



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

A decorative graphic consisting of six vertical bars of varying heights and colors: red, orange, olive green, dark green, blue, and purple. The bars are arranged in a slightly staggered, overlapping fashion.

## Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

# Australian Child Care Industry October 2008

This report was prepared by the Labour Supply and Skills Branch

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## Executive Summary

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The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) conducted a Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences in the Child Care industry in September and October 2008. The survey, developed in consultation with industry stakeholders, examined three key occupations: Centre Directors, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers,<sup>1</sup> and collected a range of information from employers including their most recent recruitment and retention experiences and future recruitment expectations. The survey, to which 311 employers responded, also asked questions about the number of vacancies which occurred over the 12 months prior to the survey and employers' success in filling these vacancies, including the number and quality of applications received.

The survey found that, overall, 20.2 per cent of Child Care vacancies remained unfilled in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 10.6 per cent across all industries and regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008.<sup>2</sup> The unfill rate was highest for Qualified Child Care Workers with 29.0 per cent of vacancies remaining unfilled, followed by Centre Directors (19.4 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled) and Unqualified Child Care Workers (12.7 per cent remained unfilled).

Recruitment activity was very high across the industry, with 91.0 per cent of employers reporting they had recruited or attempted to recruit in the 12 months prior to the survey. However, the level of competition for vacancies was low in comparison with other industries and regions surveyed, with an average of just 2.4 applicants per vacancy, of whom, an average of 1.1 were considered suitable per vacancy. By comparison, the average for all industries and regions surveyed was 5.0 applicants and 1.9 suitable applicants per vacancy.

The proportion of employers who expect to recruit over the next 12 months varied by occupation group. Almost half (47.6 per cent) of employers surveyed anticipated that they would recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers in the coming year. This proportion reduced to 44.4 per cent of employers for Unqualified Child Care Workers and just 12.9 per cent of employers for Centre Directors. The proportion of employers who anticipated difficulty recruiting in the next 12 months was also higher for Qualified Child Care Workers (77.7 per cent of employers), followed by Centre Directors (75.0 per cent of employers) and Unqualified Child Care Workers (58.7 per cent of employers).

It should be noted that since the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences in the Child Care industry was conducted the Australian economy has begun to feel the effects of the global financial crisis. As this is likely to impact on labour market conditions and possibly the demand for child care, employers' future recruitment expectations may have altered since completing the survey.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey questionnaire defined 'Qualified Child Care Worker' as a Child Care Worker with a Certificate III or higher Child Care related qualification. 'Unqualified Child Care Worker' was defined as a Child Care Worker who has a Certificate I/II in a Child Care related area, or who has no Child Care related qualifications, or who has no post school qualification.

<sup>2</sup> DEEWR surveyed 6614 employers across a range of industries and regions in the 12 months to October 2008 about their recruitment experiences and the results provide a basis for comparison with the employers surveyed from the Child Care industry.

# 1. The Australian Child Care Industry

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## 1.1. Industry Profile

There are a variety of child care services available in Australia: Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care (before and after school), Vacation Care, Occasional Care and In Home Care. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences in the Child Care industry concentrated on three of these service types – Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and Vacation Care.

### Long Day Care

Long Day Care (LDC) is provided in child care centres, mainly for children up to school age. LDC can be all-day or part-time and is provided by private operators, employers, local councils, community organisations or not-for-profit organisations.<sup>3</sup> These centres generally operate between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. Staff recruitment for LDC services is usually undertaken by the individual centre or by a head office that may recruit for a number of centres.

### Outside School Hours Care and Vacation Care

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) may comprise before and/or after school care and/or Vacation Care (VAC), and is provided mainly for primary school aged children. OSHC is usually provided in schools or community halls.<sup>3</sup> Recruitment for OSHC is usually undertaken by the individual centre or by a head office that may recruit for a number of centres.

## 1.2. Industry Demographics

Across Australia more than 100 000 people are employed within the Child Care industry. In 2008, it was estimated there were approximately 96 100 people employed as Child Care Workers (both Qualified and Unqualified) in Australia and 10 000 people employed as Child Care Centre Managers (or Centre Directors). The number of people employed in these occupations decreased between 2007 and 2008 (by 1100 for Child Care Workers and 400 for Child Care Centre Managers). However, in the five years from 2008 it is projected that employment of Child Care Centre Managers will increase by 45.2 per cent and employment of Child Care Workers will increase by 16.1 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

LDC services employ about 64 per cent of paid staff in the Child Care industry, followed by OSHC services and VAC services, with each employing 16 per cent of staff in the industry. These employment figures reflect the service breakdown of the industry.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, [http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/OfficeOfEarlyChildhood/ChildCare/Documents/Pages%20from%2008\\_272A\\_MyChild\\_Info-for-families\\_Factsheets\\_4\\_webaw.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/OfficeOfEarlyChildhood/ChildCare/Documents/Pages%20from%2008_272A_MyChild_Info-for-families_Factsheets_4_webaw.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government Jobsearch Website, Job Outlook, <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Pages/alpha.aspx#C>.

The Child Care industry in Australia is a female-dominated industry. At the time of the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, men represented less than 5 per cent of Child Care Centre Managers<sup>5</sup> or Child Care Workers<sup>6</sup> in Australia.

The median age of Child Care Workers in 2008 was 32 years, with the highest proportion of the workforce aged between 25 and 34 years (22.9 per cent), followed by the 20 to 24 years age group (20.3 per cent). The smallest proportion of workers was from the 65 and over age group (1.0 per cent), followed by the 55 to 64 years age group (7.7 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

By comparison, the median age of Child Care Centre Managers was 41 years, with the highest proportion of the workforce aged between 35 and 44 years (36.9 per cent). With no one in the occupation aged between 15 and 19 years, those aged 65 and over represent a small proportion of Centre Managers (1.2 per cent), followed by those aged between 20 and 24 years (4.8 per cent).<sup>6</sup> These data suggest that, overall, the Child Care industry has a relatively young workforce and the impact of Australian's ageing population on the industry may be less than in other industries.

At the time of the 2006 Census of Child Care Services, many people within the industry held formal qualifications in a children's services related field, with 61 per cent of all LDC centre staff holding a relevant qualification and 48 per cent of both OSHC and VAC staff holding a relevant qualification.<sup>7</sup> The average weekly full-time earnings of Child Care Workers in 2008 were \$650 and \$900 for Child Care Centre Managers.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3. Government Initiatives

The Australian Government has announced an early childhood education and child care agenda that focuses on providing Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care. The agenda has a strong emphasis on connecting with schools to ensure all Australian children are fully prepared for learning and life. Investing in the health, education, development and care of our children benefits children and their families, our communities and the economy, and is critical to lifting workforce participation and delivering the Government's productivity agenda.

The reform agenda includes:

1. Universal Access Early Childhood Education - Ensuring that by 2013, all children in the year before formal schooling will have access to high quality early childhood education program delivered by a university-trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks of the year, in public, private and community-based preschools and child care.

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<sup>5</sup> The ABS classifies this occupation as 'Child Care Co-ordinators'.

<sup>6</sup> The ABS classifies this occupation as 'Children's Care Worker'.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care, *2006 Census of Child Care Services*, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/OfficeOfEarlyChildhood/Documents/2006%20Child%20Care%20Census%20Summary.pdf>

2. Early Years Learning Framework - Developing a national Early Years Learning Framework which will outline the desired outcomes for children in early childhood education and care settings across the birth to five age range and as they make the transition to school.
3. National Early Years Workforce Strategy - The Workforce Strategy will provide a long-term blueprint to improve recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce, develop pathways that reward and support the best workers, and raise the level of qualifications.
4. National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care - Families need access to high quality, affordable early learning and care for their children. Australian Governments have committed to establishing a National Quality Framework that will raise quality and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care services. The key elements of the National Quality Framework are national quality standards, a quality rating system, enhanced regulatory approach and the Early Years Learning Framework.
5. Changes to the Child Care Tax Rebate - Increasing the level of assistance to families with child care costs by increasing the Child Care Tax Rebate from 30% to 50%, up to \$7,500 per child; and paying the rebate quarterly, rather than annually.
6. JET Child Care fee assistance – Increasing the level of support provided to parents under the Jobs Education and Training Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) program for study of up to two years.
7. Additional Early Learning and Care Centres - Establishing up to 260 Early Learning and Care Centres in areas of unmet demand for child care.
8. National rollout of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) - The AEDI is a population-based measure of child development, which enables communities to assess how children are developing by the time they reach school age. The AEDI will help communities to tailor their resources and programs to the developmental needs of their children.
9. Home Interaction Program – The Home Interaction Program will be rolled out to 50 communities nationally to assist disadvantaged three to five year olds. The program provides for home tutors, books and associated educational resources to help parents improve their children’s school readiness. This program is innovative in its holistic emphasis on providing enduring skills to children, parents and the community.

Under the Skilling Australia for the Future initiative, the Commonwealth has funded the Productivity Places Program (PPP) which will also assist in building the Child Care workforce. The program, which targets areas of current skill shortage and emerging skill needs by delivering training places in these areas, has identified Child Care Co-ordinators (or Centre Directors) and Child Care Workers as priority occupations.

#### 1.4. Population projections<sup>8</sup>

Over the 20 years to 2028, the population aged under 12 years is projected to grow by 21.4 per cent. This growth is expected to be particularly strong in the four to five years age group (25.0 per cent).<sup>9</sup>

Overall, the growth in the population aged under 12 years is expected to be most significant in Queensland (35.2 per cent) and Western Australia (34.9 per cent) and least significant in Tasmania (4.6 per cent) and New South Wales (11.6 per cent).<sup>9</sup>

The projected growth in the number of Australian children indicates that there will be increased demand for Child Care places, and therefore Child Care Workers and Centre Directors, in the coming years. The aim of the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences is to identify the prevalence of recruitment and retention issues, whether they differ between states and territories, and the specific issues that Child Care employers identify as impacting on their business and the sector more widely.

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<sup>8</sup> See Table 11, Appendix, for additional details.

<sup>9</sup> Source: ABS, Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101, Series B projections, ABS cat. No. 3222.0.

## 2. Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

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The Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences in the Child Care industry was conducted during September and October 2008. Following advice from industry stakeholders, the survey was conducted online to gain the best possible response from employers by allowing them to complete the survey at their own convenience. The survey was conducted at the site level with responses received from individual child care centres.

A random sample of employers was sent a primary approach letter requesting their involvement with the research and providing them with the details of a website they could visit to complete the survey. Each employer was provided with a unique reference number which they had to enter to begin the survey, ensuring that each employer could complete the survey only once.

The survey asked employers about their experiences recruiting staff in the 12 months prior to the survey, as well as their most recent recruitment experiences for Centre Directors, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers.

For the purposes of the survey, Qualified Child Care Worker was defined as 'a Child Care Worker who has a Certificate III or higher Child Care related qualification'. Unqualified Child Care Worker was defined as 'a Child Care Worker who has a Certificate I/II in a Child Care related area, has no Child Care related qualifications or has no post school qualification'.<sup>10</sup>

Respondents also answered questions about the profile of their business, staff turnover in the past 12 months, staff retention strategies, future recruitment expectations and factors that they anticipated would impact on their services ability to deliver quality Child Care in the future.

### 2.1. Profile of Respondents

A total of 311 Child Care employers responded to the survey, out of 1037 providers who were approached (a 30.0 per cent response rate). As shown in Table 1, the respondents were from across all states and territories.

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<sup>10</sup> Qualification requirements for Child Care Workers vary between states and territories. However, these definitions capture the qualification requirements in most states and territories.

**Table 1: Survey respondents by state and territory**

state or territory	Proportion of respondents from each state or territory <sup>11</sup>	Proportion of Child Care Centres located in each state or territory
Victoria	18.0%	23.1%
New South Wales	16.4%	31.4%
Queensland	15.4%	24.2%
South Australia	15.4%	7.5%
Western Australia	10.6%	7.9%
Australian Capital Territory	9.0%	2.4%
Tasmania	8.0%	2.3%
Northern Territory	5.8%	1.2%

The majority of respondents were from Victoria (18.0 per cent) and New South Wales (16.4 per cent), with many also from Queensland and South Australia (15.4 per cent each). The respondent rates largely reflected the proportion of child care centres in each state and territory.

**Table 2: Survey respondents by business size**

Business Size	Proportion of respondents
2 to 4 staff	11.6%
5 to 9 staff	29.9%
10 to 19 staff	43.4%
20 and over staff	15.1%

Almost half of the respondents (43.4 per cent) were from businesses employing between 10 and 19 staff, followed by those with between 5 and 9 staff (29.9 per cent). The lowest proportion of respondents were from businesses employing between 2 and 4 staff (11.6 per cent).

**Table 3: Survey respondents by service type**

Service Type <sup>12</sup>	Proportion of respondents
Outside School Hours Care	59.8%
Long Day Care	50.8%
Vacation Care	37.0%
Other Child Care	6.8%

Most of the respondents were OSHC providers (59.8 per cent), followed by LDC providers (50.8 per cent). By comparison, VAC providers represented 37.0 per cent of respondents, while less than 7 per cent of providers reported that they provide other types of child care services such as Family Day Care and Kindergarten.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The state or territory of an additional 1.3 per cent of respondents was unidentifiable.

<sup>12</sup> As many sites provide more than one type of child care service some sites are included in two or more of these categories.

### 3. Recruitment Experiences in the 12 months prior to the survey

#### 3.1. Prevalence of Recruitment Activity

Overall, 91.0 per cent of respondents reported that they had recruited or attempted to recruit staff in the 12 months prior to the survey. This compares with 61.9 per cent of employers from all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008.<sup>13</sup>

Recruitment activity was most prevalent within the Australian Capital Territory with 100 per cent of surveyed employers reporting that they recruited, or attempted to recruit, staff during the 12 months prior to the survey. Recruitment activity was also widespread in Tasmania, with 96.0 per cent of respondents reporting that they undertook recruitment, followed by New South Wales and Western Australia (94.1 per cent and 93.9 per cent, respectively).

**Table 4: Proportion of employers who undertook recruitment in 12 months prior to the survey by state and territory**

state and territory	% who recruited past 12 months
Australian Capital Territory	100.0%
New South Wales	94.1%
Northern Territory	88.9%
Queensland	91.7%
South Australia	85.4%
Tasmania	96.0%
Victoria	83.9%
Western Australia	93.9%
<b>Australia (Total)</b>	<b>91.0%</b>

Looking at the type of service respondents provide, recruitment activity was most widespread in the LDC sector, with 94.9 per cent of respondents reporting that they had undertaken recruitment activity in the 12 months prior to the survey. A high level of recruitment activity was also reported in the other sectors surveyed, with 90.4 per cent of those in the VAC sector and 87.1 per cent of those in the OSHC sector recruiting, or attempting to recruit, staff during that period.

<sup>13</sup> DEEWR surveyed 6614 employers across a range of industries and regions in the 12 months to October 2008 about their recruitment experiences and the results provide a basis for comparison with the employers surveyed from the Child Care industry.

### 3.2. Staff Attraction Strategies

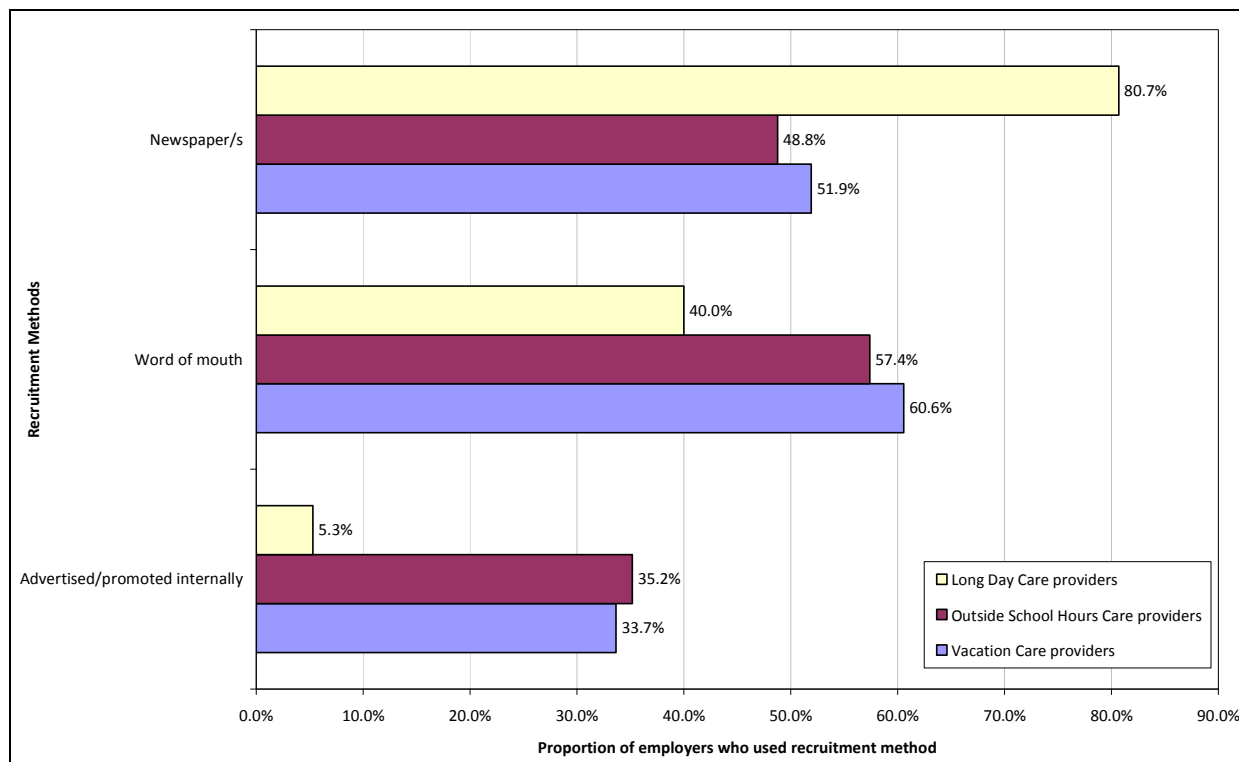
Many employers (45.6 per cent) reported that they had adopted strategies to attract staff. The most common strategies reported were offering staff training and development opportunities (88.4 per cent of employers with staff attraction strategies reported adopting this strategy), offering a safe and comfortable workplace (83.7 per cent), offering a workplace with effective staff communication and consultation (69.8 per cent) and offering flexible working hours and job sharing (69.0 per cent).

### 3.3. Recruitment Methods

The survey results indicate that employers in the Child Care industry use a combination of formal and informal recruitment methods. The most commonly reported recruitment method was newspaper advertising, with 63.6 per cent of recruiting employers using this method in the 12 months prior to the survey. The second most common method was word of mouth (47.7 per cent), followed by advertising/promoting internally (32.2 per cent), being directly approached by job seekers (29.7 per cent) and advertising through educational institutions (26.1 per cent).

The recruitment methods used by employers differed depending on the type of child care they provided, as shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1: Most common recruitment methods by service type**



While 80.7 per cent of LDC providers reported advertising in newspapers, only 48.8 per cent of OSHC and 51.9 per cent of VAC providers reported using this method. Conversely, while 28.0 per cent of LDC providers reported advertising or promoting internally, 35.2 per cent of OSHC providers and 33.7 per cent of VAC providers did. Word of mouth was also much more

commonly used by OSHC and VAC providers (57.4 per cent and 60.6 per cent respectively) than by LDC providers (40.0 per cent).

Around 30 per cent of OSHC and VAC providers advertised through educational institutions (30.2 per cent and 27.9 per cent respectively), while just 20.7 per cent of LDC providers did. By comparison, use of recruitment agencies and Job Network members were more common amongst LDC providers (reported by 22.0 per cent and 12.0 per cent respectively of LDC providers), than among OSHC (used by 9.9 per cent and 6.2 per cent respectively) and VAC providers (11.5 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively).

### **3.4. Recruitment Experiences by Occupation in the 12 months prior to the survey**

#### **3.4.1. Centre Directors**

Overall, 74 respondents (23.8 per cent) reported that they recruited for Centre Directors in the 12 months prior to the survey, with the majority (66.2 per cent) reporting that they did so to replace a Centre Director who had left. Of the 103 positions these employers tried to fill, 19.4 per cent remained unfilled.

Most employers reported that, prior to being recruited, the staff they recruited as Centre Directors were employed in another position or site within the business or in another Child Care service within the region (40.3 per cent each).

The experiences of employers who recruited for Centre Directors in the 12 months prior to the survey varied depending on the child care service they provided. Recruitment for this occupation was most common within the LDC sector, with 30.4 per cent of employers from that sector reporting that they recruited for Centre Directors compared with 21.7 per cent of those within the VAC sector and 19.9 per cent of those in the OSHC sector.

The proportion of unfilled vacancies was higher than average in the VAC and OSHC sectors, with 24.3 per cent and 20.4 per cent of vacancies remaining unfilled respectively, compared with 13.1 per cent of LDC sector Centre Director vacancies.

#### **3.4.2. Qualified Child Care Workers**

A total of 209 respondents (67.2 per cent) reported that they recruited for Qualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of the 635 positions that these employers attempted to fill, 29.0 per cent remained unfilled.

Overall, 84.7 per cent of employers who recruited for Qualified Child Care Workers reported that they did so to replace workers who had left the business, while 65.1 per cent reported that they did so to increase staff numbers.

Employers most commonly indicated that, prior to being recruited, the staff they hired worked in another child care service within the region (51.6 per cent of employers) or worked in another position, or site, within the business (26.6 per cent).

Recruitment of Qualified Child Care Workers was lower in the OSHC and VAC sectors (58.1 per cent and 65.2 per cent of employers respectively recruited for this occupation), compared with the LDC sector (79.1 per cent of employers).

The proportion of unfilled positions was most significant in the OSHC and VAC sectors, with 36.4 per cent and 36.8 per cent of positions remaining unfilled respectively. By comparison, 22.1 per cent of LDC Qualified Child Care Worker positions remained unfilled, lower than the other Child Care sectors although still significantly higher than the average rate of unfilled vacancies recorded across all occupations in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (10.6 per cent of vacancies unfilled).

In terms of location, New South Wales had the highest proportion of Qualified Child Care positions unfilled (40.7 per cent), however, a significant proportion of vacancies also remained unfilled in the Northern Territory (34.2 per cent), the Australian Capital Territory (31.5 per cent) and Tasmania (31.3 per cent).

More than half of those respondents who recruited Qualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months prior to the survey reported that some of those staff previously worked in another child care service within the same region (51.6 per cent).

### **3.4.3. Unqualified Child Care Workers**

Overall, 215 respondents (69.1 per cent) reported that they recruited, or attempted to recruit, for Unqualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of the 732 vacancies employers tried to fill, 12.7 per cent remained unfilled.

Most employers reported that they undertook recruitment for Unqualified Child Care Workers due to staff turnover (77.2 per cent) although many also reported that they did so to increase staff numbers (66.0 per cent).

Many employers reported that, prior to being recruited, the staff they hired for Unqualified Child Care Worker positions had most commonly been outside the workforce (43.9 per cent of employers) or employed in another industry within the region (34.4 per cent).

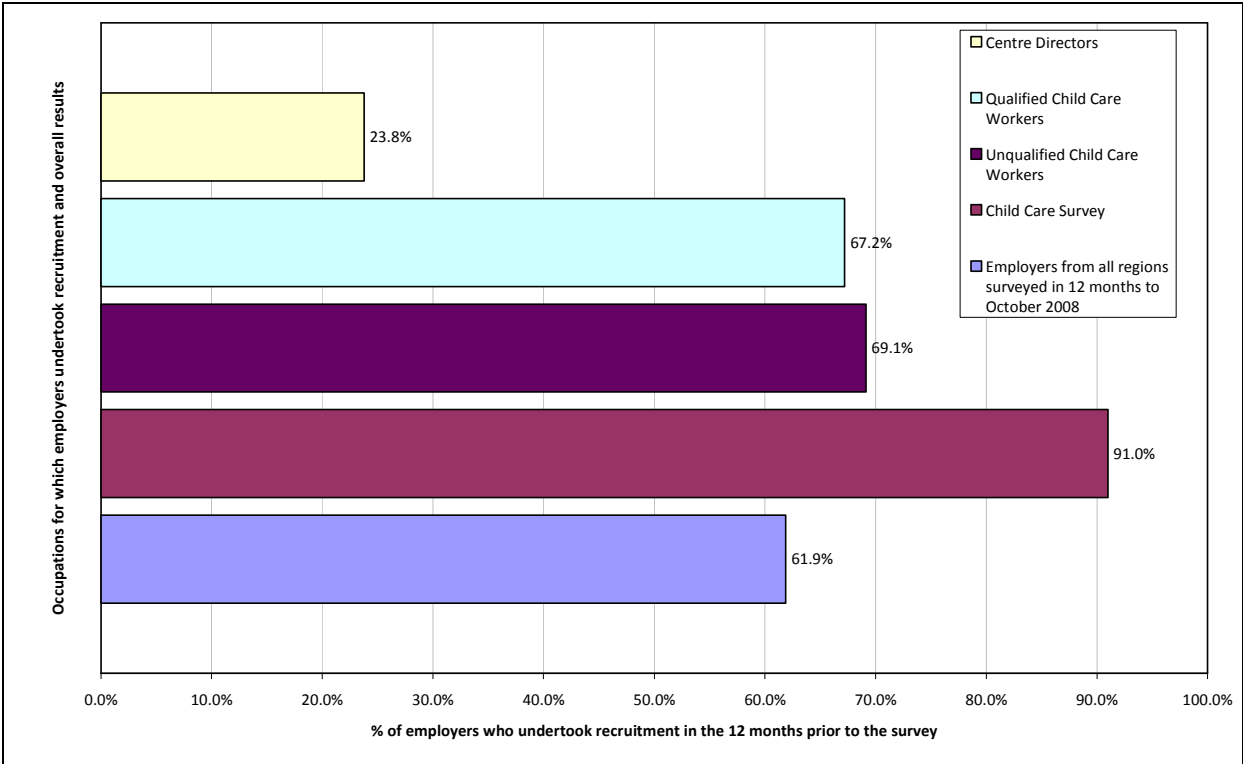
Recruitment of Unqualified Child Care Workers was generally consistent across service types, however, unfilled vacancies were much more prevalent in the VAC sector with 16.4 per cent of vacancies remaining unfilled, compared with 11.4 per cent of LDC vacancies and 10.3 per cent of OSHC vacancies.

## **3.5. Summary**

The proportion of unfilled vacancies overall (20.2 per cent) and across all three child care occupations surveyed was significantly higher than the comparable rate for all regions surveyed (which stood at 10.6 per cent) in the 12 months to October 2008. The unfill rates for Centre Directors (19.4 per cent) and Qualified Child Care Workers (29.0 per cent) were significantly higher, while for Unqualified Child Care Workers it was only slightly higher than all regions (12.7 per cent).

The proportion of employers who undertook recruitment for Centre Directors in the 12 months prior to the survey (26.1 per cent) was significantly lower than the proportion who recruited for Qualified and Unqualified Child Care Workers (73.9 per cent and 76.0 per cent respectively, as shown in Chart 2 below).

**Chart 2: Proportion of employers who undertook recruitment**



Overall, recruitment activity in the region was high, with 91.0 per cent of respondent employers reporting undertaking recruitment activity in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 61.9 per cent of employers from all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008.

Table 5, provides a comparison of recruitment activity, unfilled vacancies and where staff were recruited from.

**Table 5: Recruitment experiences in the 12 months prior to the survey**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Proportion of employers who recruited (for occupation) last 12 months</b>	<b>Proportion of unfilled vacancies in the last 12 months</b>	<b>Where staff recruited were employed prior (proportion of employers who reported response)</b>
<b>Centre Directors</b>	23.8%	19.4%	Another position or site within the business (40.3 per cent); Another Child Care service within the region (40.3 per cent)
<b>Qualified Child Care Workers</b>	67.2%	29.0%	Another Child Care service within the region (51.6 per cent); Another position or site within the business (26.6 per cent)
<b>Unqualified Child Care Workers</b>	69.1%	12.7%	Outside of the workforce (43.9 per cent); Another industry within the region (34.4 per cent)
<b>Overall Child Care Results (three occupations combined)</b>	91.0%	20.2%	<i>n/a</i>
<b><i>All Regions surveyed in 12 months to October 2008</i></b>	61.9%	10.6%	<i>n/a</i>

As can be seen, many Centre Directors were recruited from within the business, whereas most Qualified Child Care Workers were recruited from other Child Care services within the region. By comparison, most employers who recruited Unqualified Child Care Workers reported that these staff commonly were outside of the workforce prior to being recruited.

## 4. Recruitment Experiences – Most Recent Recruitment

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### 4.1. Most Recent Recruitment by Occupation

Survey respondents were also asked specific questions about the most recent time they recruited for a Centre Director, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers. The information collected included the number of most recent vacancies they recruited for, the number of applicants and the suitability of applicants who applied for those vacancies, and the difficulties, if any, encountered when recruiting.

#### 4.1.1. Centre Directors

Surveyed employers reported that when they most recently recruited for Centre Directors they attempted to fill a total of 74 positions. Of these, 18.9 per cent remained unfilled compared with 19.0 per cent of higher skilled vacancies in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008. The majority of these Centre Director vacancies (93.3 per cent) were filled with staff who had prior experience working in the Child Care industry. However, the remaining 6.7 per cent of vacancies were filled with staff who had no prior Child Care industry experience. It is possible that many of the successful applicants had preschool or education experience, or experience in other children's services.

Employers reported that there was an average of 2.8 applicants per Centre Director position, or an average of 1.6 of these applicants were considered suitable. This is lower than the comparable averages of 5.1 applicants and 1.8 suitable applicants per each higher skilled vacancy<sup>14</sup> in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008.

The main reasons applicants were unsuitable for Centre Director positions, as reported by employers, were insufficient experience (52.6 per cent of employers reported this reason) and insufficient training/qualifications for the position (50.0 per cent). Many employers also reported that applicants were unsuitable because of poor communication skills (26.3 per cent) and insufficient team work abilities (23.7 per cent).

More than 40 per cent of employers reported that they experienced difficulty when recruiting for their most recent Centre Director vacancy, which is low in comparison with 65.6 per cent of employers from all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 who reported that they experienced difficulty when recruiting for higher skilled vacancies. The most common reasons for difficulty reported when recruiting for this occupation were insufficient applicants/tight labour market (46.9 per cent), the training and experience required for the position (40.6 per cent) and wages and remuneration not being competitive with other industries (34.4 per cent).

Employers experiences when most recently recruiting for Centre Directors differed depending on the type of child care service that they provided. While just 12.5 per cent of Centre Director

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<sup>14</sup> The occupation of Centre Director is defined within the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1997), at a 'Child Care Co-ordinator' which is a higher skilled occupation. Therefore it is of interest to compare the survey results for Centre Directors to all higher skilled occupations surveyed.

positions for which LDC providers recruited remained unfilled, 21.6 per cent of OSHC sector Centre Director positions and 28.0 per cent of VAC sector positions remained unfilled.

There was little variation between service types in the average number of applicants for each Centre Director position, with an average of 3.0 applicants for LDC positions, 2.8 applicants for each VAC position and 2.6 applicants for each OSHC position. However, whilst LDC employers reported an average of 1.9 suitable applicants for each Centre Director position, OSHC and VAC employers reported the same average of just 1.3 suitable applicants per vacancy.<sup>15</sup>

As well as reporting more unsuitable applicants, employers from the OSHC and VAC sectors more commonly reported difficulty when recruiting for their most recent Centre Director position (48.6 per cent and 48.0 per cent of employers reported difficulty respectively) than employers in the LDC sector (31.3 per cent). Notably, a significant proportion of employers within the OSHC and VAC sectors reported that, in addition to the other reasons for difficulty discussed above, the working hours were a reason it was difficult to recruit for Centre Directors (38.9 per cent and 41.7 per cent respectively).

The proportion of unfilled Centre Director vacancies was highest in New South Wales, with 62.5 per cent remaining unfilled. The proportion of vacancies filled with staff without prior Child Care experience was high in Tasmania (25.0 per cent), Western Australia (12.5 per cent) and South Australia (7.7 per cent). While these staff possibly had other relevant experience, the results suggest a shortage of experienced applicants.

It is interesting to note then that competition for Centre Director positions was highest in Tasmania, with an average of 4.8 applicants per vacancy and an average of 2.6 suitable applicants per vacancy. The anomaly between the high number of inexperienced staff recruited in Tasmania and the high number of suitable applicants in Tasmania may be an indication that employers in that State have altered their expectations when recruiting for Centre Directors due to a lack of applicants with experience and training. However, the recruitment of staff who are not sufficiently suitable can impact on staff turnover rates because these staff are less likely to remain in the position in the long term. As discussed in section 5.2.1 below, turnover of Centre Directors was high in Tasmania.

There was little choice for employers recruiting for Centre Directors in the Northern Territory and New South Wales with an average of less than two applicants per vacancy (1.9 applicants and 1.6 applicants respectively), and even less choice between suitable applicants (0.8 and 1.2 respectively). Additionally, although in Western Australia there was a comparatively high average number of applicants per vacancy (2.9) there was an average of just 1.0 suitable applicant per vacancy.

#### **4.1.2. Qualified Child Care Workers**

Surveyed employers reported that when most recently recruiting for Qualified Child Care Workers they attempted to fill 371 vacancies. The proportion of vacancies which remained unfilled was significantly high at 31.8 per cent (compared with 13.0 per cent of medium skilled vacancies which remained unfilled in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008). Of those Qualified

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<sup>15</sup> See Table 12, Appendix, for a detailed comparison.

Child Care Worker positions filled, 82.6 per cent were filled with staff who had experience in the Child Care industry.

Employers reported an average of 2.1 applicants per each recent Qualified Child Care Worker vacancy, however, they often had little choice when filling positions as there was an average of less than one (0.9) suitable applicant per vacancy. These numbers were well below the average number of applicants for medium skilled vacancies in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (average of 5.5 applicants) and the average number of suitable applicants (1.9).

The most common reasons employers reported for applicants being unsuitable were insufficient training and qualifications (63.5 per cent), insufficient experience (59.1 per cent) and poor communication skills (55.7 per cent).

While the proportion of unfilled vacancies was highest amongst those employers who recruited for OSHC and VAC care Qualified Child Care Worker positions (35.1 per cent and 34.1 per cent respectively), the average number of applicants and suitable applicants was close to the overall average across all service types.<sup>16</sup>

Recent recruitment experiences did differ between states and territories through. In the Northern Territory all recent Qualified Child Care Worker positions were filled with experienced staff, while by comparison, just 69.4 per cent of those positions in Queensland were filled with staff who had prior experience in the Child Care industry.

New South Wales had a markedly higher average number of applicants per vacancy than the other states and territories (3.8 compared with an average of 2.1 for the other states) and this flowed through to a higher average number of suitable applicants (1.7 compared with 0.9). By comparison, Northern Territory had an average of less than one applicant per recent Qualified Child Care Worker vacancy (0.8) resulting in few suitable applicants (an average of 0.3 per vacancy).

Although the reasons for applicant unsuitability were similar across Australia, there were some reasons that were more commonly reported by employers in particular states or territories. For instance, a significant proportion of employers in Queensland reported that poor communication skills was one of the main reasons for applicant unsuitability (78.3 per cent), whereas the most commonly reported reason for applicant unsuitability in the Australian Capital Territory was insufficient training/qualifications (90.0 per cent).

Of those employers who had recruited for Qualified Child Care Workers, 77.0 per cent reported that they experienced difficulty when recruiting compared with 56.0 per cent of those employers who recruited for medium skilled vacancies across all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008. The main reasons for this difficulty were the working hours (reported by 51.6 per cent of employers who experienced difficulty), tight labour market/insufficient applicants (50.3 per cent), the training and experience required for the position (49.7 per cent) and wages and remuneration not being competitive with other industries (46.0 per cent). Notably, 18.6 per cent of employers also reported that the low status of Qualified Child Care Worker roles also contributed to recruitment difficulty.

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<sup>16</sup> See Table 13, Appendix, for a detailed comparison.

### 4.1.3. *Unqualified Child Care Workers*

Employers reported that of the 466 recent Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancies that they attempted to fill, 15.7 per cent remained unfilled which was above the proportion of medium skilled vacancies that remained unfilled across all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (13.0 per cent). Of those staff recruited, 50.4 per cent had prior experience working in the Child Care industry.

There was an average of 2.6 applicants for each recent Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancy, less than half the average number of applicants for each medium filled vacancy across all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (5.5). There was also a lower average number of applicants considered suitable for each Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancy by comparison with applicants for medium skilled vacancies across all regions (an average of 1.1 suitable applicants for each Unqualified Child Care Worker Vacancy, compared with 1.9 for medium skilled vacancies in all regions).

The most common reasons some applicants were unsuitable for the Unqualified Child Care Worker positions for which they applied, as reported by employers, were poor communication skills (65.5 per cent), insufficient experience (61.9 per cent) and not being suited to working with children (46.9 per cent). These results echo comments received from some respondents that many people consider Child Care to be an 'easy' industry in which to work, without considering the personal traits and capabilities necessary for Child Care Worker positions.

Recruitment difficulties were reported by 52.1 per cent of those employers who recruited for Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancies, which is below the proportion of employers from all regions who reported difficulties recruiting for medium skilled vacancies (56.0 per cent). Employers reported that the most common reasons they experienced difficulty recruiting for the occupation were the working hours of the position (55.4 per cent), wages and remuneration not being competitive with other industries and the training and experience required for the position (both 45.5 per cent).

A higher proportion of Unqualified Child Care Worker positions remained unfilled in the LDC sector (18.5 per cent) than in the OSHC and VAC sectors (14.2 per cent and 14.1 per cent respectively). This was despite a higher average number of applicants per vacancy for LDC Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancies (3.3 compared with 1.8 in both OSHC and VAC) and a higher average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (1.2 compared with 1.1 in OSHC and 1.0 in VAC).<sup>17</sup>

Indicators of recruitment difficulty suggest that there were a number of states and territories in which employers experienced difficulty recruiting for Unqualified Child Care Workers. A significant proportion of vacancies remained unfilled in the Australian Capital Territory (26.9 per cent compared with 15.7 per cent for all respondents). However, employers in the Northern Territory reported having the lowest average number of applicants per vacancy (1.4), while the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory all had less than one applicant considered suitable for each vacancy (0.9). Overall, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania had the highest proportion of employers who reported difficulty filling vacancies for this occupation (64.0 per cent and 62.5 per cent respectively).

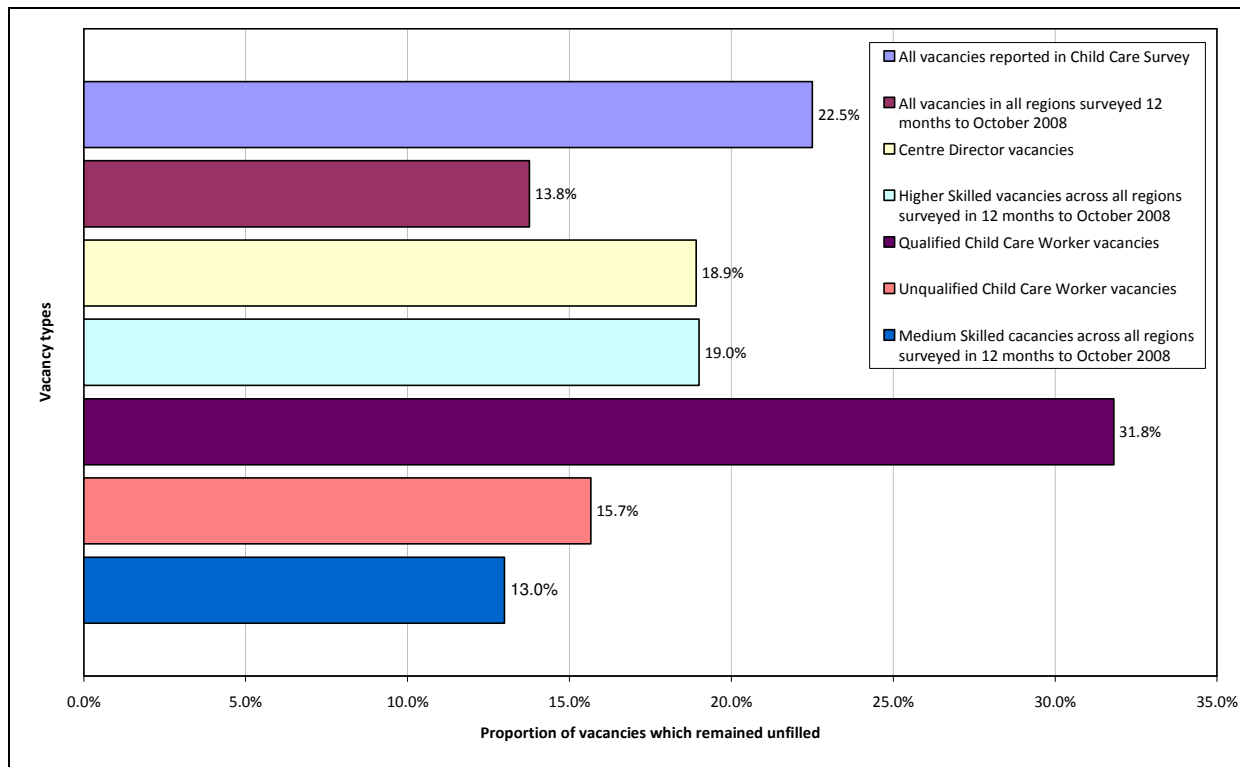
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<sup>17</sup> See Table 14, Appendix, for a detailed comparison.

## 4.2. Summary

Employers' most recent recruitment experiences varied between the three surveyed occupations.

**Chart 3: Comparison of most recent vacancies remaining unfilled**



As can be seen in Chart 3, there was a much higher proportion of Qualified Child Care Worker positions that remained unfilled than the proportion of Centre Director and Unqualified Child Care Worker positions which were not filled (31.8 per cent compared with 18.9 per cent and 15.7 per cent respectively). Additionally, the proportion of unfilled vacancies for all three occupations was higher than the overall proportion of unfilled vacancies in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (13.8 per cent), as was the combined child care unfill rate of 22.5 per cent.

However, the proportion of unfilled Centre Director positions was on par with the comparable rate of unfilled higher skilled vacancies in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (18.9 per cent compared with 19.0 per cent). The proportions of unfilled Qualified and Unqualified Child Care Worker positions were both higher than the proportion of unfilled comparable medium skilled vacancies in all regions, with the Qualified Child Care Worker unfill rate being more than double that of all medium skilled vacancies (31.8 per cent compared with 13.0 per cent).

Similarly, the proportion of employers who had unfilled vacancies was comparable between those respondents to this survey who recruited for Centre Directors and those employers from all regions surveyed who recruited for higher skilled occupations (18.9 per cent compared with 19.8 per cent), while the proportion of employers recruiting for Qualified and Unqualified Child Care Workers who had unfilled vacancies was notably higher than the proportion of employers from all regions who were unable to fill some medium skilled vacancies (36.8 per cent and 19.1 per cent respectively compared with 11.2 per cent).

**Table 6: Comparison of most recent recruitment experiences**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Proportion of employers who had unfilled vacancies</b>	<b>Proportion of employers who recruited staff with child care experience</b>	<b>Proportion of employers who experienced difficulty recruiting</b>
<b>Centre Directors</b>	18.9%	93.3%	43.2%
<b>Qualified Child Care Workers</b>	36.8%	82.6%	77.0%
<b>Unqualified Child Care Workers</b>	19.1%	50.4%	52.1%
<b>Child Care Survey Total</b>	n/a	65.6%	n/a
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008: All Occupations</b>	14.1%	n/a	58.1%
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008: Higher skilled occupations<sup>18</sup></b>	19.8%	n/a	65.6%
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008: Medium skilled occupations<sup>19</sup></b>	11.2%	n/a	56.0%

The proportion of Child Care employers who experienced difficulty recruiting for their most recent vacancy differed depending on the occupation they were recruiting for. The highest proportion of employers reported difficulty recruiting for Qualified Child Care Workers (77.0 per cent), followed by those employers who recruited for Unqualified Child Care Workers (52.1 per cent). Surprisingly, just 43.2 per cent of employers reported difficulty recruiting for Centre Directors, an occupation which requires staff to be qualified and, often, have relevant experience.

<sup>18</sup> Child Care Co-ordinator is a higher skilled occupation according to ABS, Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1997), Cat. no. 1220.0. Therefore, it is of interest to compare the survey results within all higher skilled occupations surveyed.

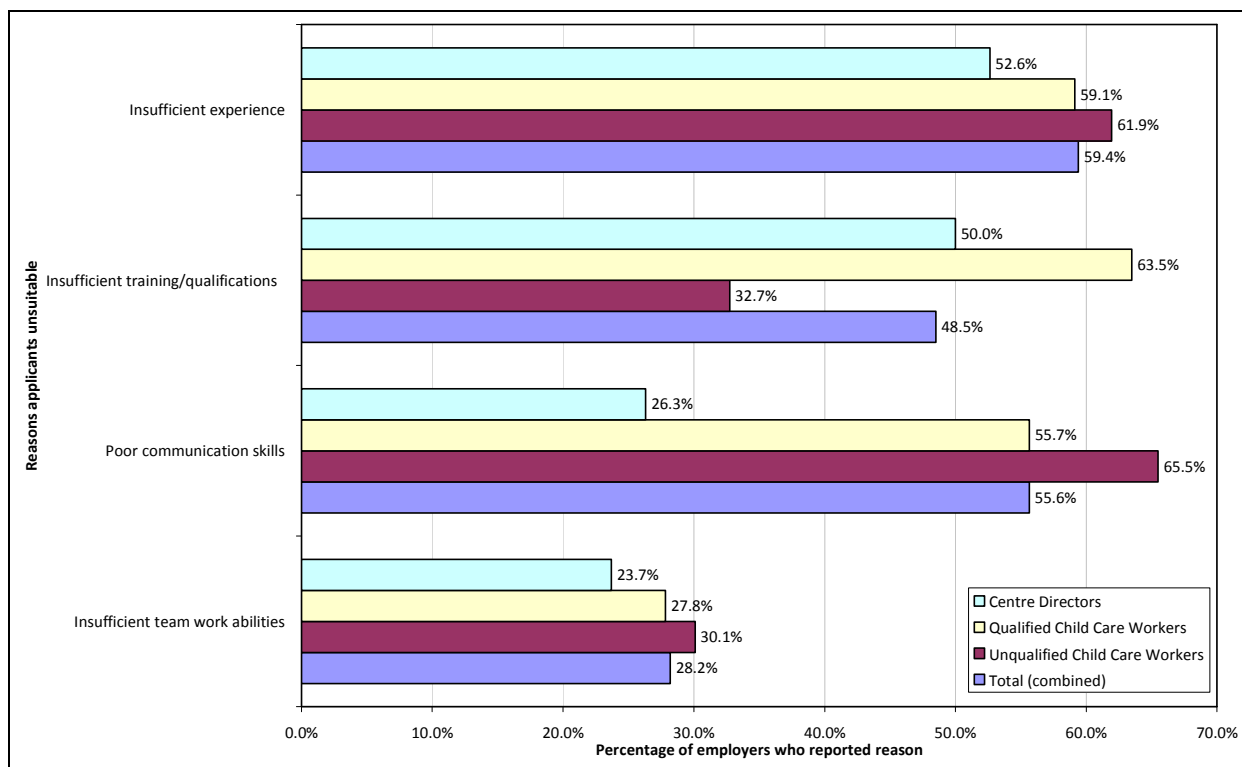
<sup>19</sup> Child Care Worker (no distinction is made between Qualified and Unqualified) is a medium skilled occupation according to ABS, Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1997), Cat. no. 1220.0. Therefore, it is of interest to compare the survey results within all medium skilled occupations surveyed.

**Table 7: Comparison of competition**

Occupation	Average Applicants per vacancy	Average Suitable Applicants per Vacancy
Centre Directors	2.8	1.6
Qualified Child Care Workers	2.1	0.9
Unqualified Child Care Workers	2.6	1.1
<b>Total Combined</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008. All Occupations</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008, Higher skilled occupations</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>All regions surveyed, 12 months to October 2008, Medium skilled occupations</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>

Table 7 shows that the competition between applicants and suitable applicants did not differ significantly between the three child care occupations. However, there was much less competition between applicants in the Child Care industry than in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008 (an average of 2.4 applicants compared with an average of 5.0 applicants in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008). The difference in competition between suitable applicants was not as great (an average of 1.1 suitable applicants for all child care occupations compared with an average of 1.9 suitable applicants for all occupations in all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008).

**Chart 4: Common reasons applicants were unsuitable for most recent vacancies**



The most common reasons employers reported for applicants being unsuitable for the position for which they applied were relatively similar across the child care occupations, as illustrated in Chart 4. Notably, 65.5 per cent of those employers who recruited for Unqualified Child Care Workers reported poor communication skills as the main reason for applicant unsuitability, compared with 55.7 per cent of those who recruited for Qualified Child Care Worker positions and just 26.3 per cent of those who recruited for Centre Directors.



## 5. Staff Retention Strategies and Turnover

### 5.1. Retention Strategies

Overall, 73.0 per cent of employers surveyed reported that they had current retention strategies, with 61.2 per cent of those employers reporting that at least some of their strategies are formal, that is, incorporated into employment contracts or other formal arrangements. The most common retention strategies adopted by those child care employers surveyed are providing training and development for staff (88.1 per cent of employers reported having this strategy), providing a safe and comfortable work environment (85.9 per cent) and ensuring there is effective communication and consultation with staff (76.2 per cent). However, almost half (46.3 per cent) of all employers surveyed reported that they think more can be done within the industry to encourage staff retention.

**Table 8: Retention strategies by state and territory**

state or territory	Proportion of employers who reporting having retention strategies	Proportion of employers who reported that the retention strategies they have are formal	Proportion of employers who reported more can be done to retain staff within the industry
New South Wales	72.5%	73.0%	33.3%
Victoria	62.5%	57.1%	44.6%
Queensland	81.3%	61.5%	43.8%
South Australia	62.5%	60.0%	45.8%
Western Australia	81.8%	48.1%	51.5%
Tasmania	80.0%	55.0%	52.0%
Northern Territory	83.3%	80.0%	38.9%
Australian Capital Territory	78.6%	59.1%	71.4%
<b>Australia (Total)</b>	<b>73.0%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>

Staff retention strategies were most commonly reported by employers in the Northern Territory (83.3 per cent), followed by those in Western Australia (81.8 per cent) and Queensland (81.3 per cent). Employers from the Northern Territory also most commonly reported having formal retention strategies (80.0 per cent of those with strategies), followed by New South Wales (73.0 per cent).

The common initiatives that employers suggested when asked what more could be done to encourage staff retention in the Child Care industry were increasing wages (75.0 per cent), greater recognition of the qualifications and importance of the work of Child Care Workers (22.2 per cent) and improving conditions such as leave and other entitlements (20.8 per cent). Some employers also reported that they believed a reduction in child to staff ratios could encourage staff retention (9.7 per cent).

## **5.2. Staff Turnover in the 12 months prior to the survey by Occupation**

Despite the implementation of retention strategies, many employers reported experiencing staff turnover of Centre Directors, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### **5.2.1. Centre Directors**

Overall, 23.5 per cent of employers surveyed reported that they had one or more Centre Directors leave their business in the 12 months prior to the survey. The most common reasons these staff left were family reasons (reported by 47.9 per cent of employers) and the demands of the job (28.8 per cent).

When asked where these staff went to work when they left, most employers reported that these Centre Directors left the workforce (20.5 per cent), went to another child care service within the region (19.2 per cent), or went to work as a qualified teacher (17.8 per cent).

The proportion of LDC providers who had Centre Directors leave their business in the 12 months prior to the survey (26.6 per cent) was moderately higher than the proportion of OSHC and VAC providers (21.5 per cent and 21.7 per cent respectively).

Notably, a significant proportion of OSHC and VAC providers (20.0 per cent and 28.0 per cent respectively) reported that within their businesses one of the main reasons staff left was because they were unhappy with the working environment or unhappy because the centre was understaffed.

The proportion of employers who had Centre Directors leave in the 12 months prior to the survey differed between states and territories. Turnover was most prevalent in the Australian Capital Territory, where 35.7 per cent of employers reported Centre Directors leaving in the 12 months prior to the survey. Many employers in South Australia and Tasmania also reported turnover of Centre Directors (29.2 per cent and 28.0 per cent of employers respectively).

### **5.2.2. Qualified Child Care Workers**

More than half of the employers surveyed (53.4 per cent) reported that they had some Qualified Child Care Workers leave their business in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The most common reasons these staff left, as reported by employers, were because of family or personal reasons (48.8 per cent), to take advantage of better wages and remuneration in other Child Care centres or in other industries (35.5 per cent) and because of the demands of the job (27.1 per cent). Employers reported that when Qualified Child Care Workers left they most commonly went to work in another Child Care service within the region (32.5 per cent), to work in another industry in the region (31.9 per cent) or went to work as a qualified teacher (22.3 per cent).

In terms of service types, a significantly higher proportion of LDC providers reported having Qualified Child Care Workers leave (69.6 per cent) than those in the OSHC and VAC sectors (41.4 per cent and 45.2 per cent respectively).

Turnover of Qualified Child Care Workers also differed between states and territories, with many employers in the Australian Capital Territory (71.4 per cent), Western Australia (63.6 per cent) and Queensland (58.3 per cent) reporting they had staff leave. The main reasons staff left were generally similar across all states and territories.

### **5.2.3. Unqualified Child Care Workers**

In total, 61.1 per cent of employers surveyed reported that they had Unqualified Child Care Workers leave their business in the 12 months prior to the survey. The most common reasons employers reported for Unqualified Child Care Workers leaving during that period were personal or family reasons (47.4 per cent), staff seeking more standard work hours (32.6 per cent) and staff seeking better wages and remuneration in other Child Care centres or industries (32.1 per cent).

Most employers reported that when Unqualified Child Care Workers left their business they most commonly went to work in another industry within the region (37.4 per cent), left the region (24.2 per cent) or went to work in another child care service within the region (23.2 per cent).

Turnover of Unqualified Child Care Workers did not appear to be affected by the type of service that employers provide. However, there were notable differences in turnover between states and territories. A significant proportion of employers in the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia reported having staff leave this occupation in the 12 months prior to the survey (85.7 per cent and 69.7 per cent respectively) compared with the Northern Territory (38.9 per cent). Notably, in the Australian Capital Territory the most common reason employers reported for staff leaving was better wages and remuneration in other centres or industries (58.3 per cent of employers reported this reason in the Australian Capital Territory compared with 32.1 per cent of all employers). This may in part be impacted by the prevalence of public service occupations available in the Australian Capital Territory.

### **5.3. Summary**

The rate of staff turnover differed between the three child care occupations, with just 23.5 per cent of surveyed employers reporting that Centre Directors had left their business in the 12 months prior to the survey compared with 53.4 per cent who had Qualified Child Care Workers leave and 61.1 per cent who had Unqualified Child Care Workers leave. Table 9 below outlines the proportion of employers who reported having staff leave each of these occupations by the state or territory in which the child care site is located.

**Table 9: Staff Turnover by state and territory**

state or territory	% of employers who had Centre Directors leave	% of employers who had Qualified Child Care Workers leave	% of employers who had Unqualified Child Care Workers leave
New South Wales	19.6%	47.1%	60.8%
Victoria	19.6%	50.0%	60.7%
Queensland	20.8%	58.3%	60.4%
South Australia	29.2%	52.1%	54.2%
Western Australia	24.2%	63.6%	69.7%
Tasmania	28.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Northern Territory	5.6%	33.3%	38.9%
Australian Capital Territory	35.7%	71.4%	85.7%
Australia (Total)	23.5%	53.4%	61.1%

Employers from some states and territories did more commonly report experiencing staff turnover than other regions and Australia overall. In particular, significant proportions of employers in Australian Capital Territory reported staff turnover, as can be seen in Table 9. By comparison, in Northern Territory and New South Wales there was lower than average reports of staff turnover across all three occupations.

**Chart 5: Common reasons staff left by occupation**

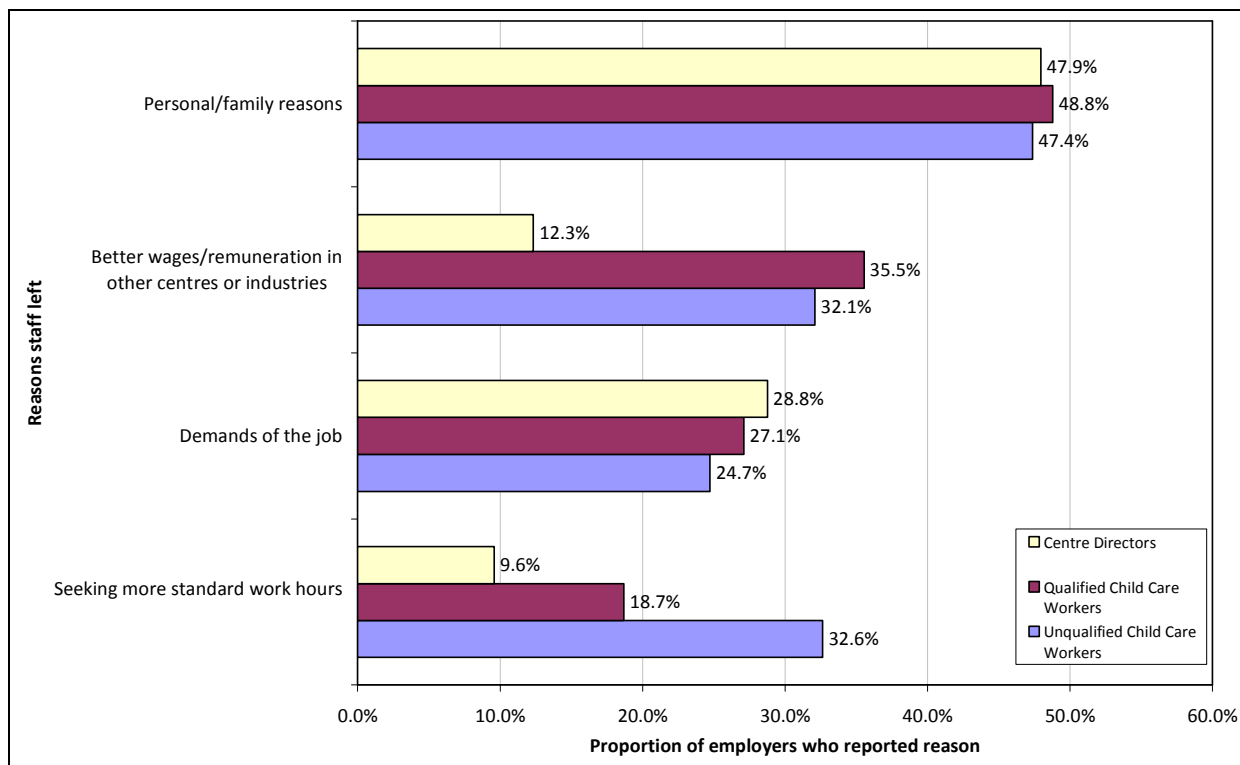
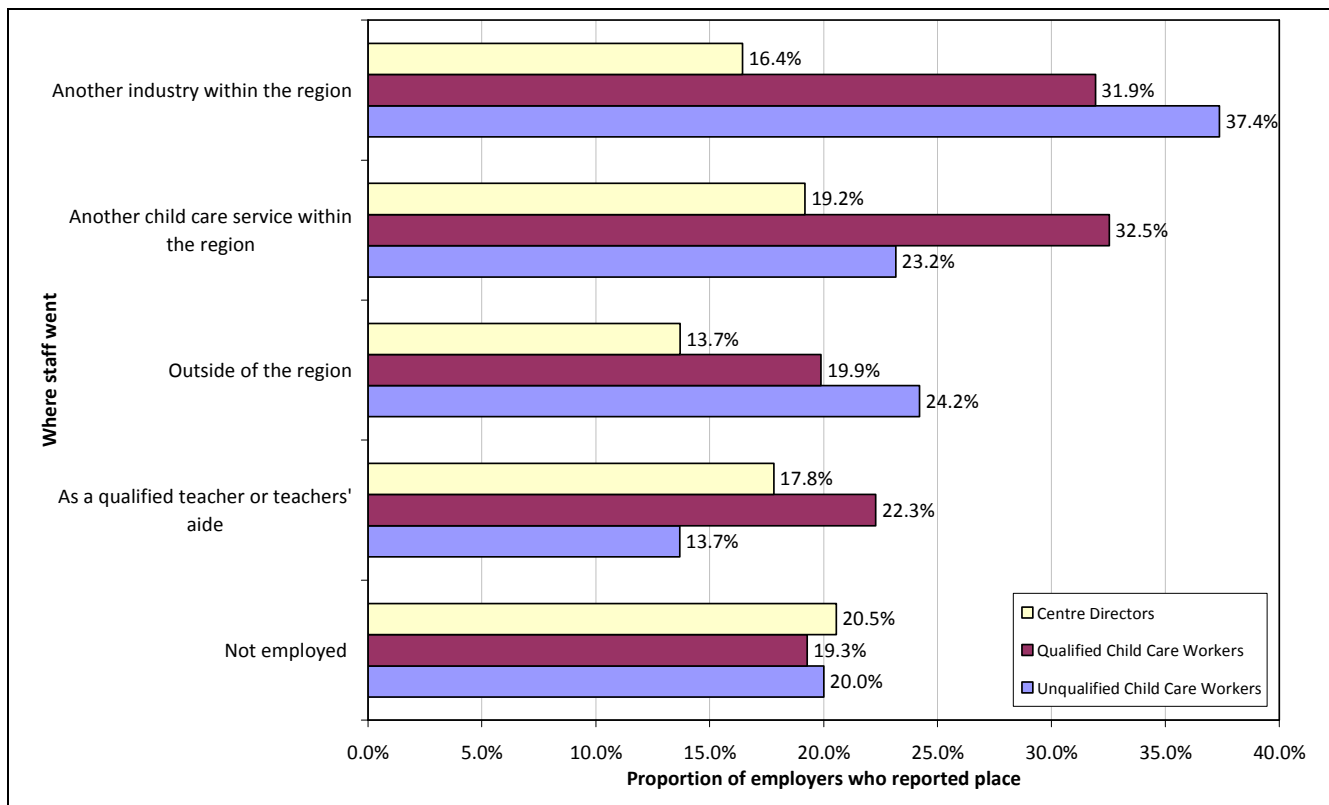


Chart 5 illustrates that across all three occupations the most common reasons that employers reported for staff leaving in the past year were personal and family reasons. Staff leaving to pursue better wages and remuneration in other centres and industries was also a common reason reported by employers who had Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers leave (35.5 per cent and 32.1 per cent respectively), while many employers also reported that Unqualified Child Care Workers left to seek employment with more standard work hours (32.6 per cent). By comparison, the demands of the job was the second most common reason reported for Centre Directors leaving (28.8 per cent).

**Chart 6: Where staff went to when they left (as reported by employers)**



Where staff went to after they left their position differed somewhat depending on the occupation that they left, as shown in Chart 6. While employers who had Unqualified Child Care Workers leave most commonly reported that those staff left to work in another industry in the region (37.4 per cent), the most common place reported where Qualified Child Care Workers went was to another child care service within the region (32.5 per cent). This may reflect that fact that Qualified Child Care Workers may have a greater interest in remaining within the industry because of their qualifications.

Moving to another child care service within the region was the second most common response regarding where Centre Directors went to (reported by 19.2 per cent of employers), however, most employers reported that these staff left the industry.

## 6. Future Expectations

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Towards the end of the survey, employers were asked to report on their recruitment expectations for the 12 months following the survey and to identify the factors which they expected to impact on their ability to deliver quality child care in the future. Analysis of the responses to this part of the survey has been included in the section below. However, it should be noted that the survey was conducted prior to the structural changes that are occurring in the industry and at a time when Australia was experiencing strong economic conditions. The Australian economy is beginning to feel the effects of the global financial crisis and this is likely to impact on labour market conditions and possibly the demand for child care. Accordingly, child care employers' future expectations may have shifted from what they were in October 2008 when the survey was conducted.

### 6.1. Future Recruitment Expectations by Occupation

Surveyed employers were asked questions about their expectations for recruiting Centre Directors, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers in 12 months following the survey. Questions included the reasons they expect to recruit for each occupation and the minimum qualifications and experience they would like staff to have. Employers were also asked what factors they expect to impact on their ability to deliver quality child care in the future.

#### 6.1.1. Centre Directors

Just 12.9 per cent of employers surveyed reported that they expect to recruit for Centre Directors in the next 12 months, indicating that turnover of staff in this occupation is anticipated to be low. However, it must be noted that many of the survey respondents were current Centre Directors and therefore there may be some bias in that current staff may be hesitant to report their own intentions to leave their position. Of those who anticipate recruiting for this occupation, 75.0 per cent expect to encounter difficulty when trying to fill the position, compared with just 43.2 per cent of employers who reported experiencing difficulty when they most recently recruited for a Centre Director.

The most common reason employers expect to recruit is due to turnover, with 32.5 per cent of employers reporting that they expect to replace a Centre Director who is leaving the industry.

Of those employers who expect to recruit for this occupation in the next 12 months, 55.0 per cent reported that they would like the staff they recruit to have at least a Diploma in a child care field and 80.0 per cent reported that they would like staff to have two or more years experience in the Child Care industry.

Employers within the VAC sector of the industry most commonly reported that they expected to recruit for Centre Directors in the next 12 months (17.4 per cent), followed by those in OSHC (15.6 per cent). Just 7.6 per cent of employers within the LDC sector anticipated that they would recruit for this occupation in the coming year. The expectations of recruitment difficulty echoed the recruitment expectations, with VAC providers expecting the most difficulty (85.0 per cent of VAC employers reported that they expected difficulty).

Employers within the LDC sector expect staff to have more experience than employers within other sectors, with 75.0 per cent of LDC providers reporting that they would like to recruit Centre Directors with three or more years experience compared with just 44.8 per cent of OSHC providers and 45.0 per cent of VAC providers.

### **6.1.2. Qualified Child Care Workers**

Although 67.2 per cent of employers undertook recruitment for Qualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months prior to the survey, just 47.6 per cent anticipate recruiting for this occupation in the next 12 months. Of those who expect to recruit for this occupation, 77.7 per cent expect to encounter difficulty. On a positive note though, the most common reasons employers expect to recruit for this occupation is the increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity.

Those employers who expect to recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers in the next 12 months reported that when recruiting the minimum qualifications they would like staff to have is a Diploma in a child care field (41.9 per cent) or a Certificate III in a Child Care field (39.9 per cent). Most employers reported that they would like these staff to have at least one years experience working in child care (34.5 per cent). However, notably 18.2 per cent of employers reported that they do not expect staff to have any experience, indicating their willingness to recruit newly qualified graduates.

Employers' expectations of new recruits differed depending on the service they provide. Notably, most employers within the OSHC and VAC sectors reported they would like Qualified Child Care Workers who they recruit to have a minimum of a Certificate III in a Child Care related field (48.8 per cent and 45.9 per cent of employers, respectively, reported this as the minimum qualification), while the majority of employers within the LDC sector reported that they would like staff to have at least a Diploma in a child care field (55.0 per cent).

Nearly half of employer from the LDC sector reported that they would like Qualified Child Care Workers who they recruit to have at least two years experience in the Child Care industry (47.5 per cent), compared with 37.8 per cent of employers from the OSHC sector and 41.0 per cent of employers from the VAC sector.

Table 10 outlines the reasons employers from different states and territories commonly expect to recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months following the survey. As can be seen, in many states and territories the most common reasons employers expect to recruit is to replace staff who are leaving the industry and replace those going to other child care centres.

**Table 10: Common reasons employers expect to recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers, by state and territory**

state and territory	Common reasons employers expect to recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers in the next 12 months (% of employers who reported reason)
<b>New South Wales</b>	To replace staff who are leaving to go to other Child Care centres (32.0 per cent); To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (28.0 per cent)
<b>Victoria</b>	To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (36.0 per cent); To increase staff numbers for an unspecified reason (32.0 per cent)
<b>Queensland</b>	To replace staff for an unspecified reason (52.0 per cent); To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (32.0 per cent); To replace staff who are leaving the industry (32.0 per cent)
<b>South Australia</b>	To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (45.0 per cent); To replace staff for an unspecified reason (35.0 per cent)
<b>Western Australia</b>	To replace staff who are leaving the industry (41.2 per cent); To replace staff for an unspecified reason (35.3 per cent)
<b>Tasmania</b>	To replace staff who are leaving the industry (38.5 per cent); To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (38.5 per cent)
<b>Northern Territory</b>	To increase staff numbers for an unspecified reason (40.0 per cent); To replace staff who are leaving the industry (40.0 per cent)
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	To replace staff who are leaving the industry (73.3 per cent); To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (46.7 per cent)
<b>Australia (Total)</b>	To increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (35.1 per cent); To replace staff for another reason (33.1 per cent)

### 6.1.3. Unqualified Child Care Workers

Just 44.4 per cent of employers reported that they expect to recruit for Unqualified Child Care Workers in the 12 months following the survey, with 58.7 per cent of those employers expecting to experience difficulty when recruiting staff for this occupation.

Most employers reported that they expect to recruit for this occupation to replace staff who are leaving the industry (44.2 per cent) or to increase staff numbers in order to increase business capacity (35.5 per cent). When recruiting for this occupation, most employers reported that they would like staff to have at least one years experience in the Child Care industry (41.3 per cent), although many reported that they do not expect Unqualified Child Care Workers to have any experience in the industry (33.3 per cent).

## 6.2. Factors Expected to Impact on Future of the Industry

When asked about the factors that they expect to impact on their services' ability to deliver quality child care in the future, most employers reported that the wages paid to staff are a significant factor (66.2 per cent). Other factors reported included the nature of the working hours (58.2 per cent of employers reported this factor) and the lack of quality, experienced staff in the industry (49.2 per cent).

The nature of the working hours was reported by most OSHC providers to be the factor that will impact their ability to deliver quality child care in the future (66.7 per cent). This echoes much of the qualitative data collected from OSHC providers which indicates that it is difficult to attract and retain staff within the sector because most positions are part-time and split over two shifts a day, one in the morning before school and one in the afternoon after school.

### **6.3. Summary**

By comparison with recruitment activity for each occupation in the 12 months prior to the survey, recruitment of Centre Directors, Qualified Child Care Workers and Unqualified Child Care Workers is expected to be low in the 12 months following the survey. Around 45.0 per cent of employers reported that they expect to recruit for Qualified Child Care Workers (47.6 per cent) and Unqualified Child Care Workers (44.2 per cent), while just 12.9 per cent reported that they expect to recruit for a Centre Director in the next year.

Although many employers reported that they expect to recruit staff to replace those leaving the industry, less than 40.0 per cent of respondents reported that they anticipate difficulties in retaining staff to impact on their ability to deliver quality child care in the industry. The most common factors that employers reported as what they perceive to be likely to impact on their ability to deliver quality child care in the future were the level of remuneration (66.2 per cent), the working hours required of child care workers (58.2 per cent) and a lack of quality, experienced staff (with between five to ten years experience) in the industry (49.2 per cent).

## 7. Conclusion

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In the 12 months prior to the survey recruitment activity was widespread in the Child Care industry, with 91.0 per cent of surveyed employers reporting that they recruited, or attempted to recruit, staff during that period. However, a significant proportion (20.2 per cent) of the child care vacancies employers recruited for remained unfilled over the 12 month period. Most notably, a high proportion of those vacancies which required applicants to have child care related qualifications and/or experience remained unfilled; 29.0 per cent of Qualified Child Care Worker vacancies were not filled and 19.4 per cent of Centre Director vacancies were not filled.

The proportion of employers who reported experiencing recruitment difficulties, when trying to fill their most recent vacancy, was most significant amongst those recruiting for Qualified Child Care Workers (77.0 per cent of employers recruiting for this occupation reported experiencing difficulties compared with 56.0 per cent of employers who recruited for medium skilled occupations across all regions surveyed in the 12 months to October 2008). However, the reasons for difficulty that employers reported were similar across all three child care occupations, being: the working hours required in child care; the training and experience required; that wages and remuneration within the child care industry are not competitive with other industries; and insufficient applicants or a tight labour market.

These difficulties reported reflected the reasons employers reported for staff leaving their business in the 12 months prior to the survey. Across all three occupations two of the most common reasons that employers reported for staff leaving were the demands of the job and because of better wages/remuneration in other child care centre or other industries. This reflects the qualitative responses from some employers that some staff left their centres to take qualified school teacher positions.

The factors that employers reported as what they perceive as likely to impact on their ability to deliver quality child care in the future also reflected the reasons for difficulty and staff turnover. The most common factors employers reported were the wages and remuneration provided to staff (66.2 per cent), the working hours required of staff, such as long shifts, early starts and late finishes (58.2 per cent) and a lack of quality, experienced staff within the industry (49.2 per cent).

## 8. Appendix

**Table 11: Projected population growth 2008-2028 by age group, 0-12years**

2008	0-1yrs	2-3yrs	4-5yrs	6-8yrs	9-12yrs	0-12yrs
New South Wales	178205	177929	173116	263693	356745	1149688
Victoria	137071	130458	127901	193409	263798	852637
Queensland	114929	113336	109683	169958	230804	738710
South Australia	38356	36519	36643	56730	79340	247588
Western Australia	58020	54933	53572	82548	114598	363671
Tasmania	13367	12563	11813	18768	26390	82901
Northern Territory	7526	7174	7042	10544	13356	45642
Australian Capital Territory	9141	8739	8293	12190	16707	55070
<b>Australia</b>	<b>556664</b>	<b>541715</b>	<b>528119</b>	<b>807947</b>	<b>1101908</b>	<b>3536353</b>
2018	0-1yrs	2-3yrs	4-5yrs	6-8yrs	9-12yrs	0-12yrs
New South Wales	189423	187483	185953	276515	370280	1209654
Victoria	149255	148605	147929	221073	291148	958010
Queensland	135111	135808	136598	206376	273207	887100
South Australia	41185	41385	41560	62632	82849	269611
Western Australia	67041	67082	67159	100922	134141	436345
Tasmania	13289	13462	13498	20401	27351	88001
Northern Territory	8530	8389	8193	11903	14839	51854
Australian Capital Territory	9653	9548	9447	14098	18525	61271
<b>Australia</b>	<b>613544</b>	<b>611823</b>	<b>610398</b>	<b>914008</b>	<b>1212462</b>	<b>3962235</b>
2028	0-1yrs	2-3yrs	4-5yrs	6-8yrs	9-12yrs	0-12yrs
New South Wales	198685	198419	198144	295782	392296	1283326
Victoria	158040	158634	158840	237976	316737	1030227
Queensland	150302	151481	152791	231513	312969	999056
South Australia	42069	42632	43192	65603	88666	282162
Western Australia	73986	74556	75187	113831	153118	490678
Tasmania	12878	13120	13242	20127	27373	86740
Northern Territory	9336	9223	9034	13189	16756	57538
Australian Capital Territory	9945	9885	9812	14700	19593	63935
<b>Australia</b>	<b>655300</b>	<b>658009</b>	<b>660306</b>	<b>992814</b>	<b>1327639</b>	<b>4294068</b>

Source: ABS, *Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101*, Series B projections, ABS cat. No. 3222.0.

**Table 12: Average number of applicants and suitable applicants for most recent Centre Director vacancies**

	Average Number of Applicants	Average Number of Suitable Applicants
Long Day Care	3.0	1.9
Outside School Hours Care	2.6	1.3
Vacation Care	2.8	1.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>

**Table 13: Average number of applicants and suitable applicants for most recent Qualified Child Care Worker vacancies**

	<b>Average Number of Applicants</b>	<b>Average Number of Suitable Applicants</b>
<b>Long Day Care</b>	2.0	0.9
<b>Outside School Hours Care</b>	2.2	1.0
<b>Vacation Care</b>	2.3	1.0
<b>Overall</b>	2.1	0.9

**Table 14: Average number of applicants and suitable applicants for most recent Unqualified Child Care Worker vacancies**

	<b>Average Number of Applicants</b>	<b>Average Number of Suitable Applicants</b>
<b>Long Day Care</b>	3.3	1.2
<b>Outside School Hours Care</b>	1.8	1.1
<b>Vacation Care</b>	1.8	1.0
<b>Overall</b>	2.6	1.1

A decorative graphic at the top of the page consists of a light beige horizontal bar. On the right side of this bar, there are several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in various colors: purple, blue, green, olive, orange, and red. These shapes are arranged in a slightly staggered, overlapping fashion.

For more information:

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