

Quality child care on the national agenda



NCAC has been a central part of the early and middle childhood landscape for the last 18 years and a significant part of my life since I commenced at NCAC in January 1997. This time has represented an enormous and rewarding journey, as we have worked to develop

and establish new quality assurance systems and sound administrative systems to support them. This period has also seen NCAC produce numerous resources and communication tools, foster many relationships, employ and develop a large number of staff, and constantly strive to improve both the quality assurance systems and NCAC practices.

The Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems have put quality care and education on the agenda in the early education and child care field, with families and in the wider community. The systems have assisted services and families to reflect on current practice against agreed standards and to design and implement quality improvement plans leading to significant improvement in the care and education offered to children.

I am pleased to say that the CCQA systems have also engendered and encouraged debate about quality child care, how it can be nurtured, improved and indeed measured. I hope that in the future there will continue to be robust debate about how we can continue to improve and build upon positive outcomes for children attending child care.

As NCAC's CEO it has been rewarding to meet and work with so many people across Australia and internationally – all with a common bond in regards to ensuring that children get the best quality care and education possible, and knowing how important this is for their present and their future. I have enjoyed many opportunities to talk to educators and visit services, to see the great programs they are delivering and to hear about their success stories. Having the opportunity to meet and observe so many children actively engaged in their learning has been a great pleasure.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to the NCAC staff, both past and present, who have not only made my role at NCAC a rewarding one, but who have

continually impressed and inspired me with their commitment to promoting positive experiences for children and to delivering exemplary customer service for all of our stakeholders. I would especially like to acknowledge and thank the NCAC management team, in particular Elizabeth Robinson, Susan Reade and Eric Randall, for their wisdom, expertise, foresight and ability to deliver the seemingly impossible. I wish every member of the NCAC team well as they move onto the next period in their lives. Leading NCAC has been a pleasure.

I have also been extremely fortunate to have worked with tremendously supportive Boards over the years, and each Board Director has brought to NCAC knowledge and expertise that has continually strengthened our organisation and assisted us to attain many and varied achievements over the years. I would like to thank Quentin Bryce, NCAC's first Chairperson and CEO, for her great work in establishing NCAC. Thanks also to NCAC's past Chairpersons, Ross McLean and John Tainton, who were instrumental in building NCAC into the organisation that we have become. I wish to extend special appreciation to our current Chairperson, June McLoughlin, for her generous and unwavering support of myself and the NCAC staff team during her time as Chair, and in particular during the past two years as NCAC has prepared to close.

Since its inception NCAC has also been fortunate in the support provided by the Australian Government. I would like to acknowledge past and present Ministers with portfolio responsibility for child care who have supported NCAC and championed quality care and education for children. Thank you also to all of the public servants that have worked collegially with NCAC and provided support and encouragement.

Finally, I acknowledge and commend the amazing achievements of all of the child care services and educators that have embraced the CCQA systems so positively and proficiently over the years. Your commitment to 'putting children first' has been both encouraging and inspiring. I wish you all the best as you enter a new era of assuring quality education and care for children in Australia ■

Denise Taylor

NCAC CEO, 1997 – 2011