

24 August 2021

Ms Saxon Rice
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
GPO Box 9928
Melbourne, VIC 3001
Via email: enquiries@asqa.gov.au

Dear Ms Rice

I am writing on behalf of our community based early childhood education and care members at Early Learning Association of Australia to express concern at the short teach out period for the Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

Given the current qualifications need to be completed by 19 July 2022, or to abide by the new qualification requirements, we are concerned that providers will put a pause on new enrolments as they cannot guarantee completion by July next year.

There is likely to be a considerable delay in adding the new qualifications to the scope of registration given the qualifications are not equivalent. Further, once the courses are added they need to be assessed by the Victorian Department of Education and Training to determine their eligibility for Free TAFE.

Our sector is currently experiencing a significant skills shortage, with staff required at all levels. A recent survey we conducted found every service had at least one vacancy that they could not fill. This equates to thousands of unfilled vacancies across the sector.

We are concerned about the hard end date for qualification completion for two key reasons:

1. Current students, impacted by COVID, may not complete their course by next July and may find the additional requirements to complete, especially diploma students who will need a Certificate III, too burdensome. This is likely to cause further attrition from these courses.
2. New students will be delayed in enrolling at the same time we are at a critical shortage. Our services operate according to strict ratios and students who are actively working towards their qualifications are part of these ratios. This can only occur if providers are currently offering courses.

We are requesting an immediate extension of the teach out period to 24 months to ensure that students currently enrolled and studying on a part time basis are not disadvantaged, and to provide sufficient time for providers to adopt the new course.

We would be pleased to find a time to discuss this issue if desired. Please call Megan O'Connell on (03) 9411 4102 if you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, rounded initial 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a smaller, circular mark at the end.

David Worland
Chief Executive Officer