

The Director's Brief — Six months. Everything changed.

The most legislatively active period in ECEC history — condensed into one cheat sheet. Every regulation, wage reform and funding change your centre needs to know, with links direct to the source.

■ **Paramount consideration — now law**

■ **Personal devices banned on floor**

■ **Training deadline: 27 Aug 2026**

Child Safety Reforms

Act Now

27 Feb 2026
National Law

Paramount Consideration — Now Enforceable

- › All staff, volunteers and providers are now legally required to prioritise children's safety, rights and best interests in every decision in the operation of a service.
- › This is not a guideline — it is enforceable law.
- ACECQA — [Strengthened NQF Child Safety](#)

27 Feb 2026
Devices

Personal Device Ban In Effect

- › Personal devices that can capture, store or transmit images/video are prohibited while working directly with children. Only service-issued devices may photograph or film children on site.
- › A new offence of inappropriate conduct has been introduced.
- ACECQA — [Digital Devices Info Sheet](#)

1 Sep 2025
Regulations

September 2025 Regulatory Package

- › Incident notification for physical/sexual abuse now 24 hours (was 7 days)
- › New digital technology and online environment policies required
- › Services must be free from vaping substances and devices
- ACECQA — [Sep 2025 & Jan 2026 Changes](#)

Dec 2025 / Jan 2026

Tougher Enforcement Powers

- › Statute of limitations changes — 10 Dec 2025
- › Regulators can now share prohibition notice data with recruitment agencies
- › New penalties for false/misleading information
- › Increased penalty infringement amounts from 2 Jan 2026
- ACECQA — [Penalty Changes](#)

National Quality Standard Updates

From 1 Jan 2026

QA2 — Element 2.2.3

Renamed: 'Child Safety and Protection'

- › Element 2.2.3 is now renamed and strengthened.
- › Management and educators must explicitly identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
- › Update your self-assessment and QIP language now.

■ ACECQA — NQS Changes Jan 2026

QA7 — Governance

Child Safe Governance Now Expected

- › Quality Area 7 now explicitly references child safe services.
- › Your governance documents, policies and leadership structures must demonstrate child safe practices.
- › Update before your next assessment visit.

■ ACECQA — NQS Changes Jan 2026

National Educator Register Live

27 Feb 2026

Ongoing obligation — all providers

You Must Enter and Maintain Your Workforce Data on the Register

The Early Childhood Worker Register (hosted by ACECQA) is now live. Approved providers must enter and keep current: identity, qualifications, Working With Children Checks, teaching registration, and all safety-related information for every staff member.

Providers have one month from 27 February 2026 to enter current workforce information. Updates must be made within 14 days of any workforce change.

■ ACECQA — Worker Register

Mandatory Child Safety Training

Deadline: 27 Aug 2026

Available Now — Geckco

Foundation Modules — Free for All Staff

- › All staff, volunteers and students must complete mandatory national child safety training.
- › Foundation modules are live on Geckco now — every person needs their own personal Geckco account (no shared accounts).
- › Deadline: 27 August 2026 — approx. 2 hours to complete

■ Dept. Education — Training Info

From July 2026

Advanced Modules + Wage Subsidy Grants

- › Advanced child safety training modules launch July 2026.
- › Small-to-medium providers can access wage subsidy grants to fund staff completing training in paid hours.
- › CCS-approved services may also close early for Foundation training.

■ Dept. Education — Mandatory Training

Wages & Award Changes

Action Required

Dec 2025 — Worker Retention Payment

15% Above-Award: Phase 2 Active

- › Second WRP tranche (further 5%) took effect 1 December 2025.
- › Fee cap: no more than 4.2% increase (Aug 2025–Aug 2026).
- › All funding must be passed to eligible workers.
- › FDC and In Home Care providers are not currently eligible.

■ Dept. Education — Wages & WRP

1 March 2026 — Fair Work

New Award Classification Structure

- › New streamlined classifications replace the Children's Services Award 2010 structure following the FWC's Dec 2025 gender undervaluation decision.
- › Combined with WRP, total wage increases reach up to 27%.
- › Check your payroll now.

■ Fair Work — Children's Services Award

Child Care Subsidy Changes

From Jan 2026

January 2026 — Families

3-Day Guarantee: Activity Test Softened

- › All families now eligible for a minimum of three days of CCS per week regardless of activity level (\$426.6M allocated).
- › Review your enrolment mix, gap fee conversations and subsidy administration processes.

■ Services Australia — CCS

Ongoing — Providers

Safety Now a CCS Approval Factor

- › Quality and safety is now a paramount consideration for CCS provider approval and ongoing compliance.
- › Providers who fall short risk conditions on approval, restrictions on expansion, or loss of CCS approval entirely.

■ Dept. Education — CCS Provider Info

Most reforms above apply nationally under the NQF. However, each state and territory has its own regulator, additional obligations, and in some cases different timelines. Here's what your jurisdiction adds on top of the national baseline.

■ ■ **Western Australia exception: WA is still transitioning to the Applied National Law. The Feb 2026 national reforms do not yet fully apply in WA. WA services should verify current obligations directly with the WA Department of Education.**

New South Wales Regulator: NSW Early Learning Commission	Victoria Regulator: VECRA	Queensland Regulator: Dept. of Education (QARD)
<p>30+ Additional Reforms</p> <p>1 Dec 2025 NSW Early Learning Commission launched</p> <p>New independent regulator replaced previous authority within Dept of Education.</p> <p>27 Feb 2026 Compliance & quality history display — mandatory</p> <p>All NSW services must prominently display compliance and quality history, past ratings, serious breaches (last 2 yrs) and prosecutions. Fines up to \$154,800 for large providers.</p> <p>27 Feb 2026 Device fines — stronger than national</p> <p>NSW penalties exceed national rates: \$3,420 (individuals) to \$51,600 (large providers). Smartwatches and wearables explicitly included.</p> <p>Ongoing NSW child protection training still required</p> <p>NSW requires approved child protection training (CHCPRT002 or equivalent) for nominated supervisors — separate from and in addition to Gecco modules.</p> <p>■ NSW Early Learning Commission — Reforms</p>	<p>Nation-leading Enforcement</p> <p>1 Jan 2026 VECRA launched — independent regulator</p> <p>Victoria's new Early Childhood Regulatory Authority is actively filing criminal charges and doubling compliance checks.</p> <p>1 Jan 2026 Penalties up to 9x for large providers</p> <p>Victoria went beyond the national 3x increase. Large providers (25+ services) face maximum penalties nine times the previous level.</p> <p>Sep 2025 Mobile device ban — ahead of national</p> <p>Victoria implemented its device ban in September 2025, ahead of the February 2026 national date.</p> <p>Early 2026 WWCC + Reportable Conduct unified</p> <p>Victoria brought WWCC, Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards under one regulator — the Social Services Regulator.</p> <p>■ VECRA — Victorian Regulator</p>	<p>Reportable Conduct Incoming</p> <p>Oct 2025 Child Safe Organisations System — phase 1</p> <p>Queensland's 10 Child Safe Standards began phased implementation via the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024.</p> <p>Now Prohibited persons register check — legal obligation</p> <p>QLD providers must check the register of prohibited persons and suspended educators before hiring anyone in ECEC.</p> <p>1 Jul 2026 Reportable Conduct Scheme — ECEC sector</p> <p>Fast-tracked in response to the Griffith case. Begins for all ECEC services from 1 July 2026. Begin preparing policies now.</p> <p>■ QLD — ECEC Child Safety & Training</p>

South Australia		Regulator: Dept. for Education (ESB)		Tasmania, ACT & NT		Regulator: Respective Depts. of Education	
Increased A&R; Investment				Transition In Progress			
2025–26	\$21.8M boost to A&R; — more frequent assessments	Post Feb 2026	National reforms NOT yet fully in effect	27 Feb 2026	All national reforms apply — TAS, ACT & NT	All three jurisdictions are fully under the National Law. All national changes apply from standard commencement dates.	
SA committed an additional \$21.8M specifically to increase the frequency of Assessment and Rating visits.				WA is still transitioning to the Applied National Law. State-equivalent provisions apply in the interim.			
27 Feb 2026	All national reforms apply in SA	Now	Education and Care Services National Application Bill — priority	2024	Tasmania — \$240M+ response to Commission of Inquiry	Tasmania committed more than \$240M in response to Commission of Inquiry findings on child safety.	
SA is fully under the National Law. All national changes are in effect from their standard national dates.				The Bill to bring WA fully under the national Applied Law has been fast-tracked as a state priority. Monitor progress closely.			
Ongoing	Education and Care Services National Application Bill	Sep 2025	Device ban — state equivalent in effect	2026	NT — Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan 2026	The NT launched its Early Childhood Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan 2026 focused on ECEC quality and child safety.	
SA is progressing an additional state bill to further align its regulatory framework with national expectations.				WA implemented a state-equivalent personal device restriction from September 2025.			
■ SA ESB — Child Safety Reforms				■ NT — Mandatory Child Safety Training			
				■ WA Dept. Education — Early Childhood			

Director's Action Checklist Print this out. Tick these off. Stay compliant.

■ Update personal device policy

Ban personal devices on the floor. Issue service devices for image capture. Document the change.

■ Load the Educator Register

Enter all staff into the ACECQA National Worker Register and keep it current as staff change.

■ Create Geckko accounts for all staff

Every staff member, volunteer and student needs an account. Assign Foundation training modules now.

■ Build a training completion plan

Map out how all staff will finish Foundation training before 27 August 2026.

■ Check payroll for March 2026

Verify new Award classifications are applied from 1 March 2026, on top of the WRP.

■ Review and update QIP

Update QA2 (Element 2.2.3) and QA7 language to reflect new NQS child safety requirements.

■ Review all relevant policies

Digital tech policy, 24-hr incident reporting timelines, paramount consideration statement.

■ Confirm WRP fee cap compliance

Fee increases must not exceed 4.2% (Aug 2025–Aug 2026) to preserve WRP eligibility.

■ On the Horizon — What's Coming Next

1 Jul 2026 — QLD	Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme extends to all ECEC services. QLD centres should begin preparing now.
Jul 2026 — Training	Advanced child safety modules launch on Gecco. Wage subsidy grants open for small-to-medium providers.
27 Aug 2026 — Deadline	All staff must have completed Foundation child safety training. Non-compliance risks service approval.

■ Quick Reference Links

■ ACECQA — Strengthened NQF Child Safety Visit ■	■ ACECQA — All Child Safety Info Sheets Visit ■
■ National Educator Register Visit ■	■ Gecco — National Child Safety Training Visit ■
■ Worker Retention Payment — Wages Visit ■	■ Children's Services Award — Fair Work Visit ■
■ CCS — Services Australia Visit ■	■ ACECQA — NQS Sep 2025 & Jan 2026 Changes Visit ■

For information only — not legal advice. Always verify current requirements with your regulatory authority.