



**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP**  
**ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

<b>ALGA MAIL</b>
ITEM No:
DATE RECEIVED: 8-10-14
FILE No:

Our Ref MC14-009463

Mayor Dr Felicity-ann Lewis  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

**03 OCT 2014**

Dear Dr Lewis

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2014 on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association concerning Willoughby City Council's motion on the National Quality Framework (NQF) requirements for outside school hours care (OSHC) services.

Child care and early learning services in Australia, including OSHC services, are required to meet a range of requirements under the NQF. These requirements, including educator to child ratios and qualification requirements, were agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2011. Accordingly, any changes to the requirements under the NQF would require the agreement of the Australian Government and all states and territories.

I can assure you the Government is continuing to work closely with state and territory governments to improve implementation of the NQF without compromising the quality of education and care. In regards to OSHC services, one of our election commitments is to work with state and territory governments to better customise the inclusion of OSHC in the scope of the NQF. We want to ensure that schools and other OSHC providers can continue to operate in an appropriately regulated environment.

A review of the NQF is currently being undertaken by the Government and all states and territories to ensure the goal of improving quality in child care and early learning services is being met in the most efficient and effective way. The review is also examining whether the requirements for centre-based services in the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations could be better tailored to the specific circumstances of OSHC services.

Initial consultations with the sector as a part of the review of the NQF have been undertaken and more than 1300 people attended consultation sessions. There have also been 281 online comments, 638 sector surveys, 132 family surveys and 162 submissions received. It is pleasing to see such a high level of interest in the review.

It is expected further consultation with the sector will occur on any changes to the NQF identified as a result of the review.

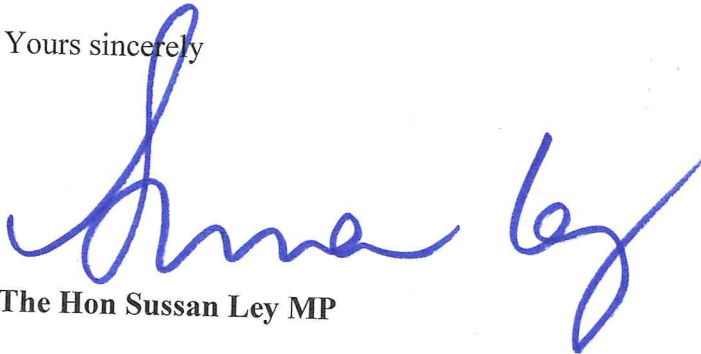
Regarding Willoughby City Council's motion, I note that it does not specify the OSHC requirements that should be developed. The Government is committed to working with state and territory governments to better customise the inclusion of outside school hours care in the scope of the NQF so that schools and other providers will be in a position to continue to offer this crucial service, whilst ensuring it is appropriately regulated. Against that background, I would welcome more information about the OSHC specific requirements raised by Willoughby City Council for development.

The Government is committed to ensuring that families are able to access affordable and flexible child care. One of the Government's first priorities was to task the Productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into future options for child care and early childhood learning, including OSHC services, with a focus on developing a system that supports modern families' working circumstances and children's learning and development needs.

The Productivity Commission's draft report on its inquiry into Child Care and Early Childhood Learning is available on the Productivity Commission's website. The draft report was released as part of the Commission's standard inquiry processes, which included further extensive consultations throughout August 2014 and the acceptance of additional submissions until 5 September 2014. The Commission is scheduled to provide its final report to Government by the end of October this year. If you have any further queries about the draft report or the consultation process, please contact the Productivity Commission or visit its website at [www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/childcare](http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/childcare). I look forward to receiving the final recommendations from the Productivity Commission by 31 October 2014.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



**The Hon Sussan Ley MP**