



Early Childhood Education National Industry Advisory Group Hui Minutes

11 June 2025



Minutes – Early Childhood Education National Industry Advisory Group Hui (hui topa)

Date, Time and Location:	11 06 2025 at 10:00-12:00, Microsoft Teams, Ahumairangi
Chair:	Sarah Williams, National Engagement Manager, Toitū te Waiora
Advisory Group Members:	<p>Bonnie Te Ara Henare, Managing Director, Principal Consultant/Senior Education Advisor, AHO Education & International Consultancy Ltd/ Ministry of Education</p> <p>Graeme Severinsen, Academic Leader Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes (ECE), Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand</p> <p>Fiapaipai Casserley, Kaiako, He Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens</p> <p>Alice Ingram, Curriculum and Learner Experience Writer, Whānau Āwhina Plunket</p> <p>Kara Daly, Pedagogical Lead, Playcentre Aotearoa</p> <p>Simon Laube, Chief Executive, Early Childhood Council</p> <p>Elizabeth Polley, Senior Academic Staff Member, Open Polytechnic/Te Pūkenga</p> <p>Jesseallen Te Awhe- Raston, Tiamana (Chairman), Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngaio</p> <p>Cathy Wilson, Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Montessori Aotearoa NZ</p>
Secretariat:	Tamar Anstice, National Engagement Project Coordinator, Toitū te Waiora
Attendees:	<p>Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Mark Ormsby, Poumatua, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Cerelia Diprose, Principal Data & Insights Analyst, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Lisa Hann, Industry Engagement Lead National, Toitū te Waiora</p>
Apologies:	<p>Logan Warwick, Registered Kaiako, Kids In The View Early Learning</p> <p>Raewyn Overton-Stuart, Managing Director, PAUA Early Learning</p> <p>Zane McCarthy, Teacher/ECE sector representative on National Executive, Campus Creche Trust/NZEI Te Riu Roa</p>

***Actions for review on Page 6**

Industry Updates: Summarised Minutes

Commentary:

Transition from Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to Industry Skills Boards (ISBs)

- A considerable amount of uncertainty around the upcoming change from WDCs to ISBs.
- Members expressed serious concern around the proposed placement of ECE within the ISB model, noting that ECE appeared tokenised or insufficiently represented in early documentation.
- A suggestion was raised to better position ECE within a renamed or clearly defined Education, Health, and Social Services ISB, ensuring educational identity is retained alongside broader wellbeing roles.
- Despite structural ambiguity, members were encouraged to continue sector engagement through current NIAG networks as the transition progresses.

Data Insights & Workforce Analysis

- The data team presented a comprehensive set of statistics on:
 - workforce composition by role and qualification
 - demographic distribution
 - injury rates and time off work
 - salary distribution and pay equity breakdown
- Key insights included:
 - qualification enrolments are declining, raising concern for future pipeline supply;
 - workload intensity is increasing, with many roles involving medium-heavy physical demands;
 - ECE workers are experiencing higher rates of work-related injuries, particularly back strain;
 - women who make up most of the ECE workforce earn 21% less than men in ECE roles, raising serious equity questions.
- Some members questioned whether existing datasets adequately capture contextual realities in the sector and called for caution in how data is interpreted and communicated.

Workforce Challenges & Current Sector Pressures

- Teacher shortages continue to be critical, particularly for qualified and registered staff.
- Budget 2025 generated widespread disappointment, with a 0.5% increase viewed as insufficient to stabilise or uplift the sector.
- Funding pressures are impacting:
 - Staff retention
 - ECE centre viability
 - ability to offer pay parity
- Members noted that small and community-based centres are especially vulnerable under new funding structures and are at increased risk of closure if enrolment fluctuates.

Industry Updates: Summarised Minutes

- In some regions, students in ECE teacher training programmes must travel up to three hours to find a registered teacher for practicum, raising accessibility and equity challenges for rural and isolated learners.
- Waitlists for services, particularly in kōhanga reo and other cultural learning environments, are growing, highlighting the tension between demand and capacity.

Neurodiversity, Inclusion & Learner Support

- Members emphasised the rise in neurodiverse learners within ECE settings and the growing demand for:
 - culturally grounded support strategies
 - training for teachers in neurodiversity
 - better access to specialised PLD
- There is currently a lack of national data on this topic; members discussed pooling internal datasets to support qualification development and appropriate professional learning.
- An emphasis was placed on ensuring that approaches reflect Māori and Pasifika relational contexts rather than defaulting to imported Western diagnostic frameworks.

Qualifications, Compliance & Curriculum Concerns

- Updates were provided on changing unit standards, programme reviews, and forthcoming qualification reviews.
- Some members raised concerns around a perceived “dumbing down” of qualifications, warning against lowering expectations or neglecting core pedagogical knowledge.
- There is heightened anxiety around increasing compliance requirements and administrative burden on teachers and providers.
- Members strongly advocated for protecting the integrity of Te Whāriki, ensuring it is not overshadowed by primary school frameworks or achievement-based models.
- ACC data supported the potential development of a targeted health & safety micro-credential for the ECE sector, particularly due to rising injury rates for kaiako.

Key Themes

- ECE must be clearly positioned and meaningfully recognised in the new ISB structure. The group signalled the need for continued advocacy to ensure ECE visibility during ISB design.
- Recent budget provisions are inadequate and may threaten centre sustainability.
- Pay disparity and gender inequity remain systemic issues, with urgent need for acknowledgement and intervention.
- A desire to grow capability and expertise of kaiako, without sacrificing Te Whāriki-led pedagogy. Sector representatives will continue to articulate the importance of Te Whāriki as a foundational learning and cultural framework for ECE in Aotearoa.

Industry Updates: Summarised Minutes

- Evidence supports embedding practical, physical safety training into future ECE qualifications. Members agreed on the importance of raising workforce wellbeing and reducing injury risk through training and qualification content.
- Rural, Māori, and Pasifika contexts require tailored solutions and resource allocation.
- Members committed to sharing data where possible to support evidence-based qualification development.

Actions:

1.	
Reference #	20250611/01
Presenter:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	Members were reminded and encouraged to make a submission on the Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill.
Actions:	Prepare and submit feedback to the Select Committee on the Amendment Bill to ensure adequate Industry Skills Board (ISB) coverage for Early Childhood Education (ECE) following the link that Tamar has sent out alongside minutes.

2.	
Reference #	20250611/02
Documents:	ECE Industry Snapshot
Presenters:	Lisa Hann/Cerelia Diprose
Commentary:	Members are encouraged to contribute additional data where possible (e.g., on neurodiversity, workload, and pay equity).
Actions:	A reminder will be sent out on July 1 st , 2025 to all members to send through any relevant data pertaining to neurodiversity, workload, and pay equity to help strengthen investment advice for ECE sector workforce.

3.	
Reference #	20250611/03
Presenters:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	ACC data indicating elevated rates of workplace injuries in the ECE sector suggests a need for a targeted health and safety micro-credential to be developed and embedded

3.

Actions:	Investigate opportunities to embed health and safety content into ECE qualifications and/or micro-credentials.
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4.

Reference #	20250611/04
Presenters:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	Graeme mentioned that Te Rito Maioha are currently in the process of creating a Neurodiversity micro-credential that will be offered to ākonga once it has been approved by NZQA.
Actions:	Graeme to share neurodiversity micro-credential with the group as soon as it has been approved by NZQA. Hera to check in with Graeme closer to the next hui.