

Child care flagged as occupation in national shortage with "strong future demand" expected ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The child care sector, and specifically child care educators, has been flagged as an occupation currently in short supply nationally with anticipated strong future demand anticipated post 2021 likely to add to the shortage according to the Australian Government's National Skills Commission latest Skills Priority List.

Specifically, the report confirmed current shortages in metropolitan and regional areas in six of the states and territories of Australia with the exception of Victoria, where shortages were noted in metropolitan but not regional areas, and Queensland where no shortages were found in either metropolitan or regional areas in Queensland.

Overall, the National Skills Commission concluded that child care work as an occupation would remain in strong demand for the foreseeable future.

Although the current workforce challenges faced by the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector are well known, evidence based input, such as this report, represent an important component for policy makers to consider when deciding on policy initiatives that will seek to meet the demand challenges going forward.

As the overview of the report highlights, "This list provides the backbone piece of labour market analysis on occupations that will be a key input to a range of Australian Government policy initiatives, including targeting of skilled migration, apprenticeship incentives and training funding."

Child care occupation in top 7% of all occupations deemed in short supply

Across the 800 different occupations reviewed by the National Skills Commission, 57, (or 7.13 per cent,) were classified as being in short supply currently and with strong future demand anticipated.

The inclusion of child care in this cohort implies a significant level of shortage relative to the rest of the Australian economy and a matter of urgency for policy makers.

Other care economy roles included in this cohort were aged and disability care and enrolled nurses, with other occupations in the finance, engineering, trades, pharmacy and general health industries and sectors well represented.

Providers starting to take steps to attract workers ahead of any policy moves

As yet there have been no formal policy moves announced by the Australian Government to address the current and future shortages the sector is facing, although it is important to note that ACECQA is currently in the process of finalising their National Workforce Strategy which will provide valuable insight into current shortages and proposed responses.

In the meantime two developments stand out as signals that changes are beginning to take place include Fair Work approving a 10 per cent pay increase for early childhood teachers and Goodstart Early Learning confirming wage increases of three to five per cent for educators.

Julia Davison, CEO of Goodstart Early Learning noted that better wages and conditions will be crucial to attracting and retaining qualified staff in early learning and childcare settings which was part of the reason why the changes were implemented by the provider.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[3]

Tags: child care workforce ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 3 Aug 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/08/child-care-flagged-occupation-national-shortage-%E2%80%9Cstrong-future>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/08/child-care-flagged-occupation-national-shortage-%E2%80%9Cstrong-future> ^[2]

<https://thesector.com.au/2021/07/13/child-care-flagged-as-occupation-in-national-shortage-with-strong-future-demand-in-latest-nsc-skills-priority-list/> ^[3]

