020, QARD worked to develop resources and a new guide, *Planning and delivering a program in a children's service* to assist services and educators in unpacking the new programming and documentation requirements.

The impact of the reform on children's services during 2020 was minimal as many children's services were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. This is because many services are located in recreational facilities which were closed for extended periods. Transitional provisions apply for existing services until 1 January 2022, to assist services adapt and meet the new requirements such as new educator to child ratios, programming using approved learning frameworks, and additional policies and procedures.



## Co-regulatory partners

QARD works with national and state regulatory authorities to support the successful implementation of the NQF. This includes regular interaction with all jurisdictions and ACECQA regarding the effectiveness of operational policy, training, systems, business processes, information management and sector support. We collaborate within a 'Community of practice' designed to improve regulatory practice, identify emerging issues and reduce risk.

We also collaborate with other regulators to promote coherence through information sharing, and to build capability within the education and care sector.

### Commission for Children and Young People

QARD has continued to hold regular meetings and share information with the CCYP on a number of different issues including reportable conduct, and the Victorian Child Safe Standards (CSS).

QARD continued to manage referrals from the CCYP to determine services' compliance with the CSS, and monitors aspects of services' compliance with the CSS as part of the assessment and rating process for services.

### Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

QARD continues to work closely with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as a co-regulator. Information is shared and joint investigations carried out into OSHC providers, sometimes operated by school councils registered by the VRQA, and early childhood-related qualifications by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) also regulated by the VRQA.

### Department of Health

QARD works closely with the Department of Health to support and facilitate the implementation of a number of policy areas, most importantly in 2020 in relation to COVID-19.

### No Jab, No Play

QARD continues to support the requirements of the No Jab, No Play (NJNP) legislation.

During visits to services, authorised officers continue to monitor services' compliance with the NQF and the CS Act by checking children's enrolment records to ensure the required documentation is in place to meet NJNP requirements.

QARD has continued support of NJNP through multiple communications via the monthly newsletter and forums to ensure providers are aware of the requirements under NJNP. QARD responds regularly to individual services' issues and requests for information regarding NJNP.

### Department of Justice and Community Safety

QARD shares information with Department of Justice and Community Safety where there are concerns a relevant person may not hold, or be eligible to hold, a Working with Children Clearance.

### WorkSafe Victoria

Collaboration with WorkSafe Victoria ensures issues of shared interest impacting on the safety, health and wellbeing of children are addressed. There is collaboration where each agency is involved in an investigation of the same matter.

### Victorian Institute of Teaching

QARD maintains a close relationship with the Victorian Institute of Teaching through an established Memorandum of Understanding and regular liaison over the registration of early childhood teachers.

### Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Regular collaboration and information sharing between QARD and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment contributes to the identification of non-compliant services and providers. Sanctions taken by the Commonwealth in relation to child care funding are considered, and action taken to cancel provider approvals as appropriate. This has contributed to the large reduction in 2019 and 2020 in the number of family day care services in Victoria with concerning compliance issues.

### Victoria Police

QARD works closely with Victoria Police on alleged criminal matters as required.

# Glossary

Term	Acronym	Meaning
Approved provider		An entity which holds a provider approval under the NQF or the CS Act
Approved service		An approved early childhood education and care service for which a service approval exists under the NQF. An approved children's service for which a service approval exists under the CS Act.
Assessment and Rating	A&R	The process by which NQF services are assessed and rated by their regulatory authority against the NQS and given a rating for each of the seven quality areas and an overall rating based on these results.
Care type		Centre-based services offering more than one type of service are classified as follows: services which provide long day care in addition to any other service type are classified as long day care services; services which provide kindergarten services as well as outside school hours care services are classified as kindergarten services; services which provide outside school hours care services only are classified as outside school hours care services.
Centre-based service		An education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services that are delivered at a centre.
Children's service		A service regulated under the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> for which a service approval exists.
Early childhood education and care services/early childhood services	ECEC	Blanket terms, used in reference to all early childhood education and care services under both the NQF and CS Act.
Incident notification		See <i>Notification</i>
Limited hours service		One of two types of service approval prescribed in the Children's Services Regulations 2020. Children's services with a Limited Hours service approval can provide education and care to a child for up to three hours per day to a maximum of six hours per week. They are often located in sports and leisure centres where the child's parent is a patron.
National Law		The NQF operates under an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The purpose of the applied law system is to set a national standard for children's education and care across Australia. In effect it means the same law is applied in each state and territory, but with some varied provisions as applicable to the needs of each state or territory. Victoria is the host jurisdiction of the Education and Care Services National Law which is set out in a Schedule to the <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)</i> . Application provisions in this Act apply the National Law in Victoria. Other jurisdictions adopted the National Law through an Application Act or passed corresponding legislation.
National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care	NQA	The overarching name given to the quality reforms to early childhood education care, which incorporate the NQS, including the Early Years Learning Framework, the assessment and rating system and the National Regulations.
National Quality Framework	NQF	The NQF covers services providing or intending to provide education and care on a regular basis to children under the age of 13 years. This includes family day care services, long day care services, outside school hours care services and preschools (kindergartens). The NQF comprises the National Law, National Regulations and the NQS.
National Quality Standard	NQS	The NQS sets a high national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. The NQS includes 7 quality areas that are important outcomes for children. Services are assessed and rated by their regulatory authority against the NQS and given a rating for each of the 7 quality areas and an overall rating based on these results.
No Jab, No Play	NJNP	Under the No Jab, No Play legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood education and care services have to first obtain evidence that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

Term	Acronym	Meaning
Notification		Approved providers are required to notify the regulatory authority about incidents, complaints and changes to information.
National Quality Agenda IT System	NQA ITS	A web-based information system to assist state and territory regulatory authorities and ACECQA to manage the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of children's education and care services. The system also enables NQF services, providers and educators to submit application and notification forms online to regulatory authorities and ACECQA.
Occasional Care		One of two types of service approval prescribed in the Children's Services Regulations 2020. Children's services with an Occasional Care service approval can provide education and care to a child on an ad hoc, irregular basis.
Outside School Hours Care	OSHC	Regulated under the NQF. Not defined in the National Law or National Regulations. A service that provides care for primary school aged children (typically 5 to 12 years) before and after school and can also operate during school holidays (vacation care) and on pupil free days. Outside school hours care services are usually provided from primary school premises. Services may also be located in child care centres or community facilities.
Places		Places only relates to centre-based services under the National Law and children's services regulated under the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> . The maximum number of children who can be educated and cared for by a service at any one time, stated on the service approval. Number of places reflects services' approved capacity. Places data for FDC services is not collected.
Preschool		Not defined in the National Law or Regulations. A service that provides an early childhood education program, delivered by a qualified teacher, often but not necessarily on a sessional basis in a dedicated service. Alternative terms used for preschool in some jurisdictions include kindergarten, pre-preparatory and reception.
Provider management type		The type of legal or social entity responsible for managing the delivery of an early childhood education and care service or children's service.
Provider		See <i>Approved provider</i>
Quality Improvement Plan	QIP	The approved provider of an NQF service must ensure a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is in place for each service. The aim of a QIP is to help providers self-assess their performance in delivering quality education and care, and to plan future improvements. The QIP also helps regulatory authorities with assessing the quality of the service.
Reportable Conduct Scheme		Scheme to improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct, commenced on 1 July 2017.
School holidays care service		Cares for or educates children for 4 weeks or more during school holidays under the National Law, or up to 4 weeks per calendar year under the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> . Also referred to as vacation care.
Serious incident		Serious incidents that occur while a child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service include: the death of a child; a serious injury or trauma to a child; the serious illness of a child requiring hospital attendance; an emergency for which emergency services attended; circumstances where a child is missing or unaccounted for/is taken or removed/is mistakenly locked in or out of the service/service premises.
Service approval		A person must have service approval to operate an education and care service under the National Law or a children's service under the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> . Regulatory authorities are responsible for assessing and determining applications for service approval.
Waiver		An exemption from a requirement that an approved education and care service comply with a prescribed element(s) of the NQS or regulation of the National Regulations, or and approve children's service comply with a prescribed regulation of the Children's Services Regulations 2020. While a waiver is in force, the approved service is not required to comply with the element(s) or regulation(s) specified in the waiver.

# Data tables

DATA IN THIS APPENDIX RELATE ONLY TO VICTORIAN SERVICES.

**Appendix Table 1: Number of new ECEC services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>NQF services:</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Centre-based care</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>170</b>
• Long day care	34	36	54	75	116	81	105	97
• Kindergarten	31	23	30	22	19	22	23	20
• Outside school hours care	58	81	79	63	78	88	57	53
<b>Family day care</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CSA services</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>

**Note:** This table only counts services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year. Total new services for 2013 and 2014 excludes new CSA services.

**Appendix Table 2: Number of new places for centre-based services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total places</b>	<b>7,376</b>	<b>8,293</b>	<b>11,433</b>	<b>12,308</b>	<b>18,319</b>	<b>14,760</b>	<b>16,177</b>	<b>14,273</b>
<b>NQF places:</b>	<b>7,376</b>	<b>8,293</b>	<b>9,664</b>	<b>11,767</b>	<b>17,623</b>	<b>14,303</b>	<b>15,817</b>	<b>14,097</b>
• Long day care	3,172	3,501	4,246	7,348	12,092	8,520	11,777	10,007
• Kindergarten	1,474	1,166	1,731	1,117	828	1,107	1,110	1,159
• Outside school hours care	2,730	3,626	3,687	3,302	4,703	4,676	2,930	2,931
<b>CSA places</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>1,769</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>176</b>

**Note:** This table only counts places for services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year. Total new places for 2013 and 2014 excludes new CSA places.

**Appendix Table 3: Number of new ECEC services by provider management type, 2013–2020**

Provider type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>188</b>
Catholic school	1	0	2	2	2	1	0	0
Government school	10	7	6	5	4	5	3	4
Independent school	5	3	2	7	5	4	4	2
Local government	7	10	31	11	9	12	8	9
Not-for-profit community managed	34	27	56	34	37	36	20	24
Not-for-profit other	4	5	15	5	16	13	11	11
Private for profit	190	162	174	159	187	148	160	138
Other	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0

**Note:** This table only counts services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year. Total new services for 2013 and 2014 excludes new CSA services.

**Appendix Table 4: Number of new places for centre-based services by provider management type, 2013–2020**

Provider management type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total places</b>	<b>7,376</b>	<b>8,293</b>	<b>11,433</b>	<b>12,308</b>	<b>18,319</b>	<b>14,760</b>	<b>16,177</b>	<b>14,273</b>
Catholic school	40	0	35	65	86	20	0	0
Government school	389	290	186	191	117	214	45	175
Independent school	343	170	69	294	309	192	320	31
Local government	659	630	1,832	574	386	520	777	616
Not-for-profit community managed	1,946	956	2,461	1,476	1,960	1,939	1,199	1,417
Not-for-profit other	281	216	548	213	2,182	759	674	1,149
Private for profit	3,718	6,031	6,270	9,495	13,279	11,116	13,162	10,885
Other	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0

**Note:** This table only counts places for services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year. Total new places for 2013 and 2014 excludes new CSA places.

**Appendix Table 5: Number of approved ECEC services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>4,381</b>	<b>4,457</b>	<b>4,514</b>	<b>4,612</b>	<b>4,567</b>	<b>4,546</b>	<b>4,578</b>
<b>NQF services:</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>4,027</b>	<b>4,108</b>	<b>4,233</b>	<b>4,209</b>	<b>4,229</b>	<b>4,299</b>
<b>Centre-based care</b>	<b>3,541</b>	<b>3,589</b>	<b>3,645</b>	<b>3,737</b>	<b>3,886</b>	<b>3,961</b>	<b>4,043</b>	<b>4,140</b>
• Long day care	1,220	1,244	1,280	1,342	1,457	1,520	1,607	1,691
• Kindergarten	1,211	1,197	1,197	1,203	1,205	1,194	1,186	1,183
• Outside school hours care	1,110	1,148	1,168	1,192	1,224	1,247	1,250	1,266
<b>Family day care</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>CSA services</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>279</b>

**Note:** This table only counts services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

**Appendix Table 6: Number of approved places for centre-based ECEC services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total places</b>	<b>212,057</b>	<b>234,951</b>	<b>228,856</b>	<b>241,748</b>	<b>257,659</b>	<b>268,682</b>	<b>280,416</b>	<b>290,591</b>
<b>NQF approved places:</b>	<b>200,809</b>	<b>223,873</b>	<b>218,287</b>	<b>231,645</b>	<b>248,143</b>	<b>259,542</b>	<b>272,414</b>	<b>283,552</b>
• Long day care	91,493	109,743	99,683	107,605	120,343	128,664	140,255	149,891
• Kindergarten	44,736	46,101	48,077	49,811	50,099	50,567	51,073	51,798
• Outside school hours care	64,580	68,029	70,527	74,229	77,701	80,311	81,086	81,863
<b>CSA licensed places</b>	<b>11,248</b>	<b>11,078</b>	<b>10,569</b>	<b>10,103</b>	<b>9,516</b>	<b>9,140</b>	<b>8,002</b>	<b>7,039</b>

**Note:** This table only counts places for services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

**Appendix Table 7: Number of approved ECEC services by provider management type, 2013–2020**

Provider management type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>4,457</b>	<b>4,514</b>	<b>4,612</b>	<b>4,567</b>	<b>4,546</b>	<b>4,578</b>
Catholic school	44	41	41	39	33	29	26	<b>20</b>
Government school	338	320	309	295	279	260	244	<b>236</b>
Independent school	133	129	123	127	132	131	131	<b>129</b>
Local government	458	433	496	484	467	456	440	<b>438</b>
Not-for-profit community managed	1,130	1,114	1,294	1,281	1,285	1,261	1,221	<b>1,203</b>
Not-for-profit other	312	309	373	363	375	379	374	<b>355</b>
Private for profit	1,393	1,582	1,818	1,922	2,040	2,051	2,110	<b>2,197</b>
Other	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	<b>0</b>

**Note:** This table only counts services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

**Appendix Table 8: Number of approved places for centre-based ECEC services by provider management type, 2013–2020**

Provider management type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total places</b>	<b>200,809</b>	<b>223,873</b>	<b>228,856</b>	<b>241,728</b>	<b>257,659</b>	<b>268,682</b>	<b>280,416</b>	<b>290,591</b>
Catholic school	2,398	2,144	2,106	1,996	1,758	1,567	1,484	<b>1,173</b>
Government school	18,311	18,267	18,335	18,535	18,296	17,400	16,870	<b>16,399</b>
Independent school	9,190	9,133	8,492	8,738	9,044	8,960	9,374	<b>9,246</b>
Local government	19,125	18,575	21,183	21,589	21,333	20,986	21,185	<b>21,474</b>
Not-for-profit community managed	47,646	62,491	53,738	54,193	55,330	55,587	54,885	<b>55,038</b>
Not-for-profit other	22,923	22,997	24,990	25,205	27,069	27,692	28,020	<b>28,296</b>
Private for profit	81,216	90,266	99,980	111,439	124,822	136,490	148,598	<b>158,965</b>
Other	0	0	32	33	7	0	0	<b>0</b>

**Note:** This table only counts places for services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

**Appendix Table 9: Number of NQF services managed by Victorian providers, 2015–2020**

Service jurisdiction	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>VIC</b>	<b>3,557</b>	<b>3,602</b>	<b>3,687</b>	<b>3,629</b>	<b>3,620</b>	<b>3,669</b>
<b>Other jurisdictions</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>556</b>
ACT	9	8	10	11	12	18
NSW	157	189	201	191	195	204
NT	7	16	20	18	18	17
QLD	66	79	90	88	85	87
SA	67	80	75	63	50	47
TAS	1	1	10	8	5	5
WA	157	173	175	173	170	178

**Note:** This table only counts services remaining approved at the end of each year and excludes services suspended, surrendered or cancelled in the same year.

**Appendix Table 10: Number of children attending ECEC services, 2015–2020**

Service type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>405,679</b>	<b>413,114</b>	<b>429,922</b>	<b>436,108</b>	<b>409,749</b>	<b>414,983</b>
Centre-based day care	na	na	na	na	188,249	<b>196,393</b>
Long day care	148,333	154,175	163,524	172,161	na	<b>na</b>
Kindergarten (long day care settings)	21,393	23,269	25,022	24,786	27,514	<b>29,559</b>
Kindergarten (all other settings)	52,756	52,996	53,948	53,620	51,991	<b>50,291</b>
Family day care	68,886	60,705	63,352	55,617	35,863	<b>31,884</b>
OSHC (and vacation care)	111,875	119,753	121,955	127,879	106,132	<b>106,856</b>
Occasional care	2,436	2,216	2,121	2,045	na	<b>na</b>

**Note:** Number of children in kindergarten refers to number of children enrolled in funded kindergarten in the year before school, using Victorian Department of Education and Training data. Number of children attending ECEC services refers to children 0-12 years attending Australian CCS approved child care services and is sourced from multiple years of the Report on Government Services and from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Preschool Education, cat. No. 4240.0. Changes to reporting under the CSS resulted in the introduction of new categories Centre-based care (a consolidation of long day care and occasional care previously reported separately) and Outside school hours care (a consolidation of outside school hours care, and vacation care previously reported separately). Data on funded kindergarten enrolments is not directly comparable to attendance in other service types.

**Appendix Table 11: Average hours of attendance per week of children aged 0-12 years at Australian CCS approved child care services, 2013–2020**

Service type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Centre-based day care	na	na	na	na	na	na	29.6	<b>30.0</b>
Long day care	27.9	28.0	28.1	28.3	28.4	28.5	na	<b>na</b>
Family day care	30.2	34.2	34.3	32.4	31.8	30.1	25.0	<b>24.9</b>
Vacation care	28.5	27.7	27.3	27.0	26.8	26.2	na	<b>na</b>
OSHC	6.4	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.1	8.4	<b>8.5</b>
Occasional care	8.6	8.4	8.8	8.6	8.7	8.9	na	<b>na</b>

**Note:** Data from this table is sourced from multiple years of the Report on Government Services. See note for Appendix Table 10 about continuity of data.

**Appendix Table 12: Number of applications submitted by application type, 2013–2020**

Application type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Approval</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>472</b>
Provider Approval	366	447	389	356	390	355	300	251
Service Approval	322	320	369	379	335	265	247	221
<b>Amendment of approval</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>560</b>
Amend Provider Approval	48	109	144	166	179	237	140	121
Amend Service Approval	384	420	514	469	364	644	1147	439
<b>Waiver (service or temporary)</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>529</b>
<b>Suspension</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>168</b>
Suspension Provider Approval	1	2	5	18	20	23	15	16
Suspension Service Approval	18	18	36	94	82	107	84	152
<b>Related to supervisor certificates</b>	<b>5,161</b>	<b>2,969</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Amend Supervisor Certificate	27	57	37	39	31	0	0	0
Supervisor Certificate	5,079	2,897	511	352	188	0	0	0
Supervisor Certificate for Specified Class of Persons	53	14	5	8	11	0	0	0
Suspension Supervisor Certificate	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>252</b>
Change of Information-Provider	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Decision – Request Review by Tribunal or Court	0	1	2	3	8	1	1	1
Extension-Temporary Waiver	0	0	0	1	3	10	26	20
Internal Review of Reviewable Decision	58	55	65	32	29	14	14	8
Out of Scope Application	0	1	84	144	156	97	135	10
Re-Assessment and Re-Rating	3	19	26	64	19	31	33	27
Review of Ratings by RA	16	19	14	25	21	27	14	5
Revocation-Service Waiver	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	7
Transfer of Service Approval	218	282	351	165	250	232	188	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,864</b>	<b>4,769</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>2,538</b>	<b>2,376</b>	<b>2,347</b>	<b>2,657</b>	<b>1,981</b>

**Note:**

(i) This table includes applications submitted related to supervisor certificates that were excluded from the Applications section of this report.

The requirement for supervisor certificates was removed from the National Law and Regulations on 1 October 2017.

(ii) The 6,865 total includes surrenders of provider and service approvals, which were no longer submitted as applications from 2014.

Appendix Table 13: Number of decisions by application type and decision type, 2013–2020

Approval type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Provider approval</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>119</b>
Approved (with additional conditions)	2	1	1	5	29	50	29	37
Approved (with standard conditions)	273	164	184	185	106	87	105	64
Refused	0	38	128	91	103	45	47	18
<b>Service Approval</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>210</b>
Approved (with additional conditions)	130	89	98	111	119	91	91	73
Approved (with standard conditions)	128	143	208	141	152	138	123	132
Refused	1	6	31	30	24	12	7	5

**Note:** The decisions made do not necessarily relate to applications received in the calendar year.

Appendix Table 14: Number of decisions by month and application type, 2020

Approval type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Provider Approval	11	4	10	6	9	4	4	6	11	10	14	30	<b>119</b>
Service Approval	38	18	20	16	8	13	22	13	8	8	9	37	<b>210</b>
Amendment of approval	92	47	45	20	21	52	23	63	33	33	24	38	<b>491</b>
Service or temporary waiver	8	22	11	6	29	32	10	18	67	52	1	20	<b>276</b>
Voluntary suspension	5	9	8	3	8	22	24	14	15	7	9	7	<b>131</b>
Other	51	37	24	10	15	5	14	9	6	6	9	28	<b>214</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1,441</b>

**Note:** The decisions made do not necessarily relate to applications received in the calendar year.

Appendix Table 15: Number of active waivers by type, 2013–2020

Waiver type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Physical</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>74</b>
Service	16	20	22	29	33	43	45	50
Temporary	9	4	7	15	17	20	24	24
<b>Staffing</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>180</b>
Service	40	47	54	51	51	64	72	65
Temporary	29	73	31	113	33	95	53	115

**Note:** Active waivers are either in place until 31 December of a particular year, expire in the future or remain in place for the duration of the service approval. Temporary waivers that were active and expired before 31 December are not included. Physical and staffing waiver subtotals may not sum up to the total number of active waivers as there may be waivers that fall into both categories. Physical waivers include FDC location waivers.

Appendix Table 16: Number of active waivers related to qualifications, 2013–2020

Waiver type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>179</b>
Service	40	47	54	51	51	64	72	<b>65</b>
Temporary	29	73	31	24	5	87	53	<b>114</b>

**Note:** See footnote for Appendix Table 15.

**Appendix Table 17: Number of active waivers related to educator-to-child ratios, 2013–2020**

Waiver type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	0	0	0	89	28	8	0	1

*Note: See footnote for Appendix Table 15.*

**Appendix Table 18: Number of approved multi-storey services, 2013–2020**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
NQF services	64	74	83	104	128	150	188	<b>212</b>
CSA services	-	-	41	41	42	44	48	<b>39</b>

*Note: This includes only services that have been identified to be operating in multi-storey buildings at the end of 2020.*

**Appendix Table 19: Overall quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020**

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>2,352</b>	<b>3,407</b>	<b>3,792</b>	<b>3,908</b>	<b>3,930</b>	<b>3,989</b>	<b>3,984</b>
Excellent	4	8	8	10	9	10	<b>6</b>
Exceeding NQS	772	1,137	1,271	1,326	1,314	1,282	<b>1,252</b>
Meeting NQS	1,067	1,579	1,809	1,928	2,001	2,100	<b>2,177</b>
Working Towards NQS	508	683	689	635	605	597	<b>547</b>
Significant Improvement Required	1	0	15	9	1	0	<b>2</b>
Number of approved services	3,930	4,027	4,108	4,233	4,209	4,229	<b>4,299</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	95%	94%	95%	94%	95%	95%	<b>96%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	78%	80%	81%	84%	85%	85%	<b>86%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	<b>0.2%</b>
Exceeding NQS	33%	33%	34%	34%	33%	32%	<b>31%</b>
Meeting NQS	45%	46%	48%	49%	51%	53%	<b>55%</b>
Working Towards NQS	22%	20%	18%	16%	15%	15%	<b>14%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.1%</b>

Appendix Table 20: Overall quality ratings by care type and rating level, 2020

Care type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All services	2	547	2,177	1,252	6	3,984		
LDC	1	214	913	399	3	1,530		
KGN	0	59	394	699	3	1,155		
OSHC	0	204	822	140	0	1,166		
FDC	1	70	48	14	0	133		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All services	0.1%	14%	55%	31%	0.2%	4,299	96%	86%
LDC	0.1%	14%	60%	26%	0.2%	1,691	94%	86%
KGN	0.0%	5%	34%	61%	0.3%	1,183	98%	95%
OSHC	0.0%	17%	70%	12%	0.0%	1,266	96%	83%
FDC	0.8%	53%	36%	11%	0.0%	159	95%	47%

Appendix Table 21: Overall quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All services	2	547	2,177	1,252	6	3,984		
Catholic/independent school	0	17	39	89	0	145		
Government school	0	72	113	44	0	229		
Local government	0	26	131	215	0	372		
Not for profit	1	109	601	655	5	1,371		
Private for profit	1	323	1,293	249	1	1,867		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All services	0.1%	14%	55%	31%	0.2%	4,299	96%	86%
Catholic/independent school	0.0%	12%	27%	61%	0.0%	148	99%	88%
Government school	0.0%	31%	49%	19%	0.0%	236	98%	69%
Local government	0.0%	7%	35%	58%	0.0%	387	98%	93%
Not for profit	0.1%	8%	44%	48%	0.4%	1,415	98%	92%
Private for profit	0.1%	17%	69%	13%	0.1%	2,113	94%	83%

**Appendix Table 22: Overall LDC quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020**

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>1,156</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>1,530</b>
Excellent	3	6	6	7	6	6	<b>3</b>
Exceeding NQS	241	348	409	427	427	410	<b>399</b>
Meeting NQS	438	586	650	711	767	861	<b>913</b>
Working Towards NQS	182	216	181	174	212	222	<b>214</b>
Significant Improvement Required	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Number of approved services	1,244	1,280	1,343	1,457	1,520	1,607	<b>1,691</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	97%	96%	94%	92%	95%	93%	<b>94%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	79%	81%	85%	87%	85%	85%	<b>86%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	<b>0.2%</b>
Exceeding NQS	28%	30%	33%	32%	30%	27%	<b>26%</b>
Meeting NQS	51%	51%	52%	54%	54%	57%	<b>60%</b>
Working Towards NQS	21%	19%	15%	13%	15%	15%	<b>14%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.1%</b>

**Appendix Table 23: Overall kindergarten quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020**

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,183</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>1,155</b>
Excellent	1	2	2	3	3	4	<b>3</b>
Exceeding NQS	403	585	641	681	693	707	<b>699</b>
Meeting NQS	365	444	446	429	396	386	<b>394</b>
Working Towards NQS	105	113	84	70	76	66	<b>59</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Number of approved services	1,198	1,197	1,203	1,205	1,194	1,186	<b>1,183</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	98%	97%	98%	98%	98%	98%	<b>98%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	88%	90%	93%	94%	93%	94%	<b>95%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	<b>0.3%</b>
Exceeding NQS	46%	51%	55%	58%	59%	61%	<b>61%</b>
Meeting NQS	42%	39%	38%	36%	34%	33%	<b>34%</b>
Working Towards NQS	12%	10%	7%	6%	7%	6%	<b>5%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>

**Note:** Quality ratings in this table exclude ratings for kindergarten services provided in a long day care setting.

**Appendix Table 24: Overall quality ratings for NQF services funded to provide a four year old kindergarten program by rating level, 2014–2020**

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>1,548</b>	<b>2,027</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>2,306</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>2,503</b>
Excellent	4	8	8	10	9	9	<b>6</b>
Exceeding NQS	613	882	980	1,064	1,069	1,027	<b>1,060</b>
Meeting NQS	698	876	935	1,033	1,030	1,058	<b>1,210</b>
Working Towards NQS	233	261	202	199	225	216	<b>226</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Number of approved services	2,150	2,121	2,168	2,352	2,374	2,349	<b>2,579</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	99%	99%	99%	98%	99%	98%	<b>99%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	85%	87%	90%	91%	90%	91%	<b>91%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	<b>0.2%</b>
Exceeding NQS	40%	44%	46%	46%	46%	44%	<b>42%</b>
Meeting NQS	45%	43%	44%	45%	44%	46%	<b>48%</b>
Working Towards NQS	15%	13%	10%	9%	10%	9%	<b>9%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>

**Note:** Quality ratings in this table include ratings for funded four-year-old kindergarten services provided in a long day care setting.

**Appendix Table 25: Overall OSHC quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020**

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,166</b>
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Exceeding NQS	101	167	187	186	171	150	<b>140</b>
Meeting NQS	233	496	637	717	777	797	<b>822</b>
Working Towards NQS	180	268	271	222	204	226	<b>204</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>0</b>
Number of approved services	1,149	1,168	1,191	1,224	1,247	1,250	<b>1,266</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	93%	93%	95%	94%	93%	95%	<b>96%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	65%	71%	75%	80%	82%	81%	<b>83%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
Exceeding NQS	20%	18%	17%	17%	15%	13%	<b>12%</b>
Meeting NQS	45%	53%	58%	64%	67%	68%	<b>70%</b>
Working Towards NQS	35%	29%	25%	20%	18%	19%	<b>17%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>

Appendix Table 26: Overall FDC quality ratings by rating level, 2014–2020

Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>133</b>
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Exceeding NQS	27	37	34	32	23	15	<b>14</b>
Meeting NQS	31	53	76	71	61	56	<b>48</b>
Working Towards NQS	41	86	153	169	113	83	<b>70</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0	0	15	8	1	0	<b>1</b>
Number of approved services	339	382	371	347	248	186	<b>159</b>
Percentage of services eligible for a rating	78%	84%	90%	94%	95%	96%	<b>95%</b>
Percentage meeting NQS or above	59%	51%	40%	37%	42%	46%	<b>47%</b>
Rating as %	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total services with an NQS rating</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excellent	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
Exceeding NQS	27%	21%	12%	11%	12%	10%	<b>11%</b>
Meeting NQS	31%	30%	27%	25%	31%	36%	<b>36%</b>
Working Towards NQS	41%	49%	55%	60%	57%	54%	<b>53%</b>
Significant Improvement Required	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	2.9%	0.5%	0.0%	<b>0.8%</b>

Appendix Table 27: Overall LDC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All LDC	1	214	913	399	3	1,530		
Catholic/independent school	0	1	4	23	0	28		
Government school	0	2	2	3	0	7		
Local government	0	5	34	47	0	86		
Not for profit	1	35	252	172	2	462		
Private for profit	0	171	621	154	1	947		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All LDC	0.1%	14%	60%	26%	0.2%	1,691	94%	86%
Catholic/independent school	0.0%	4%	14%	82%	0.0%	29	100%	96%
Government school	0.0%	29%	29%	43%	0.0%	7	100%	71%
Local government	0.0%	6%	40%	55%	0.0%	89	98%	94%
Not for profit	0.2%	8%	55%	37%	0.4%	479	97%	92%
Private for profit	0.0%	18%	66%	16%	0.1%	1,087	93%	82%

**Appendix Table 28: Overall kindergarten quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020**

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All KGN	0	59	394	699	3	1,155		
Catholic/independent school	0	5	20	60	0	85		
Government school	0	4	16	14	0	34		
Local government	0	12	76	153	0	241		
Not for profit	0	37	278	469	3	787		
Private for profit	0	1	4	3	0	8		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All KGN	0.0%	5%	34%	61%	0.3%	1,183	98%	95%
Catholic/independent school	0.0%	6%	24%	71%	0.0%	86	99%	94%
Government school	0.0%	12%	47%	41%	0.0%	34	100%	88%
Local government	0.0%	5%	32%	63%	0.0%	251	97%	95%
Not for profit	0.0%	5%	35%	60%	0.4%	803	99%	95%
Private for profit	0.0%	13%	50%	38%	0.0%	9	100%	88%

**Note:** Quality ratings in this table exclude ratings for kindergarten services provided in a long day care setting.

**Appendix Table 29: Overall ratings for NQF services funded to provide a four-year-old kindergarten program by provider management type and rating level, 2020**

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total funded services with an NQS rating		
All funded services	1	226	1,210	1,060	6	2,503		
Catholic/independent school	0	5	23	80	0	108		
Government school	0	5	16	17	0	38		
Local government	0	16	105	195	0	316		
Not for profit	1	68	502	621	5	1,197		
Private for profit	0	132	564	147	1	844		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All funded services	0.0%	9%	48%	42%	0.2%	2,579	99%	91%
Catholic/independent school	0.0%	5%	21%	74%	0.0%	109	100%	95%
Government school	0.0%	13%	42%	45%	0.0%	38	100%	87%
Local government	0.0%	5%	33%	62%	0.0%	323	98%	95%
Not for profit	0.1%	6%	42%	52%	0.4%	1,211	99%	94%
Private for profit	0.0%	16%	67%	17%	0.1%	898	98%	84%

**Note:** Quality ratings in this table include ratings for funded four-year-old kindergarten services provided in a long day care setting.

Appendix Table 30: Overall OSHC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All OSHC	0	204	822	140	0	1,166		
Catholic/independent school	0	11	15	6	0	32		
Government school	0	66	95	27	0	188		
Local government	0	1	12	5	0	18		
Not for profit	0	31	64	13	0	108		
Private for profit	0	95	636	89	0	820		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All OSHC	0.0%	17%	70%	12%	0.0%	1,266	96%	83%
Catholic/independent school	0.0%	34%	47%	19%	0.0%	33	100%	66%
Government school	0.0%	35%	51%	14%	0.0%	195	98%	65%
Local government	0.0%	6%	67%	28%	0.0%	20	100%	94%
Not for profit	0.0%	29%	59%	12%	0.0%	119	94%	71%
Private for profit	0.0%	12%	78%	11%	0.0%	899	95%	88%

Appendix Table 31: Overall FDC quality ratings by provider management type and rating level, 2020

Provider management type	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total services with an NQS rating		
All FDC	1	70	48	14	0	133		
Local government	0	8	9	10	0	27		
Not for profit	0	6	7	1	0	14		
Private for profit	1	56	32	3	0	92		
Rating as %	Significant Improvement Required	Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS	Excellent	Total approved services	Percentage of services eligible for a rating	Percentage meeting NQS or above
All FDC	0.8%	53%	36%	11%	0.0%	159	95%	47%
Local government	0.0%	30%	33%	37%	0.0%	27	100%	70%
Not for profit	0.0%	43%	50%	7%	0.0%	14	100%	57%
Private for profit	11%	61%	35%	3%	0.0%	118	93%	38%

**Appendix Table 32: Number of visits by visit type, 2014–2020**

Visit type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total visits</b>	<b>3,122</b>	<b>3,144</b>	<b>3,058</b>	<b>3,413</b>	<b>4,044</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>2,644</b>
Assessment and Rating	1,213	1,156	886	1,007	984	991	<b>227</b>
Compliance	1,798	1,863	2,047	2,274	2,848	2,847	<b>2,244</b>
Other	111	125	125	132	212	165	<b>173</b>

**Note:** A compliance visit is defined as any of the following visit types in NQA ITS: application/assessment, change of ownership, complaint, incident, investigation and post-approval, while other visits are education or pre-approval visits. Some visits relate to services that were not operating at the end of the year.

**Appendix Table 33: Number of assessment and rating visits per 100 services by care type, 2014–2020**

Care type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>NQF services</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>
LDC	33	25	21	27	28	24	<b>6</b>
KGN	31	25	15	23	24	18	<b>3</b>
OSHC	32	40	24	21	19	31	<b>6</b>
FDC	20	19	39	22	17	9	<b>4</b>

**Appendix Table 34: Number of compliance visits completed per 100 services by care type, 2014–2020**

Care type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>All services</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>49</b>
LDC	69	67	78	76	86	88	<b>70</b>
KGN	25	22	27	32	42	40	<b>38</b>
OSHC	31	28	27	39	55	54	<b>36</b>
FDC	61	49	51	44	69	76	<b>38</b>
CSA	15	51	39	36	47	40	<b>26</b>

**Appendix Table 35: Number of reported serious incidents by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>All services</b>	<b>3,529</b>	<b>3,247</b>	<b>3,507</b>	<b>3,568</b>	<b>3,882</b>	<b>3,595</b>	<b>3,897</b>	<b>3,494</b>
LDC	2,223	1,928	2,039	2,296	2,535	2,278	2,536	<b>2,506</b>
KGN	725	685	718	704	750	734	673	<b>515</b>
OSHC	406	496	577	448	487	473	572	<b>390</b>
FDC	175	138	154	96	96	98	105	<b>76</b>
CSA	-	-	19	24	14	12	11	<b>7</b>

**Note:** Under s174 of the National Law Approved providers are required to notify the regulatory authority of certain information including incidents and complaints in relation to their ECEC service. 'Serious incidents' are notifiable incidents under s174(2)(a). The meaning of a 'serious incident' is described under R12 of the National Regulations. 'Other incidents' refer to incidents required to be notified to the regulatory authority under r175(2) of the National Regulations except r(175(2)(a) which is about a change in the hours of operation. Some incidents relate to services that were not operating at the end of the year.

**Appendix Table 36: Number of reported serious incidents per 100 NQF services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All services	83	74	79	79	84	79	86	76
LDC	182	155	159	171	174	150	158	148
KGN	60	57	60	59	62	61	57	44
OSHC	37	43	49	38	40	38	46	31
FDC	66	41	40	26	28	40	56	48
CSA	-	-	4	6	4	3	3	3

Note: See footnote for Appendix Table 35.

**Appendix Table 37: Number of reported non-serious incidents by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All services	137	450	663	930	887	1,010	1,549	4,590
LDC	99	332	460	580	584	615	835	1,001
KGN	24	71	137	192	178	194	293	1,882
OSHC	7	28	41	110	93	163	390	1,355
FDC	7	19	25	47	32	35	30	107
CSA	-	-	0	1	0	3	1	245

Note: See footnote for Appendix Table 35.

**Appendix Table 38: Number of reported non-serious incidents per 100 approved services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All services	3	10	15	21	19	22	34	100
LDC	8	27	36	43	40	40	52	59
KGN	2	6	11	16	15	16	25	159
OSHC	1	2	4	9	8	13	31	107
FDC	3	6	7	13	9	14	16	67
CSA	-	-	0	0	0	1	0	88

Note: See footnote for Appendix Table 35.

**Appendix Table 39: Number of complaints by complaint type, 2013–2020**

Complaint type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All complaints	1,394	1,552	1,627	1,828	1,765	1,694	2,000	1,542
Direct complaints	1,167	822	653	649	585	650	677	380
Complaints through notifications	227	730	974	1,179	1,180	1,044	1,323	1,162

Note: Complaint notifications are a requirement under s174 of the National Law for an approved provider to notify the regulatory authority of any complaint alleging a serious incident at the service or a breach of the National Law. Direct complaints are complaints received directly from a parent or other member of the public usually expressing dissatisfaction about a service. Some complaints relate to services that were not operating at the end of the year.

**Appendix Table 40: Number of complaints per 100 services by complaint type, 2013–2020**

Complaint type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All complaints	33	35	37	40	38	37	44	34
Direct complaints	27	19	15	14	13	14	15	8
Complaints through notifications	5	17	22	26	26	23	29	25

*Note:* See footnote for Appendix Table 39.

**Appendix Table 41: Number of complaints per 100 services by care type, 2013–2020**

Care type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All services	33	35	37	40	38	37	44	34
LDC	81	86	83	94	86	77	90	74
KGN	20	26	27	26	21	22	22	11
OSHC	7	6	11	10	14	12	16	9
FDC	29	28	23	27	20	35	34	22
CSA	–	–	3	4	4	4	4	3

*Note:* See footnote for Appendix Table 39.

