

# **Consultation Cover Paper**

## **Draft Policy to guide co-location of Early Childhood Education and Care and Department of Education Services**

*Tasmania's Strategy for Children – Pregnancy to Age Eight Years* (the Strategy) places the child at the centre of all decision-making. The Strategy brings together the child, families, communities, environments and service providers to improve the education, health and wellbeing outcomes of children. The Strategy provides the impetus for developing collaborative partnerships to have a collective impact on positive outcomes for children. This includes the development of collaborative partnerships between the Department of Education (DoE) and Early Childhood Education and Care Services (ECEC) – for early years and school-aged children.

### **Background**

For many years, ECEC services (for early years and school-aged children) have used DoE facilities under a lease or licence agreement to deliver outside school hours care (OSHC), long day care (LDC) and occasionally, family day care (FDC). The majority of these ECEC services are provided on school sites, but can also include vacant DoE land, TAFE sites and Child and Family Centres, with the potential to locate on other DoE sites over time.

These arrangements have led to strong partnerships between both parties and integrated service delivery on DoE sites, and was the focus of the *Making Connections: schools and child care services* body of work, which was developed in 2007.

A lot has changed since this time. The National Quality Framework has been introduced. We have learnt a lot more about investing in the early years. The number of DoE services co-located with ECEC services has increased significantly.

It is timely to build on the way we work together to deliver quality outcomes for Tasmanian children.

The Department is undertaking a broad project – the *Strong Partnerships between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education and Care services* project – to improve partnerships between DoE services and ECEC services, including (but not limited to):

1. Developing a framework to support stronger partnerships;
2. Providing greater clarity and certainty on roles and responsibilities; and
3. Clear processes for establishing co-location arrangements including, consistent and transparent procurement processes.

There is a greater sense of urgency to develop area three – consistent and transparent processes to procure ECEC services on DoE sites – due to the number of leases/licences expiring within the next 12-18 months, which is why this stream of work is progressing first. The broader *Strong Partnerships* project will progress in early 2018.

Development of the Draft Policy has been informed by the Making Connections Working Group, which is a sub-group of the Tasmanian Early Years Reference Group, and comprises representatives from both the ECEC and government school sectors.

## What we are asking

We are seeking your views on:

- A. The attached *Draft Policy to Guide Co-location of Early Childhood Education and Care and Department of Education Services*, which aims to build supportive, transparent and consistent processes for the co-location of ECEC and DoE services, with a focus on nurturing positive partnerships.
- B. A proposed set of objectives for the cost recovery model for ECEC services on DoE sites.

These are both expanded on below.

## Consultation process and next steps

It is intended that two rounds of consultation will be undertaken on the Draft Policy and cost recovery model.

The first round of consultation is via an electronic survey and is open between 5 December 2017 and 14 February 2018. This is in acknowledgement of the busy time of year and the need to provide sufficient time to receive feedback to inform this work. The survey can be accessed via the following [link](#).

The second round of consultation will involve face-to-face workshops and it is intended that it will align with consultation on the broader *Strong Partnerships* project. It is planned that this will occur in early 2018.

### A. Draft Policy to guide co-location of ECEC and DoE Services

The Draft Policy applies to all Department of Education sites (such as schools, Child and Family Centres, TAFE and LINC) and approved ECEC providers (such as long day care, outside school hours care, family day care, and occasional care) on DoE sites.

The Draft Policy seeks to achieve three broad outcomes:

- All children are provided with quality education and care services and seamless transitions between DoE services and ECEC providers.
- All DoE and ECEC services work in genuine and collaborative partnership to deliver quality outcomes with the child at the centre of all decision-making.
- Infrastructure and services are maximised in the best interests of children.

The Draft Policy also has three key objectives:

- To deliver quality outcomes for children.
- To support consistent and transparent tender processes that are utilised for all procurements for ECEC services on DoE sites.
- To ensure that through the tendering and ongoing contract management process for ECEC services, parties develop genuine, collaborative partnerships aimed at delivering quality outcomes for children.

The Draft Policy aims to do this through supporting DoE and ECEC services to develop and maintain child-centred partnerships through the process of procuring ECEC services on DoE sites.

The Draft Policy sets out key aspects of the procurement process for both DoE and ECEC services including:

- governing principles for child centred partnerships;
- steps to undertake the procurement process;
- assessment of tenders;
- selection criteria for tenders;
- parameters of the combined lease/licence and service agreement (including the term of the agreement, key performance indicators, termination of the agreement, and assignment or change of control of the ECEC service); and
- governance arrangements to support collaboration (including model of governance, working together agreements and annual reviews).

The attached Draft Policy contains a number of discussion questions related to the key aspects of the procurement process outlined above, on which your input is sought via Survey Monkey.

Developing clear and consistent procurement processes also requires consideration of DoE's Cost Recovery Model for ECEC services on DoE sites.

## **B. Cost Recovery**

To support the Draft Policy, DoE is reviewing the cost recovery model for ECEC services on DoE sites to ensure it better aligns with the Stronger Partnerships framework.

The following cost recovery objectives were developed through consultation with the MCWG and the Department's Executive Group:

1. The Department of Education should maximise the use of available facilities by keeping costs as low possible for ECEC service providers for the benefit of children, families and communities.
2. Cost recovery calculations should be based on schools not being 'out of pocket'.
3. The administrative burden on schools and Early Childhood Education and Care service providers should be minimised.

We are seeking your feedback on these objectives which will guide the development of a new cost recovery method.

### Survey Question 3

- Are there any other cost recovery objectives that should be included, amended or deleted?