

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON TAFE FEE WAIVERS FOR CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS

Council of
Australian
Governments

An agreement between

- the Commonwealth of Australia and
- the States and Territories, being:
 - ◆ The State of New South Wales
 - ◆ The State of Victoria
 - ◆ The State of Queensland
 - ◆ The State of Western Australia
 - ◆ The State of South Australia
 - ◆ The State of Tasmania
 - ◆ The Australian Capital Territory
 - ◆ The Northern Territory of Australia

The Commonwealth will pay the regulated TAFE course fees for students enrolling in TAFE delivered Diplomas of Children's Services and Advanced Diplomas of Children's Services.

National Partnership Agreement on TAFE Fee Waivers for Child Care Qualifications

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON
FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS

PRELIMINARIES

1. This Agreement is created subject to the provisions of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations* and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and subsidiary schedules. In particular, the schedules include direction in respect of performance reporting and payment arrangements.
2. This agreement will be implemented consistently with the objectives and outcomes of all National Agreements and National Partnerships entered into by the Parties.
 - (a) In particular, the Parties are committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage. That commitment is embodied in the objectives and outcomes of this Agreement.
 - (b) However, the Parties have also agreed other objectives and outcomes — for example, in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement — which the Parties will pursue through the broadest possible spectrum of government action.
3. This National Partnership Agreement has been established to support an expected 8,000 people per year, including existing child care workers, to gain a vocational education and training qualification in early childhood. The funding will be used to remove regulated course fees for child care diplomas and advanced diplomas, delivered by a TAFE institute or other government training provider. This Agreement continues and builds upon the 2009 National Partnership on TAFE Fee Waivers for Childcare Qualifications.

PART 1 – FORMALITIES

Parties to this Agreement

4. In entering this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the States and Territories (the States) recognise that they have a mutual interest in improving outcomes in the area of vocational education and training qualifications for early childhood education and care workers and need to work together to achieve those outcomes.

Term of the Agreement

5. This Agreement will commence on 1 January 2010 or as soon as the Commonwealth and one other Party have signed the Agreement.
6. The Agreement will expire on 31 December 2014, or earlier, as agreed in writing by all the Parties.

Interpretation

7. For the purpose of this Agreement:
 - (a) **eligible child care courses** are defined in *Schedule A: Eligible child care courses*;
 - (b) **fees** are defined as compulsory regulated fees levied on students for enrolment in an eligible course of study;
 - (c) **regulated fees** are defined as any fees mandated by the State or Territory government, and exclude any fees that are imposed on students by the TAFE or other government providers; and
 - (d) **other government providers** are defined as government owned and managed education facilities/organisations, other than TAFE, that deliver vocational education and training.

PART 2 – OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Objective

8. A highly-qualified early childhood education and care workforce capable of providing a strong foundation for the health and educational development of Australian children.

Outcome

9. A larger, more highly skilled and capable early childhood education and child care workforce, including in remote and disadvantaged areas of Australia.

Outputs

10. The key output of this Agreement will be that TAFE and other Government training providers will not levy regulated course fees on students undertaking eligible child care courses.

PART 3 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

11. To realise the objective and commitments in this Agreement, each Party has specific roles and responsibilities, as outlined below.

Role of the Commonwealth

12. The Commonwealth will have responsibility for:

- (a) funding the States for all regulated fee revenue foregone in relation to this Agreement; and
- (b) working with the States to promote eligible fee free child care training places.

Role of the States and Territories

13. The States will have responsibility for:
- (a) ensuring that TAFE and other government providers do not levy compulsory regulated fees on students undertaking eligible child care qualifications;
 - (b) informing the Commonwealth of any decision which will lead to changes in the compulsory regulated fee policy setting arrangements that affect eligible child care qualifications (subject to relevant State approval processes);
 - (c) ensuring that the compulsory regulated fee does not exceed the standard regulated fee schedule for similar courses at the same level;
 - (d) informing TAFE and other government providers of their responsibility to inform current and possible future child care students about fee free child care qualifications. This includes in all fee policies, promotional material such as websites, handbooks, brochures and through any career counselling networks;
 - (e) ensuring that the financial impact of the removal of child care course fees is evident in financial information provided by the States to the Commonwealth; and
 - (f) working with the Commonwealth to promote eligible fee free child care training places.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Performance indicators

14. Consistent with this being a demand driven program, under this Agreement States will be reimbursed for all regulated fee revenue foregone for eligible child care courses and there will be no associated requirement to increase the number of enrolments and completions. Accordingly, these indicators measure the overall effectiveness of the Agreement, rather than the performance of States or Territories.
15. Achievement of the objectives and outcomes in this Agreement will be informed with reference to the following performance indicators:
- (a) number of students commencing eligible child care courses at TAFE or other Government provider in each State;
 - (b) number of students enrolling in eligible child care courses at TAFE or other Government provider in each State;
 - (c) total student hours undertaken in eligible child care courses at TAFE or other Government provider in each State; and
 - (d) number of students completing eligible child care courses at TAFE or other Government provider in each State, and a comparative analysis of this data within each State as a time series.

Reporting

16. The States will report against the agreed performance indicators in respect of every semester during the operation of the Agreement. Reports are expected within two months of the end of each semester.

PART 5 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Funding

17. The Commonwealth will fund States for all fee revenue forgone in respect of the agreed eligible child care courses.
 - (a) payments for Semester 1 will be made in January of that year, based on the number of students enrolled who would have otherwise been charged the regulated course fee for the previous year's Semester 1 and the applicable fees, as advised by the States, and on receipt from States of preliminary data for the previous year's Semester 2 enrolments; and
 - (b) payments for Semester 2 will be made in July of that year, based on the number of students enrolled who would have otherwise been charged the regulated course fee for the previous year's Semester 2 and the applicable fees, as advised by the States, and on receipt from States of preliminary data for that year's Semester 1 enrolments.
18. Reconciliation is expected to occur around August following the relevant calendar year based on:
 - (a) applicable fees, as advised by the States; and
 - (b) number of students who were enrolled, who would have otherwise been charged the regulated course fee for the year, as provided by States and assessed by the Commonwealth against data recorded in the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Vocational Education and Training Provider Collection. Data provided by States may be subject to an audit by the Commonwealth.

PART 6 – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Dispute resolution

19. Any Party may give notice to other Parties of a dispute under this Agreement.
20. The relevant Ministers will attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance.
21. If a dispute cannot be resolved by the relevant Ministers, it may be referred by a Party to COAG for consideration.

Review of the Agreement

22. The Agreement will be reviewed by 30 June 2012 with regard to progress made by the Parties in respect of achieving the agreed outcomes.

Variation of the Agreement

23. The Agreement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing by all the Parties and under terms and conditions as agreed by all the Parties.
24. Schedule A and Schedule B, subject to relevant Commonwealth policy and expenditure approval processes, of the Agreement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing by the Commonwealth Minister for Education and the respective State Minister of the relevant jurisdiction. The Ministers may delegate their authority to amend Schedule A and Schedule B.
25. A Party to the Agreement may terminate their participation in the Agreement at any time by notifying all the other Parties in writing.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

*Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth
of Australia by*

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the
State of New South Wales by*

The Honourable Kristina Keneally MP
Premier of the State of New South Wales
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Victoria by*

The Honourable John Brumby MP
Premier of the State of Victoria
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Queensland by*

The Honourable Anna Bligh MP
Premier of the State of Queensland
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the
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Premier of the State of Western Australia
December 2009

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State of South Australia by*

The Honourable Mike Rann MP
Premier of the State of South Australia
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Tasmania by*

The Honourable David Bartlett MP
Premier of the State of Tasmania
December 2009

*Signed for and on behalf of the Australian
Capital Territory by*

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory
December 2009

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December 2009 24/1/10

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National Partnership Agreement on
TAFE Fee Waivers for Childcare Qualifications

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Eligible child care courses

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON TAFE FEE WAIVERS FOR CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS

Current eligible child care courses are defined as the following training package qualifications:

- (i) CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care – current (release date 1/7/2013).

Previous eligible courses which have been superseded or are to be deleted are:

- (i) CHC50908 Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) – superseded by CHC50113 on 1/7/2013;
- (ii) CHC50302 Diploma of Children's Services – superseded by CHC50908 on 25/3/2011;
- (iii) CHC60202 Advanced Diploma of Children's Services – superseded by CHC60208 on 25/3/2011; and
- (iv) CHC60208 Advanced Diploma of Children's Services – latest release date 7/5/2012; to be deleted by 31 December 2014.

Estimated financial contribution

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON TAFE FEE WAIVERS FOR CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS

Table 1: Estimated Commonwealth financial contribution

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
(\$ '000)					
New South Wales	\$8,101	\$8,648	\$8,797	\$8,996	\$9,195
Victoria	\$3,097	\$3,306	\$3,363	\$3,439	\$3,515
Queensland	\$1,630	\$1,740	\$1,770	\$1,810	\$1,850
Western Australia	\$1,092	\$1,166	\$1,186	\$1,213	\$1,240
Southern Australia	\$1,141	\$1,218	\$1,239	\$1,267	\$1,295
Tasmania	\$473	\$505	\$513	\$525	\$537
Australian Capital Territory	\$619	\$661	\$673	\$688	\$703
Northern Territory	\$147	\$157	\$159	\$163	\$167

These figures are estimates only. Payments to states will be on the basis of data provided by States and assessed against NCVER data as per this National Partnership Agreement.