



## Review of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)

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Community Child Care Co-operative, the peak organisation for not-for-profit early education and care services in NSW, was pleased when the recommendation was made in the *NSW Government's Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A Blueprint for Action* to accredit early childhood teachers in line with the accreditation of teachers in schools.

It is important that given that this process now sits under BOSTES that this is acknowledged as a key responsibility of BOSTES and not just as an added on function. We note that the BOSTES Review discussion paper notes in its introduction that:

“The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) is responsible for school curriculum, assessment, and teaching and regulatory standards in NSW schools.”

The absence of any mention of the organisations' role in early childhood education settings (which are not included in the catch all phrase 'schools'), highlights the marginalisation of the early education sector. We note that in the overview of BOSTES functions, the role of the accreditation of early childhood teachers is listed. It is important that in situations like this the language chosen does not exclude the early education sector.

## Objectives and Functions of Board

- One of the functions of the Board is the approval of initial and continuing teacher education courses and programs. There are complex and perplexing issues associated with the move to more generalist courses encompassing the teaching of children 0-12 years.
  - Early childhood education is a highly specialised and unique pedagogy. It requires a comprehensive academic focus to ensure teachers are adequately trained to teach children who are moving through their most significant brain growth and developmental stages.
  - The early childhood education and care sector is struggling to attract and retain early childhood teachers, in part because of the changing composition of initial teacher education courses. Whilst BOSTES approves teacher education courses that 'equip' teachers to teach children from 0-12 years old, as opposed to 0-8 or 5-12, the shortage of early education teachers will persist. BOSTES has an unacknowledged role in assisting the early education sector to recruit and retain specialist early education teachers to our sector.

## Composition of the Board

- In a 23 member Board, only one place is specifically reserved for a person with knowledge and expertise in early childhood education.
- The early education sector is as diverse as the school education sector and just as there are allowances in the composition of the board for varying representations from school sub – sectors (government, non-government, union, P&C) there needs to be scope for the various subsectors of the early education sector to have their views heard (e.g. long day care, preschools, government providers, for-profit providers, not for profit providers).
- This is also the case for the membership of the Quality Teaching Council. Only one position is representative of early childhood teachers. This is not sufficient to ensure the needs of early childhood teachers are not marginalised.

## Teacher Accreditation

- It is important to note that the extension of the teacher accreditation process to all teachers, including those in the early childhood education sector, will place significant demands on existing structures and practices both within BOSTES and with the education and care sector.
- Processes tailored to the unique settings of the education and care sector need to be made to ensure that assessment against the teaching standards for early childhood teachers can be made easily, efficiently and comprehensively.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the review of BOSTES to ensure its current role, membership functions and structure continue to best serve the community of NSW into the future. We look forward to working to ensure early childhood education and teacher accreditation is upheld in future structures and functions of BOSTES.

Yours faithfully,



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Community Child Care Co-operative

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