



Early Childhood Education National Industry Advisory Group Hui Minutes

14 July 2025



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

Date, Time and Location:	14 07 2025 at 09:30-12:30, Microsoft Teams, Pukehinau
Chair:	Sarah Williams, National Engagement Manager, Toitū te Waiora
Advisory Group Members:	<p>Graeme Severinsen, Academic Leader Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes (ECE), Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand</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>Cathy Wilson, Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Montessori Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>Logan Warwick, Registered Kaiako, Kids In The View Early Learning</p> <p>Raewyn Overton-Stuart, Managing Director, PAUA Early Learning</p>
Secretariat:	Tamar Anstice, National Engagement Project Coordinator, Toitū te Waiora
Attendees:	<p>Cerelia Diprose, Principal Data & Insights Analyst, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Ashley Acklin, Qualifications Manager, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Mereana Su, MQS</p> <p>Ngati Wehipehana, MQS</p>
Apologies:	<p>Zane McCarthy, Teacher/ECE sector representative on National Executive, Campus Creche Trust/NZEI Te Riu Roa</p> <p>Bonnie Te Ara Henare, Managing Director, Principal Consultant/Senior Education Advisor, AHO Education & International Consultancy Ltd/ Ministry of Education</p> <p>Fiapaipai Casserley, Kaiako, He Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens</p> <p>Jesseallen Te Awhe- Raston, Tiamana (Chairman), Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngaio</p> <p>Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Toitū te Waiora</p>

*Actions for review on Page 6

Toitū te Waiora Updates: Summarised Minutes

Commentary:

VET Reform: WDCs to Industry Skills Boards (ISBs)

- The hui opened with an update on the VET Reform programme, including the progress of transferring functions from Toitū te Waiora (TTW) to the future ISBs.
- Education is currently included within the proposed coverage of the Health and Community ISB, though this is not yet confirmed. Further consultation is expected before the final boundaries are set.
- The Education and Workforce Select Committee considered submissions on the draft *Education and Training Amendment Act*.
 - TTW provided a written submission; three other WDCs delivered oral submissions opposing elements of the Bill.
- TEC acknowledged being impressed with TTW's level of preparation for transition and the proactive work completed to support a smooth transfer of responsibilities.
- Members were encouraged to continue engaging through NIAG discussions as the transition process evolves.

Workforce Forecasting & Data Insights

(Presented by Cerelia Diprose Principal Data & Insights Analyst, Toitū te Waiora)

Cerelia delivered an extensive overview of workforce modelling, using data from population projections, migration trends, regulatory ratios, and the ECE Census.

Key Findings

- Current workforce capacity meets or exceeds minimum regulatory requirements nationally.
- Future workforce needs will depend heavily on:
 - birth rates and demographic shifts
 - migration flows
 - changes in participation rates
- Although nationally sufficient, regional mismatches are expected to persist — some areas will continue to face shortages while others maintain surplus capacity.

Concerns Raised by Members

- **Ageing workforce** and **poor retention of younger teachers**, especially those seeking better pay elsewhere.
- **Inconsistent access** to high-quality support for neurodiverse tamariki, particularly in rural or underserved communities.
- A desire for **more granular, culturally anchored data**, especially for kōhanga reo, puna reo, and Pacific services.

Members highlighted that headline national data often masks the complex realities of regional, cultural, and service-type variation.

Qualification Development & Review

- TTW currently oversees six ECE qualifications, with the formal review cycle scheduled to begin early 2026.

Toitū te Waiora Updates: Summarised Minutes

- NZQA consistency reviews recommended deferring the qualification review until more graduate data from current versions becomes available.
 - Members supported this approach to ensure any changes are evidence-based and not premature.

Engagement with Māori Qualification Services (MQS)

- MQS shared their intention to expand access to early learning pathways, including:
 - a Level 2 early childhood qualification, designed for secondary students, particularly in kaupapa Māori contexts;
 - ensuring that Ngā Mokopuna (Level 2–6) qualifications remain culturally grounded and responsive.
- Discussions emphasised the value of collaboration between TTW and MQS to:
 - streamline qualification reviews
 - reduce duplication
 - ensure alignment across agencies.

Additional Qualification Notes

- Unit standards developed for adult education aligned to kōhanga reo are **not currently in use** and will be refreshed.
- Opportunities were identified to:
 - strengthen Māori-medium and Pacific-focused learning pathways
 - develop an early learning Level 2 programme that encourages secondary school learners into the sector

Industry Updates & Sector Conditions

Members shared substantive updates on workforce and operational conditions across the sector.

Financial and Operational Pressures

- Many providers are experiencing financial distress, largely due to insufficient increases in Budget 2025.
- Anticipated closures prior to the next budget cycle, especially for centres with fewer than 50 children.
- Licensing criteria consultation felt misaligned with unclear broader regulatory settings.

Curriculum and Compliance Concerns

- Confusion around what it means to “align with Te Whāriki,” particularly for new services preparing to open.
- Sector frustration that multiple reviews are underway without clarity on regulator roles or the future regulatory system.

Workforce Challenges

- Persistent shortages remain, particularly in rural and isolated areas, with staffing pressures intensified during winter illness peaks.

Toitū te Waiora Updates: Summarised Minutes

- Long waits for tamariki requiring specialist support continue to place strain on kaiako and whānau.
- Providers in home-based ECE reported significant decline in the home-based model, citing:
 - loss of fees-free training
 - inability to subsidise training costs
 - risk of losing educators once trained
- Some services are experiencing high enrolment pressure, requiring additional staffing.

Teacher Education & Training Pathways

- 70 secondary schools currently deliver Level 2–3 ECE unit standards; however:
 - many students are disengaged
 - behavioural and attention challenges are increasing
- Despite this, there are strong pockets of students genuinely passionate about ECE pathways.
- A significant data gap remains in tracking transitions from secondary pathways into the ECE workforce.

Sector Mood

- Overall morale is low due to sustained underfunding, policy churn, and resource strain.
- Despite this, members voiced strong commitment to tamariki, whānau, and community wellbeing.

Cross-Sector Collaboration & Future Planning

Participants expressed interest in strengthening collaboration across the sector to support:

- shared training and micro-credential initiatives
- better alignment between data, workforce planning, and qualification development
- collective advocacy during ISB transition
- ensuring Māori, Pacific, and regional voices remain central to decision-making

Members reaffirmed the value of NIAG spaces for maintaining cultural integrity, regional relevance, and sector-led problem solving.

Actions: To Follow Up

1.	
Reference #	20250611/02
Presenters:	Lisa Hann/Cerelia Diprose
Commentary:	Members are encouraged to contribute additional data where possible (e.g., on neurodiversity, workload, and pay equity).
Actions:	All members to continue to send through any relevant data pertaining to neurodiversity, workload, and pay equity to help strengthen investment advice for ECE sector workforce to Hera when possible.
Update 14/07/2025	All members were reminded to continue to send through any relevant data pertaining to neurodiversity, workload, and pay equity to help strengthen investment advice for ECE sector workforce to Hera when possible.
2.	
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.
Update 14/07/2025:	The new micro-credential still isn't ready for the public to view, but Graeme said that he would share it with the group once it has been approved by NZQA.