



commission for
children and young people
and child guardian

T&G Building, 141 Queen Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
PO Box 12671, Brisbane, George Street Qld 4003
Ph: 07 3247 5525 Fax: 07 3247 5507
www.cypcg.qld.gov.au

Telephone: 07 3211 6700
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Mr Kerry Shine MP
Member for Toowoomba North
Chair
Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

VIA EMAIL: ietir@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Shine

Thank you for providing the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission) with the opportunity to provide feedback into the Inquiry into the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill 2011 (the Bill).

I support the commitment made by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to establish a uniform National Quality Framework, and to facilitate the introduction of new National Quality Standards for early childhood education and care services traditionally known as long day care services, family day care services, preschool (known as kindergarten in Queensland) and outside school hours care services. I also support the alignment of the licensing systems and quality assurance processes and the establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

I recognise the valuable contribution quality education and care services can make to a child's wellbeing and development, particularly vulnerable children. I also acknowledge the importance of early childhood education and care service quality and accessibility, particularly for children from low income families and children in the statutory care system. It is also just as important that children are able to receive developmentally focused services in a safe environment where risks are managed.

I welcome efforts towards a national approach to education and care services without diminishing safeguards to children in those environments.

You may be aware that I am responsible for administering the blue card system. The purpose of the blue card system is to contribute to the creation of safe and supportive environments for children and young people when receiving services and participating in activities which are essential to their development and wellbeing, such as child care, education, sport and cultural activities.

Therefore, individuals in the education and care services sector are already required in accordance with Chapter 8 of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (the Commission's Act) to undergo blue card screening to be eligible to work with children in those regulated service environments and service providers are required to meet certain blue card obligations.

It is important to be aware that the initial blue card screening conducted by the Commission is only the first component of a three part system which considers past, present, and future risks:

- blue card screening to determine a person's eligibility to work with children and young people based on their known past behaviour
- ongoing monitoring of all blue card holders and applicants to enable the Commission to take action to protect children and young people if the person is charged with a concerning offence, and
- mitigating future risk through the requirement for organisations providing child related services to develop and implement child and youth risk management strategies.

Given there are blue card requirements for the education and care services sector, you would be aware that the Bill also proposes amendments to the Commission's Act. These amendments are to ensure that blue card screening remains consistent with existing provisions following the proposed transition to the Education and Care National Law.

The Commission has worked extensively with the Department of Education and Training throughout 2011 to ensure legislative changes do not diminish the integrity of the blue card screening system and that blue card screening remains robust and consistent in the education and services sector.

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please contact my Principal Advisor, Ms Susan Dwyer on (07) 3211 6991 or email susan.dwyer@ccypcg.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Fraser
**Commissioner for Children and Young People
and Child Guardian**