

Educational services – preschool teachers

- 57 The issue of appropriate award coverage for preschool teachers was raised when the Full Bench was considering educational services – other than universities, in Stage 3. The decision was made at that time to defer consideration of this issue until children’s services were being considered in Stage 4. This would enable all interested parties who might have a view to provide input to our deliberations.
- 58 Currently the nature of award coverage for preschool teachers is variable. For the most part they have been covered by specific early education teachers’ awards and, to a limited extent, by awards covering other teachers. In other cases they are covered by awards which also cover other employees in the child care industry or other employees in preschools or kindergartens.
- 59 There was strong support for the inclusion of preschool teachers in awards covering the “children’s services and early childhood education industry”. Equally there were strong arguments put that preschool teachers should be covered by an occupational award.
- 60 After considering the submissions and the proposals advanced by the interested parties we have decided at this stage that it is more appropriate to include preschool teachers in an occupational award covering both primary and secondary school teachers. We have taken into consideration in reaching this view, the qualifications required by early childhood education teachers, their capacity to work in schools and preschools as well as childcare centres, the lack of any relationship between teaching and children’s services employees in terms of classification structures and the differences in conditions of employment.
- 61 We understand that government policies will lead to an increase in the number of preschool teachers employed in childcare centres. It is, however, also likely that those policies will mean that access to early childhood education for children who are not in long day care will continue to be provided through preschools, kindergartens and preschool facilities attached to schools. The focus on the provision of early childhood education by university qualified teachers is appropriately reflected by their inclusion in an occupational award, the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010*.^[1]
- 62 We have drafted amendments to the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010* to reflect the inclusion of preschool teachers and we now release that exposure draft for comment.
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