



AGECS

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL
AND AGECS MEMBER
PROFILE REPORT

2023

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities, and their stories.

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Introduction

In 2022 the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) celebrated 100 years as an organisation. During the celebratory year, the AGECS Council contracted Melissa Eastwood (strategy consultant) to assist a strategic planning process. The outcome of this process was a renewed AGECS purpose, and a detailed five-year action plan. The first step of this action plan was to connect with the membership base and broader early childhood education community, so that the Council could tailor activities of AGECS to meet the needs of early childhood professionals (ECPs). This report is the first step of this process, which we have named the community engagement project.

This report features the profile of ECPs in Australia, in Victoria and within the AGECS membership base. The report will establish a description of ECPs, in terms of the following characteristics: demographics, current work arrangements, experience and qualifications. The goal of this report is related to our newfound strategic plan, in which we want to understand and respond to the needs of our members. The outcome of this report will be informed and meaningful consultation with members of the early childhood profession to direct AGECS' future path as an early childhood charity organisation in Australia.

Definitions

There are several terms used throughout this report that must be defined. Defining terms in the field is complex. However, for the sake of data reporting, definitions need to be made. This does not confine AGECS into these definitions but provides clarification and parameters for understanding and reporting needs.

Term	Definition
AGECS Member	Refers to any person who holds or has held AGECS membership. ¹
Centre-based-care (CBC)	Refers to settings external from the home in which children are left in the care of qualified professionals who must abide by national regulations. This includes stand-alone kindergartens and long day but excludes family day care (FDC) and in-home care.
Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Sector	The ECEC sector is a mixed market in which not-for-profit, private, community and local government organisations offer early education and care services for children and families. These services can be stand-alone kindergarten (the year/s

¹ To become an AGECS member, individuals must adhere to the following criteria from the AGECS Constitution:

- Anyone who has completed an early childhood course at any institution in Australia or elsewhere which is accredited for employment in early childhood services in Victoria
- is or has worked in early childhood education
- is a teacher and/or researcher in early childhood undergraduate and/or graduate program and has made a contribution to early childhood education
- Any person who has been recommended by the Council as a person who has rendered notable services to the community in early childhood education and has been elected by the members to be an Honorary Member

	before formal schooling), long day care (LDC), family day care (FDC), occasional care and out of school hours care (OSHC).
Early Childhood Professional (ECP)	Describes those who hold a qualification in early childhood studies, most commonly a certificate III in early childhood education and care, a diploma in early childhood education and care or a degree in early childhood teaching.
Early Learning System	Refers to all settings that interact with young children and families, including allied health, maternal child health, tertiary and training institutions, peak bodies, local, state, and federal government and more. There is no set boundary to the system.

Scope

This report features data on national and Victorian based ECPs. Membership with AGECS is predominantly held by Victorians, however this geographic boundary is not enforced by the Constitution. All data will be clearly labelled as being national or Victorian. Additionally, where possible Victorian data will be categorised as being metro or regional.

The following section of the report reflects a point in time, specifically May 2021.

Limitations

The raw data used to write this report comes from the 2021 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census (2021 ECEC NWC)². The data for the census was gathered across one reference week and was collected through a self-reporting survey, making the numbers within this report accurate but not exact. Additionally, not all items were responded to by each service, resulting in some inconsistencies in the numbers across the tables.

Dedicated preschools, such as kindergartens, were invited to participate in the census but were not required to. Long day cares (LDCs) were required to participate in the survey, which suggests that a lot of the data in the 2021 ECEC NWC represents LDC more than stand-alone kindergartens, though we cannot know to what extent. Within the raw data there is no distinction between long day care and stand-alone kindergartens; they are both categorised as centre-based care (CBC). There was a stand-alone kindergarten census in 2013, but due to its age this data was not taken into consideration for this report.

Additionally, the 2021 ECEC NWC data collection included in-home care, vacation care and out of school hours care. Whilst these groups are relevant to the early learning system overall, it is not a requirement of these settings to have an early childhood specific qualification and therefore these groups are not considered ECPs for the purpose of this report. As such, their data was not incorporated.

² Department of Education, Skills and Employment (17 August 2022), '[2021 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census State and Regional Data Table](#)', Department of Education website, accessed 2 August 2023.

Finally, the 2021 ECEC NWC gathered data on all staff working within the service during the reference week. Not all staff working in CBCs are working directly with children, or in roles that require an early childhood qualification, such as chefs and administration officers. In some tables staff with ECEC related qualifications and those without have been differentiated, however there are some tables where they are not. The percentage of staff working in ECEC settings in these roles is low, however it needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the data represented in this report. Where possible we have not incorporated data about workers without ECEC qualifications, as they are not considered ECPs by AGECS Council's definition.

Finally, as noted in the scope section, the data in this report reflects a point in time, May 2021, which occurred during the Covid-19 global pandemic. At this time in Australia, and specifically within Victoria, Covid-19 cases were increasing again, and the end of May signified the introduction of Lockdown 4.0. This likely influenced much of the data, specifically current working arrangements data.

The Early Childhood Professional Profile

The following section includes data on the demographics of all ECPs including age and gender. The current working conditions of ECPs, including pay rate and hours worked will be explored. Finally, the qualifications, level of 'upskilling', experience in both the sector and current workplace, and the types of professional learning undertaken by ECPs will be determined. The data chosen to be featured in this report is directly related to the AGECS goal of understanding and responding to the needs of its members, and the sector within which those members work.

At the end of this section, the data that was desired but missing will be discussed, as well as other questions about ECPs that emerge from the discussion of the statistics.

1. Demographics of ECPs

According to the 2021 ECEC NWC there are 159,817 people employed in early learning settings Australia. 146,726 (92%) of those work in centre-based care (CBC), while 13,091 (8%) work in family day care (FDC). Victoria holds 41,300 (26%) of the staff, with 37,427 (91%) working in CBC and 3873 (9%) working in FDC. 95.9% of staff in CBC are female, with only 3.9% being male. This split is closely resembled in FDC, with 96.5% of workers identifying as female and 3.5% identifying as male.

As seen in Table 1.1 below, the age of workers varies. Within CBC there is a relatively even distribution of ages from 20 through to 55+. In FDC settings there is a skew towards older ECPs, with the vast majority being 35 years or older (83.4%) and a significant proportion (21.4%) being aged 55 and over. This could indicate that some FDC based ECPs moved into FDC after years of experience in CBC. The distribution and percentages in Victoria resemble the distributions across Australia, for both settings.

In Table 1.1, the non-ECP staff and ECP staff data was combined. Roughly 9000 (7.1%) of the national responses were from non-ECP staff, and 1327 (4.1%) of the Victorian responses were from non-ECP staff. This indicates that of the almost 160,000 workers in early childhood settings in Australia, the majority of approximately 150,000 are ECPs.

Location	Australia				Victoria			
Age	CBC		FDC		CBC		FDC	
15-19	6,390	4.4%	47	0.4%	683	1.8%	15	0.4%
20-24	21,537	14.7%	320	2.4%	4,105	11%	87	2.2%
25-29	23,343	15.9%	613	4.7%	5,883	15.7%	164	4.2%
30-34	22,108	15.1%	1,195	9.1%	6,165	16.5%	350	9%
35-39	20,184	13.8%	1,908	14.6%	5,721	15.3%	664	17.1%
40-44	16,074	11%	2,118	16.2%	4,479	12%	671	17.3%
45-49	12,927	8.8%	2,165	16.5%	3,635	9.7%	630	16.3%
50-54	10,197	6.9%	1,921	14.7%	2,926	7.8%	567	14.6%
55 and over	13,964	9.5%	2,805	21.4%	3,829	10.2%	725	18.7%
Total Number	146,726		13,091		37,427		3,873	

In Table 1.2 the Indigenous status of ECPs is presented. It shows that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECPs is roughly proportionate to the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which in the general population is 3.2%, and in Victoria is 1.0%³. However, the ABS census data shows that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is skewed towards younger members, with over half of the population being aged 24 or under. This could indicate that of the working age population, there is a slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECPs.

Location	Australia		Victoria	
Age	CBC	FDC	CBC	FDC
Yes	3.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.4%
No	97.0%	99.0%	98.9%	99.6%
Total not specified	32,279	2,234	7,953	342
Total specified	114,446	10,857	29,474	3,531

2. Current working arrangements

In this section, the current working arrangements of ECPs in CBC and FDC settings in 2021 are discussed, along with hours worked (Table 2.1) and rates of pay (Table 2.2).

In terms of hours worked, more than half CBC ECPs are employed in a part-time capacity, with 19.9% working fewer than 19 hours during the reference week and 36.1% working between 20 and 34 hours that week, meaning that more than half (56%) of ECPs worked part-time. It is unclear whether these ECPs are employed on a casual or part-time contract, which is a significant detail to be omitted,

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (1 July 2022), [Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary](#), ABS Website, accessed 2 August 2023.

as it would indicate whether these part-time hours were by choice or by circumstance. Considering Australia-wide ECEC workforce shortages it can be assumed that these workers are choosing to work on a part-time basis, however this highlights data that the AGECS Council may want to seek from consultation. Additionally, it can be assumed that many services are employing casual ECPs to cover for absent on-going staff due to sickness or leaving the workforce.

In FDC settings, most ECPs worked full-time equivalent or more (65.3%). FDC often takes place in the home of the ECP which can explain the additional hours worked, but it is important to understand that of this group of predominately women, many are working more than full-time equivalent (41.5%), and to consider the repercussions of this. Many in FDC are also choosing to work part-time hours (34.8%), but they are not the majority. This indicates the needs of FDC workers may be considerably different from the needs of CBC workers, especially when it comes to professional learning.

As with age demographics, the statistics from the whole of Australia are proportionately represented in Victoria regarding hours worked, in both CBC and FDC, as seen in the Table 2.1 below. Please note that the original raw data set only provided percentages for this table.

Setting	CBC		FDC	
Region	AUS	VIC	AUS	VIC
Part-time (1-19 hours)	19.9%	19.4%	8.9%	9.7%
Part-time (20-34 hours)	36.1%	37.7%	25.9%	24.7%
Full-time (35-40 hours)	42.4%	41.8%	23.8%	21.5%
Long hours (41+ hours)	1.7%	1.1%	41.5%	44.1%
Total number	146,726	37,427	13,091	3,873

Pay rates in Australia and Victoria for ECPs are confusing, due to the mixed funding from state and commonwealth governments. As such, the conclusions that can be drawn from the data in Table 2.2 is limited. However, it does show that many of CBC ECPs are paid at the Award rate (57.1%), the base rate of which is modelled from the minimum wage requirements set by the Fair Work Commission.

Diploma and certificate III qualified workers in LDC CBC are employed under the Children’s Services Award 2010 and teacher qualified workers are employed under the Educational Services (Teacher) Award 2020. The 2020–2021 wage scales⁴ indicate that at the time of data collection, teacher pay rates in LDC ranged from \$54,320 to \$75,167. The following figures are based on the July 2021 review of the Children’s Services Award 2010, which adjusts each year based on changes to the national minimum wage⁵, meaning the wages stated are marginally higher than what was paid during the

⁴ Australian Childcare Alliance, [Educational Services \(Teachers\) 2010 2020-21 Wage Tables](#), Australian Childcare Alliance website, accessed 2 August 2023

⁵ Jobs Australia, [Children’s Services Award 2010 2021-22 Wage Table](#), Jobs Australia website, accessed 2 August 2023

census data collection period. As such, diploma qualified worker’s payrates ranged from \$49,909 to \$68,094, and certificate III qualified worker’s payrates ranged from \$41,080 to \$49,909.

To make themselves attractive options to employees and families, some LDC services promote themselves as offering ‘above award’ rates. However, the table below indicates that these services are likely offering only 10% above the award rate, and are a minority compared to services paying ‘at award’ rates. However, since the data collection for the ECEC NWC 2021 multiple small pay increases to the Children’s Services Award and the Educational Services Award (Teacher) have occurred. Additionally, there is a current National Early Years Strategy being developed by the Australian Federal Government, which will hopefully address wages of ECPs.

Furthermore, in the state of Victoria the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) (2020)⁶ is the funded kindergarten enterprise bargaining agreement for not-for-profit services. At the time of this data collection, pay under the VECTEA for teachers ranged from approximately \$63,538 per annum to \$107,485 per annum. For diploma qualified workers on the VECTEA, top of the pay scale ranged from \$49,220 to \$57,322. For certificate III qualified employees on the VECTEA the pay scale ranged from \$41,749 to \$55,375. Those employed under the VECTEA 2020 are currently on a schedule of pay increments that will see these rates rise until the end of the schedule in April 2024. There is nowhere in the table that allows for the significantly higher wages in Victoria to be differentiated, so it can be assumed that a proportion of the ‘More than 25% above award’ respondents are recipients of the VECTEA rather than their private employer paying 25% above the award rate.

Interestingly, for FDC based ECPs there is limited data on their wages, with almost three quarters of respondents answering ‘Don’t know’ to a question regarding their wage as compared to the applicable Award. The FDC model involves a mix of self-employed FDC ECPs and FDC services who employ and co-ordinate FDC ECPs to work in their own homes. As such, the FDC ECPs would likely be employed under the relevant Award, however many self-employed FDC ECPs are likely setting their own fees and their income is determined from that figure. FDC is an area of the early learning sector that is often overlooked, and the lack of data on this subject is further contributing to this.

Wage / Setting	CBC		FDC	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Paid at award	74,925	57.1%	2,013	17.7%
Up to 10% above award	33,484	25.5%	452	4.0%
Between 10% to 25% above award	7,745	5.9%	165	1.5%
More than 25% above award	2,879	2.2%	269	2.4%
Don't know	12,075	9.2%	8494	74.6%
Total specified	131,109	N/A	11,393	N/A
Total not specified	0	N/A	714	N/A
Total number	131,109		12,107	

⁶ Early Learning Association Australia, [VECTEA 2020 Salary Rates Table](#), ELAA website, accessed 2 August 2023.

3. Experience and Qualifications

This next section will explore the qualifications, ‘upskilling’ and experience of ECPs. It includes both years of experience in the ECEC sector as well as years of tenure in their current (at the time) service.

Qualification	CBC				FDC			
	AUS		VIC		AUS		VIC	
Bachelor’s degree and above (4 years or more)	12,584	9.9%	3,406	10.5%	299	2.5%	61	1.7%
Bachelor’s degree (3 years)	3,165	2.5%	598	1.8%	139	1.2%	23	0.6%
Advanced diploma/ Diploma	60,397	47.5%	18,793	57.7%	5,750	48.3%	2,035	56.8%
Certificate III/IV	41,011	32.2%	8,271	25.4%	5,414	45.4%	1,391	38.8%
Below Certificate III	1,130	0.9%	174	0.5%	62	0.5%	28	0.8%
No qualification	8,989	7.1%	1,327	4.1%	249	2.1%	45	1.3%
Not specified	3,832	N/A	1,034	N/A	194	N/A	23	N/A
Total number	131,109		33,603		12,107		3,606	

As seen in Table 3.1, those with bachelor’s or higher degrees in teaching and education make up significantly less than a quarter of ECPs employed in CBC (12.3% -12.4%), in both Victorian and national settings. Diploma qualified ECPs make up most of both CBC (47.5%) and FDC (48.3%) ECPs, with certificate qualified workers coming in second (32.2% in CBC and 45.4% in FDC).

This data reflects the ratio requirements in ECEC services, in which children who are in ECEC services but not in a funded program (e.g. the year before school) are not required to be taught by a degree qualified ECP. This is compounded by the fact that the ratio becomes smaller for younger children (one adult to four children below three years of age), meaning that more certificate and diploma qualified workers are required in CBC services to meet national regulations.

Interestingly, in Victoria, funded programs now include the two years before school, meaning that Victoria will have a growing number of bachelor qualified ECPs, yet this is not reflected in the data despite 2021 being the first year of funded three-year-old kindergarten in the state (in some areas). This also highlights a contributing factor to the workforce issues that the early childhood sector is experiencing. As there is a need for more degree qualified educators, initiatives to achieve degree qualified teacher targets, specifically the ‘upskilling’ of existing diploma and certificate qualified workers, is putting more stress on services at every level of qualification employment.

Table 3.2 looks at the number of ECPs currently undertaking study. In the early learning system, ‘upskilling’ is a common practice, and often encouraged by employers. Table 3.2 shows the data on ECPs currently studying in both CBC and FDC settings, across Australia and within Victoria.

Qualification	CBC				FDC			
	AUS		VIC		AUS		VIC	
Bachelor's degree and above	7,500	5.8%	1,746	5.2%	106	0.9%	29	0.8%
Advanced diploma/Diploma	14,226	10.9%	2,599	7.8%	273	2.3%	111	3.1%
Certificate III/IV	9,096	7%	936	2.8%	298	2.5%	52	1.4%
Below Certificate III	67	0.1%	6	0%	<5	0%	0	0%
Not currently studying	99,387	76.3%	27,990	85.5%	11,388	94.4%	3,434	95.4%
Not specified	833	N/A	326	N/A	<45	N/A	4	N/A
Total number	131,109		33,603		<12,111		3,606	

Table 3.2 shows that almost a quarter of CBC ECPs across Australia are undertaking some form of study. Interestingly the numbers in Victoria are roughly 10% lower than the national average, despite the 'Best Start, Best Life' initiative by the state government that included the funding of three-year-old kindergarten programs and the 'Free Kinder' initiative (starting in 2023 but announced in 2022) which has increased enrolments by making kindergarten programs free. This initiative means that in Victoria, more children are attending preschool services and those in three-year-old funded programs now need to be taught by teacher qualified ECPs as opposed to diploma qualified ECPs, despite the data that suggests the percentage of qualified teachers in Victoria was already below the national average. The rollout of funded three-year-old kinder began in 2022 in metro Victoria but was announced and planned for in the years prior to 2022.

In terms of what is being studied by these ECPs, there are multiple options, but it is not made clear in the data. For bachelor's degree qualified staff, there are several degrees that they could be working towards. These might be higher research degrees such as master's or PhD level qualifications, or master's by coursework to develop leadership or other relevant skills. They may also be auxiliary degrees, such as Play Therapy or micro-credentials. Alternatively, they might be studying to re-train for other professions, with the intention of leaving early childhood. This is not specified in the data, though it would be relevant information for retaining and supporting teacher qualified workers.

For the other ECPs it is more likely that areas of current study are the qualification above the one they currently hold. In Australia, to undertake a diploma in early childhood studies one must already have obtained a certificate III in early childhood studies. Additionally, to qualify more bachelor qualified teachers in a shorter period, accelerated bachelor's degrees have been created for those who currently hold diploma qualifications, regardless of whether they graduated from secondary school which is typically a requirement of entry to a bachelor's degree. However, it is also possible these ECPs are undertaking studies unrelated to ECEC, in the hopes of leaving the field for another profession.

Keeping in consideration the qualifications, current or working towards, of ECPs it is important to understand the level of experience amongst ECPs. The following Tables (3.3 and 3.4) display information on the overall years of experience staff with ECEC qualifications have and the information on the years of tenure in the current place of work, respectively.

Table 3.3 Years of experience in ECEC sector across Australia and Victoria in CBC and FDC 2021

Setting type	CBC				FDC			
	AUS		VIC		AUS		VIC	
<1 year experience	8,492	7.2%	2362	7.6%	515	4.4%	186	5.3%
1-3 years experience	31,557	26.7%	8064	25.8%	2,294	19.7%	897	25.4%
4-6 years experience	25,898	21.9%	6,984	22.4%	2,657	22.8%	877	24.8%
7-9 years experience	14,851	12.6%	4,242	13.6%	1,689	14.5%	531	15%
10+ years experience	37,431	31.6%	9,533	30.5%	4,510	38.7%	1,047	29.6%
Average experience (in years)	8.0	N/A	7.8	N/A	9.7	N/A	8.0	N/A
Not specified	58	0%	56	0.2%	0	0%	36	1%
Total number	118,230		31,186		11,664		3,538	

Table 3.3 shows that roughly a third (30.5%-31.6%) of the ECPs nationwide and within the state of Victoria have more than a decade of experience in the sector. A point to note is that these percentages are similar across CBC and FDC ECPs, whereas other statistics in this report have not shown this same level of similarity between the two settings.

Table 3.3 shows that ECPs start to leave the profession after 4 to 6 years. There are multiple potential reasons for this, and whilst conclusions cannot be drawn from this data, some of the possibilities can be listed. Firstly, CBC ECPs may be moving across to FDC settings and vice versa and therefore remaining in the ECEC workforce. Another possibility is that these ECPs are leaving dedicated ECEC settings to move into related work, such as tertiary teaching, NDIS or local and state government roles. They may also be leaving temporarily for parental leave. The final alternative is that they are leaving the field all together. A combination of these reasons is the likely cause, but this highlights an area that more specific data is needed.

Another point of note is that the percentage of workers with 7-9 years experiences drops down to roughly 12-15%, despite 8 years being the average number of years of experience. It indicates that many are leaving the field in this time, but that those who stay go on to work for more than a decade. How much more cannot be drawn from these data, and another area to focus on in the future data collection on.

Table 3.4 Years of tenure in current workplace across Australia and Victoria in CBC and FDC 2021

Setting type	CBC				FDC			
	AUS		VIC		AUS		VIC	
<1 year experience	26,965	22.8%	6,651	21.3%	2,153	18.5%	711	20.1%
1-3 years' experience	47,536	40.2%	12,337	39.5%	4,717	40.4%	1,627	46.0%
4-6 years' experience	20,415	17.3%	5,639	18.0%	1,988	17.0%	549	15.5%
7-9 years' experience	9,573	8.1%	2,833	9.1%	976	8.4%	208	5.9%
10+ years' experience	13,630	11.5%	3,652	11.7%	1,788	15.3%	407	11.5%
Average experience in years	3.9	N/A	4.1	N/A	5.0	N/A	4.2	N/A

Not specified	170	0.1%	131	0.4%	42	0.4%	36	1.0
Total number	118,118		31,110		11,622		3,502	

When we look at the Table 3.4, which focuses on the years in current workplace, again the Australian statistics and the Victorian statistics are comparable for CBC ECPs, with some wider variation for FDC settings.

The main difference we see is that significantly fewer CBC ECPs (<11.5%) have worked in the one setting for 10 plus years. In fact, the most common number of years spent in one service is between 1 and 3 (40.2%). This highlights that a lot of services are experiencing ongoing changes to staff, with the majority of staff in each service having been there for less than three years (63%). Staff retention can be a key indicator of quality, so this suggests that many services may be struggling to provide high quality experiences for children and families, a concerning implication.

Interestingly, the same spread of years of experience in current workplace applies to FDC ECPs, with 66.1% having been in their current workplace for under three years. A higher proportion of FDC ECPs (38.7%) have 10 plus years of experience in the field would suggest that a higher proportion would have 10 plus years' experience in the same workplace (i.e. their own home), however this is clearly not the case. This suggests that assumptions that FDC is always taking place in the home of the ECP, in a self-employed capacity must be incorrect. This marks another area for which further information would be beneficial.

Conclusion of Early Childhood Professional Profile

The above analysis shows the demographics, current working conditions, qualifications, and experience of ECPs in CBC and FDC settings, nationally and in Victoria. This shows that there is no such thing as 'an average ECP', but it has shown that a vast majority of ECPs are women, and that despite a spread of ages from 16-55+, most are aged between 20 and 40 years old. Furthermore, it shows that a majority of ECPs in CBC are certificate and diploma qualified, not teacher qualified. A quarter of this group is engaged in study whilst working, likely contributing to the stress already being felt across the ECEC workforce.

Similarities and differences between ECPs in CBC and FDC settings have also been identified. This is important information for the AGECS Council, who need to make decisions as to who AGECS serves and how to best serve them. This will become more relevant in the following section of the report, focussing on AGECS members.

In addition to answering several questions about the ECP profile, this analysis also identified several areas where there are still questions. What cannot be identified is how many workers are part-time because they want to be, versus part-time work being all that is available to them, or if workforce shortages increasing casual hours are responsible for skewing this data. In addition, it cannot be identified which courses are being undertaken by ECPs still studying, particularly those who are bachelor's degree qualified and above, which could indicate areas of interest for those in the sector or, if they are training to leave the sector, what kind of work they are qualifying for.

This section has provided information and context for the AGECS Council to keep in consideration when reading the next section, which pertains to AGECS members.

The AGECS Member Profile

In this section of the report, the profile of AGECS members is provided. With the information already available on AGECS members, this half of the report attempts to show the comparison of the profile of the Australian and Victorian ECP with that of AGECS members. As such, it is also segmented into demographics, work conditions and qualifications/experience. The dataset used in this section was current up to May 2023, when it was downloaded from the AGECS website. Any members gained following this date are not represented in the data.

Before elaborating on those key categories, this report will first establish important details about the AGECS membership process and the limitations of the dataset.

Membership

The data relied on for this section comes from the website's Memberpress plug-in. Memberpress is a Wordpress plug-in that manages memberships, associated fees and website partitions. Currently, people wanting to join AGECS must sign up through the official AGECS Wordpress webpage and are asked several questions. Their answers are then reviewed by the membership committee and if they meet the criteria of the Constitution, their membership is granted. All our membership data is stored through the Memberpress plugin.

The following questions are asked of AGECS members when they sign up. This data has been collected since 2009. Name, address, phone and email is collected, then potential members are asked the following:

- Are you a graduate of an accredited university early childhood education course?:*
- If yes, please include the name of the qualification you have completed:
- Are you a graduate of an institute other than a university?:*
- If yes, please include the name of the early childhood qualification you have completed:
- Have you worked in, or made a contribution to, the field of early childhood education, care and development?*
- If Yes, please state briefly your experience here:
- Are you currently employed?*
- If yes, who is your employer now?
- What is your position?

The questions marked with an asterisk are mandatory, but the other questions are not. As such, there are mixed numbers of responses for some questions. Furthermore, the responses to the optional questions took the form of comment boxes which meant there was a variety in the form of the responses. This is discussed in more detail in the 'limitations' section.

For this report the Memberpress data was exported to an Excel spreadsheet. On this spreadsheet the individual responses to each membership question is documented. There were 1119 members listed in this spreadsheet. Fourteen 'members' in the data were duplicate members or website related profiles. The profiles for the AGECS administrative accounts were removed from the dataset

entirely. For duplicate members, the employment information, if different across the two profiles, was kept as it provided additional information about AGECS members. However, when considering the number of AGECS members, there were 1105 unique members at the time of download.

The following Table 4.1 shows the distribution of joining members according to month and year joined from 2009–2022. In January 2010 it appears that someone manually entered 364 existing members into the Memberpress system, however there is no confirmation of this. The alternative is that 364 members joined in January 2010. Additionally, in this dataset there are 890 members, leaving 215 unaccounted members, based on the membership number of 1105. There is an unclear reason for this discrepancy.

It can also be stated that there have been many AGECS members who have not been input in the Memberpress system, as AGECS is a 100-year-old institution. Given our origins as a past student’s association, we can assume most graduates of the Melbourne Kindergarten Teacher’s College and its subsequent identities, were encouraged to sign up upon graduation. However, we have limited data on these members, so they are not represented in this profile.

Discounting the 2010 data, 2022 had the highest number of new members at 107 new members. This coincided with the 100-year anniversary of AGECS as an organisation, the celebrations of which included a new grant that could only be applied for by members, offering a likely explanation for the higher than usual sign-ups. 2019 also had a higher than typical number of new members, at 98. The beginning of the year appears to be the most popular time for new members to join, which could be explained by several factors, including graduates entering the workforce or people shifting into new roles who join AGECS because it may be relevant to their work.

Year Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	364	0	0	8	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
2011	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	2	0
2013	2	5	1	0	0	1	0	7	1	4	3	1
2014	0	2	4	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	2	0
2015	0	4	2	2	3	0	4	1	1	3	2	0
2016	3	11	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	1	3	1
2017	0	1	3	1	2	0	4	2	1	1	9	2
2018	6	15	7	7	3	17	7	9	0	3	3	2
2019	3	14	10	4	14	7	28	3	2	4	4	5
2020	0	5	4	2	1	5	1	3	2	6	4	6
2021	0	7	8	3	9	16	3	2	4	9	2	0
2022	20	43	9	2	3	6	7	4	4	5	2	2
Total	400	107	48	29	36	55	57	39	18	40	42	19
Total number of members in table												890

Limitations

The data used to complete this section is limited in multiple ways, particularly regarding currency and the qualitative nature of the questions asked of members. Members are encouraged to give information to AGECS us changed addresses or workplaces, but this is inconsistent. As such, the information in this section is accurate for newer members but outdated for older members, as we only have information on members that was current at the point of signing up.

An additional limitation to the dataset is the format of the answers, as mentioned in the previous section. The data collection for those applying for membership to the association contain both comment boxes and check boxes. This means that each answer that cannot be responded to as 'Yes' or 'No' is written in by the potential member, resulting in inconsistent answer formats. This had the most effect on the qualification data and work conditions data, where people entered the name of their degree and their job title and employer information, to different levels of clarity.

At times the self-entered data had to be grouped together, and in these instances, an effort has been made to minimise or make clear any assumptions that influenced the groupings. This is particularly the case for self-entered job titles, as there are multiple ways of describing same-level roles.

Any other times that the limitation of the data is relevant, it is mentioned.

5. Demographics

Regarding the demographics of AGECS members, the only demographic data collected is addressed at time of becoming a member, which can be seen in Table 5.1. As a Victorian-based organisation it is unsurprising that a majority of members (77.01%) come from Victoria, with most of those Victorian members being metro-based (81.9%). 'Metro' in this instance is defined as the greater Melbourne region, with Geelong, Ballarat and other regional cities not being considered metro. Interestingly, each state and territory is represented in the AGECS membership base, although New South Wales and Queensland are the most prevalent outside of Victoria.

If we want comparable data to the ECEC NWC 2021 data, we would need to seek gender, age, and current location data from members.

Location	No. of members	
Metro Victoria	705	63.06%
Regional Victoria	156	13.95%
Interstate		
Australian Capital Territory	3	0.27%
Queensland	15	1.34%
New South Wales	29	2.59%
Northern Territory	4	0.36%
South Australia	3	0.27%
Tasmania	3	0.27%

Western Australia	5	0.45%
International		
USA	1	0.09%
Unknown	<195	<17.26%
Total number	<1105	

6. Work arrangements

The following section has been split into two categories: employer type and job position. There is a drop in the information provided by members, as these two questions were not mandatory elements of the joining questionnaire. The other possible explanation is the input of existing members into the Memberpress plug-in, for whom these details had not been collected initially. Table 4.1 which shows the input of 364 members into Memberpress in 2010, supports the latter suggestion that a lot of member data is missing as some members were added to Memberpress with only name, email and potentially address.

Table 6.1 shows the type of employer AGECS members worked under at time of joining.

Table 6.1 – Type of employer of AGECS member as at joining		
Employer type	No. of members	
Centre based care service	237	40.17%
Early years management	48	8.14%
Family day care	3	0.51%
State government	21	3.73%
Local government/council	71	12.03%
Peak bodies and NFP community service organisations	93	15.76%
Relief agency	8	1.36%
Tertiary - University	55	9.32%
Tertiary – TAFE and RTOs	17	2.88%
Other		
Consulting practices	7	1.19%
Miscellaneous	18	3.05%
Self-employed	9	1.86%
Total Known	590	100%

Interestingly, employer types are distributed across a number of different types of organisations. Whilst individual or small CBC providers are still the largest employer (40.17%), there are a significant number of AGECS members employed by state and local governments (15.76%), peak bodies and community service organisations (15.76%), tertiary institutions (12.2%) and early years management (EYM) (8.14%). It is worth noting that most of the employers listed can and do employ teachers and educators, particularly EYMs, local government councils and peak bodies/community service organisations, which suggests that teaching and educating are still the

predominant roles of AGECS members. Roles of AGECS members will be discussed in greater detail later in this section, and are displayed in Table 6.2.

Peak-bodies and not-for-profit community service organisations mentioned, the main organisations represented included Goodstart, Gowrie Vic, Uniting VicTas (also featured as Lentara in the dataset) and Yooralla. Despite being Approved Providers, Goodstart and Gowrie were both categorised as peak body/not-for-profit community organisations because of their organisational structure. Analysis of the dataset also showed that the AGECS members who listed these organisations as employers were not in teaching or educating roles, but instead in leadership or operations roles. Other organisations of note in this category include FKACHildren’s Services and Community Childcare Association. For tertiary institutions the most prevalent employers were University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Federation University, RMIT and Victoria University in that order. The local government councils that were most represented include city councils of Knox, Hume, Casey and Yarra.

The miscellaneous category featured individuals who listed specific organisations as their employer. These organisations included the Cancer Council, the Melbourne Museum, the Teacher Learning Network, a Union (not specified), Melbourne Eastern Group Training and a local library. These individuals each met the AGECS joining criteria, which indicates that they were interested in joining AGECS for early childhood related roles within these organisations. Also filed as miscellaneous were two Nannies, one specialist school employee, one OSHC employee and several small organisations who could not be categorised anywhere else due to lack of information.

Self-employed was separated from consulting, dependent on how the member filled out their form. Some worked for consulting firms, whilst others directed their own consulting businesses. Self-employed referred to those running their own CBC or FDC businesses.

Only three members of AGECS identified themselves as working in an FDC setting, which is a stark difference from the national data, which documents 13,091 FDC ECPs working in Australia, with 3,873 being Victorian. Another underrepresent group, although there is no census data to compare to, is those employed by a relief agency. Of the 6 members who identified as working for a relief agency, Macarthur was the main employer.

Table 6.2 shows a breakdown of the types of services listed by members who identified individual CBC services as their employer. This category has been split into four subcategories: stand-alone kindergarten, community run long day care (LDC), for profit long day care (LDC) and independent school early learning centre (ELC).

Employer type	No. of members	
Community run LDC	58	24.47%
Independent School ELC	26	10.97%
Stand-alone Kindergarten	94	39.66%
Private LDC	59	24.89%
Total	237	100%

As can be seen, stand-alone kindergartens were the largest employer (39.66%) of centre-based care employed AGECS members. The actual number of AGECS members working in a stand-alone kindergarten at point of joining was likely higher than this, however due to the emergence of early years management (EYM) these numbers are skewed. For example, in the dataset, there were several members who listed preschool associations as their employer. In these instances, the employer was listed as an EYM and is not featured in this table. Furthermore, there are likely multiple kindergartens listed that fall under an EYM but have not been listed because they were not identified as such by the member at the time. EYMs and stand-alone kindergartens have a complex and constantly changing relationship, which could be an area of interest for the AGECS Council to investigate.

The next most prevalent employer was private LDCs (24.89%), which was very closely followed by community run LDCs. LDCs cater to children from as young as six weeks of age to five years of age, and often run a recognised kindergarten program for 3- and 4-year-old children. Typically, those with degree qualifications work as teachers, and typically teachers are only assigned to 3- and 4-year-old groups. Based on the roles listed in Table 6.3, we can assume that even within LDC settings it is more likely that the AGECS members are working within the kindergarten program, as teachers outnumber educators in the AGECS membership base. This point will be discussed more later in this section.

It is worth noting that other than some employers in the 'Other' and the 'Relief Agency' category, privately owned LDC is the only other Employer that works under a for-profit operational structure. So, despite being the second highest employer in this sub-category, privately owned and/or for-profit organisations make up a very small percentage (<17.46%) of AGECS members overall. This raises another discussion point for the AGECS Council, to determine the extent to which AGECS wants to provide support for privately owned for-profit services, or whether for-profit/not-for-profit is a distinction that is important to the Council at all.

The final sub-category listed is independent school ELCs, which employed 10.97% of AGECS members at point of sign-up. Independent school ELC refers to the educational programs run by independent schools that cater for children aged 3 to 5. These programs often follow the school hours and are located within the junior school campus of the greater school. ELCs often employ teachers to work within the groups but may or may not offer a funded kindergarten program. The independent school ELCs listed were Kindle at Methodist Ladies College, Camberwell Girls Grammar, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Chairo Christian College, Christian College Geelong, King's College, Lauriston Girls' School, Melbourne Montessori Primary School, Mentone Girls Grammar, O'Connor Cooperative School, Penleigh and Essendon Grammar, Preshil School, Ruyton Girls' School, St Bernadette's, Strathcona Baptist Girls' School, Geelong College, Toorak College, and the Wilderness School.

In Table 6.3 below, we see the roles that members held at time of joining. This dataset required manual categorisation of the self-nominated job titles input by AGECS members. Due to existing knowledge of the early learning system, this was straightforward enough, as many people input familiar terms that could be easily attributed to either early childhood teacher (ECT) or

educator/assistant/co-educator. Of note, despite prevalence of this title in the media, not a single respondent identified themselves as a childcare worker.

Within this manual categorisation, managers were differentiated from directors based on employer type and role responsibilities. Directors were specific to a CBC location, whereas managers were employed by early childhood businesses, peak bodies and community service organisations, and government. It involved management of people rather than management of a service.

‘Other’ was used for roles that could not be categorised as anything else. Job titles in the other category included CEO and COO of smaller organisations, students, librarians and other uncategorisable or ‘one-off’ roles. This group makes up such a small percentage of AGECS members that it did not seem significant to unpack this data more.

The only example that requires further explanation is the distinction between director and coordinator, and the category of Inclusion professional. Anyone who listed themselves as a coordinator of a CBC service was instead categorised as a director, as there were several coordinators who worked for other employer types where the coordinator role description could not be substituted for something else, such as local government and peak bodies/not-for-profit community service organisations. Key worker was folded into inclusion professional as it was the broader term, though this was one of the less represented role types for AGECS members. Other than key workers, inclusion professionals were represented by those working for community services rather than working in CBCs as additional assistants – this is likely because additional assistants are not required to hold an early childhood qualification and therefore are not eligible for AGECS membership.

Role	No. of members	
Advisor	11	1.57%
Area Manager	5	0.71%
Assistant Director (CBC)	8	1.14%
Casual	14	1.99%
Consultant	29	4.13%
Coordinator	20	2.85%
Director (CBC)	97	13.82%
ECT	211	30.06%
Educational Leader	62	8.83%
Educator	42	5.98%
Inclusion Professional	6	0.85%
Lecturer/Academic	52	7.41%
Manager	20	2.85%
Mentor	7	1.00%
Nominated Supervisor	24	3.42%
Pedagogical Leader	5	0.71%

Preschool Field Officer	14	1.99%
Project Officer/Leader	9	1.28%
Retired	5	0.71%
Room Leader	13	1.85%
Team Leader	9	1.28%
Trainer	22	3.13%
Other	17	2.42%
Total	702	100.00%

Table 6.3 sees an increase in the number of responses, 702 up from 590 in Table 6.2, this is because when coding the dataset there were many members who listed multiple roles. This is particularly common for stand-alone kindergartens, where a teacher may also be a director or nominated supervisor and the educational leader, and this is reflected in the data especially when compared to Table 6.1. In addition to multiple roles in the same setting, there were also several members who listed multiple roles across two or more settings, for example working as an ECT and training at a TAFE or RTO. This further supports the assumption that many AGECS members are leaders or emerging leaders in the early learning system.

Even so, there were a surprising number of job titles, or roles, that were prevalent across the membership base outside of CBC. Of the variety of roles, there were trends between job titles and employer types. Typically, team leader roles occurred frequently in local government/council roles, project officer roles were often in state government, inclusion professional roles were mostly peak body and community service organisations. Early years advisor was the job titled most associated with state government employed members.

So, from Table 6.3 we can see that most frequent role held by AGECS members at point of sign up was early childhood teacher (30.06%). The second most prevalent role was service director (13.82%) followed by educational leader (8.83%). This information suggests that of the CBC ECPs who are AGECS members, leadership, which is comprised of directors (13.82%), assistant directors (1.14%), nominated supervisors (3.42%), educational leaders (8.83%) and teachers (30.06%), are significantly more represented than educators (5.89%), even if multiple leadership roles are held by one person.

Outside of CBC, a significant number of AGECS members held leadership roles in the broader early learning system at point of sign-up. This includes consultant and mentor roles (5.13%), higher education roles such as lecturer/academic (7.41%) and trainer (3.13%), and preschool field officer (1.99%). There were also administrative leadership roles such as early years advisor (1.57%), coordinator (2.85%) and manager (3.56%).

It is important to note that the data shows what role people were in when they initially felt joining the association would be beneficial for them. However, many people move into different roles and specifically move their way up the hierarchy. This means that over time the needs members have for the association may change, or alternatively members who move on to other roles may also lose contact with AGECS. However, it could also be considered that AGECS is a bridge between

those practicing and those who have moved into managerial and office roles, and that is one of the services we currently offer through the provision of inForm and AUDAX. This is a key point for the AGECS Council to consider when determining the direction of future services provided for members.

A final point is that there will be several members who have retired since joining AGECS, it would be interesting to learn more about this group and whether they are still active members. We currently have a hard copy mail list for older members who do not wish to or cannot receive correspondence via email, and we could assume that these members are retired. This list was 108 members long as of May 2023.

7. Experience and qualifications

Qualification	No. of members	
PhD	16	2.17%
Master's degree	95	12.89%
Bachelor's degree	297	40.30%
Graduate Diploma	204	27.68%
Total with University level qualification	612	83.04%
Advanced Diploma	19	2.58%
Associate Diploma	17	2.31%
Diploma	75	10.18%
Certificate IV	6	0.81%
Certificate III	8	1.09%
Total with non-university level qualification	125	16.96%
Total known	789	100%

As mentioned in the Limitations section, the way in which qualification related data is collected made this section complicated. University level qualification data is separated from non-University level qualification data and requires an answer to both. This means that a lot of the information is input twice, making it difficult to differentiate between those who hold diploma and certificate qualifications as well as university qualifications, and those who do not. Therefore, diploma and certificate qualifications may be overrepresented in this table. This suspicion is supported by the fact that there are more entries (789) for this information than for employment information (589), indicating that some responses have been counted multiple times.

However, what we can ascertain from this data is that AGECS members can be split between those who hold university level qualifications and those who hold non-University qualifications, with the majority being in the former category. In this instance, a graduate diploma and above is considered a university level qualification, with all others being considered non-university qualifications. Roughly three quarters (83.04%) of AGECS members held university degrees at the point of signing up. Compared to the national early childhood professional profile, which states that only 12.4% of ECPs hold a university level qualification, this is a distinct point of difference between an AGECS member and the average national early childhood professional.

It is also important to note that diploma level qualifications were the accepted qualification to be an early childhood teacher at one point in time, but that current regulations dictate an early childhood teacher must hold a teaching degree. It can be assumed that some of the AGECS members who hold diploma qualifications are older members who were teachers before these regulation changes occurred, not newer members who are joining.

Regarding experience in the sector, qualitative data was received from members regarding their work experience. At sign-up, potential members are asked 'Have you worked in, or made a contribution to, the field of early childhood education, care and development?' and then prompted 'If yes, please state briefly your experience here:'. This question is so broad that it does not generate consistent or generalisable data, but it did receive a range of varied and detailed responses from 569 members. Some respondents listed years worked, others listed the different roles they had held over the years or personal anecdotal information such as volunteering related experience. A brief description of this data shows that many AGECS members have extensive experience in early childhood. Many members stated they had more 20 years of experience in the field, with some also stating 30- and 40- plus years. This is a point of interest, as it means people were signing up for AGECS well into their career in early childhood, which does not align with AGECS members who signed up upon graduating from the MKTC or IECD. Alternatively, it suggests that data may have been collected from existing members at some point during their membership. We cannot determine why this is.

Variety of roles was also a marker of experience in the field, according to the members. Many listed the roles they had held before their current role, especially if they had a broad work history. Some examples include moving between LDC and kindergarten, moving from assistant roles to director roles, moving into inclusion support, moving into research spaces, participating in advisory groups, taking on training work, and consulting.

Some members listed career highlights, or expressed their passion and philosophy towards ECEC as their experience. Some quotes include:

"I have introduced many initiatives in that time as well as piloting the service through the changes in the field around the EYLF and the introduction of National Quality Framework. The service has twice been assessed as Exceeding. I have presented at state-wide conferences, mentored new teachers, I have participated in numerous study and networking opportunities, and I have contributed to local, regional, state and national programs through my ideas, suggestions and feedback."

"I advocate for children's right to high quality education and care. I advocate for children to receive early intervention to ensure the best outcomes for their life. I also advocate for play based learning, starting school later and building a smooth transition between kindergarten and school, encouraging play based learning in the lower levels of school, teachers reading transition reports and primary teachers liaising with kinder teachers to support this transition."

Finally, almost every respondent mentioned working in an early learning setting, directly with children even if that was not the role they had been in in many years. This suggests that working

with children in the ECEC sector is considered an important aspect of the professional identity of AGECS members, regardless of current role.

This profile of AGECS members shows that the average AGECS member does not necessarily reflect the average ECP, in regard to qualifications and employment. From the information collected, AGECS members can be described as highly qualified professional people, who are often leaders in their workplace or field. However, the information AGECS has on members is limited. As such, at the completion of this section of the AGECS member profile, a targeted data collection survey of our members was undertaken. The results from that survey will be discussed in the next section.

The AGECS Member Survey 2023

Following the perceived gaps in the analysis of existing AGECS member data, a survey was conducted to collect current information from AGECS members. The survey was planned by Melissa Eastwood (Family Services leader, MCC) and Alex Heard (AGECS Engagement Coordinator), and the questions were reviewed by Council members on the Community Engagement Committee. The questions in the survey were designed to fill the gaps between the national data and the data we had already collected from members. Also, some gaps in the national data collection were identified regarding the contexts of early childhood professionals, therefore further data needs to be collected that would give some insight into the languages spoken at home and the country of birth of AGECS members. The National Quality Framework discusses the importance of respecting children and their contexts, and this starts when educators and their contexts are respected. Additionally, questions were also designed to update the information already collected about AGECS members.

We used SurveyMonkey to create and distribute the survey, which was sent out to members on two separate occasions over a 14-day period. As of May 2023, when the original AGECS member data was downloaded via Memberpress, we had approximately 1105 members. However, our email contact list for members contains only 854 email addresses. In addition to the email list, there is a hardcopy mailing contact list of approximately 110 members (as of May 2023). We chose not to send the mailing contact list the invitation to participate in the survey. This was due to the understanding that this contact list is comprised of elderly and retired members, who have and continue to serve an important role to AGECS as an organisation, but whose data would not inform future AGECS strategic planning.

The survey was sent to the 854 email addresses, and 77 emails 'bounced', indicating that we have email access to 777 AGECS members. Of the 777 successful emails, we collected 130 responses. Upon analysis it was discovered that one AGECS member had completed the survey twice, and their duplicate information was deleted. As such, the following section is an analysis of the 129 unique responses to the survey.

As such, only 16.73% of AGECS members are represented in the following analysis. As such, this section offers some insight into the demographics, current working arrangements and experience and qualifications of AGECS members. Despite limited insight, it does give information concerning the types of members AGECS has engagement with, which will inform future strategic directions.

8. Demographics

The first demographic addressed here is the location of members. In the previous section this was the only demographic information collect from AGECS members at point of joining up. Table 8.1 breaks down the location information for AGECS members who responded to the survey. Most survey respondents are based in Victoria, which matches up with the AGECS member data from the previous section (Table 5.1). However, in the previous section the ratio of metro members to regional members was significantly skewed towards metro members, with 63.06% being metro members and 13.65% being regional members. In this table the skew is still present, but the gap has narrowed, with 57.36% living in metro areas and 34.11% living in regional areas. Of note, the responses also indicate that whilst there may be members that live all over Australia, AGECS has more engagement from those living within Victoria.

Location	No. of members	
Metro VIC	74	57.36%
Regional VIC	44	34.11%
NSW	5	3.88%
QLD	4	3.10%
SA	2	1.55%
Total	129	100.00%

The rest of the demographic information discussed in this section is new data from AGECS members. This includes age, indigenous status, country of birth and language/s spoken at home of AGECS members who responded to the survey.

In regard to the age of AGECS members, as can be seen in Table 8.2, almost half of the survey respondents were aged 55 and over. The second highest age range represented by survey respondents was 50–54, at 16.28%. In fact, less than 12% of respondents were under 40 years of age.

AGECS has not collected age data from members in the past, so these figures cannot be compared to the previous AGECS member section. However, when compared to the national and Victorian statistics from the ECEC NWC 2021, we can see that AGECS members are disproportionately older than the 'average' ECP. The national data shows that only 10.2% of Victorian ECPs fall into the '55+' age range, compared to the 48.48% of survey respondents who fall into that range. Additionally, the most populated age range in the Victorian data was '30–34' which captured 16.5% of ECPs, whereas for AGECS member survey respondents this age range only made up 4.65%. This information is important, as it highlights that AGECS membership is disproportionately skewed towards older members.

For AGECS' longevity as an organisation, it is important that we are welcoming new and younger members. Additionally, this information could also indicate that the current academic award program AGECS offers is not effectively engaging younger graduate teachers.

Age	No. of members	
15-19	0	0%
20-24	0	0%
25-29	1	0.78%
30-34	6	4.65%
35-39	8	6.20%
40-44	10	7.75%
45-49	20	15.50%
50-54	21	16.28%
55+	63	48.48%
Total	129	100%

Table 8.3 shows that one survey respondent identified themselves as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 3 respondents identified themselves as Aboriginal, meaning that just over 3% of respondents reported indigenous status. Although the sample size is small, it is interesting to note that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AGECS members is similar to the national statistics from the ECEC NWC 2021 (seen in Table 1.2), which reports that 3.2% of ECPs across Australia are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is interesting, as in the ECEC NWC 2021 data Victoria reported a lower percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ECPs (1.1%) than the AGECS average. This could indicate that the Reconciliation Action Plan has supported AGECS develop as a culturally aware and culturally safe organisation.

Indigenous status	No. of members	
Yes, I identify as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1	0.78%
Yes, I identify as Aboriginal	3	2.33%
Yes, I identify as Torres Strait Islander	0	0.00%
No, I identify as neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	125	96.90%
I'd rather not say	0	0.00%
Total	129	100.00%

Finally, this section ends with two additional questions to generate more contextual information about AGECS members. First, the survey asked respondents to nominate their country of birth. Of the 129 respondents, the vast majority (88.37%) were born in Australia. Several members were born in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, two English speaking countries. This is interesting, as Australia lists early childhood teaching as an eligible skilled occupation for migration to Australia, suggesting there is a demographic of early childhood teachers who have migrated to Australia,

yet we are not seeing these ECPs reflected in AGECS membership⁷. This could be a point for Council to consider when planning future provision of professional learning resources.

Country of birth	No. of members	
Australia	114	88.37%
Brazil	2	1.55%
Cyprus	1	0.78%
Hong Kong	1	0.78%
Malaysia	1	0.78%
New Zealand	3	2.33%
Pakistan	1	0.78%
United Kingdom	6	4.65%
Total number of respondents	129	100.00%

The second additional demographic question which was asked collected information on the main languages spoken at home for AGECS members who responded to the survey. Many Australians speak a language other than English at home, even those born in Australia, however Table 8.5 shows that survey respondents were almost exclusively speaking English at home. Despite three members reporting being born in Brazil, only one respondent spoke Portuguese at home. Furthermore, the respondents who identified that they were born in Pakistan and Malaysia also reported to speak English at home.

Language	No. of members	
English	127	98.45%
Portuguese	1	0.78%
English and Greek	1	0.78%
Total	129	100.00%

9. Current working arrangements

Current working arrangements refers to the normal hours worked by AGECS members per week, their employer type, and their roles. In this section, there were two instances (Table 9.2 and Table 9.4) where retired AGECS members have been removed from the dataset so that the arrangements of AGECS members currently working could be accurately discussed. It is important to note that all AGECS members are valued, but the role of this report is to inform future planning.

Table 9.1 shows the employment status of AGECS members. Of the 129 survey respondents, 3 respondents listed their employment status as 'unemployed' and 24 respondents listed their status

⁷ Department of Home Affairs, [Eligible Skilled Occupation List](#), Department of Home Affairs website, accessed 11 August 2023

as 'retired', meaning that approximately 20% of respondents are not working and therefore not necessarily in need of professional learning hours. Of the currently employed members, full-time hours and long part-time hours made up the majority of hours worked by survey respondents, which is representative of the national ECP weekly hours (Table 2.1).

Hours worked	No. of members	
Short part-time (1-19 hours)	6	4.65%
Long part-time (20-34 hours)	30	23.26%
Full-time (35-40 hours)	47	36.43%
Long hours (41+ hours)	5	3.88%
Casual	14	10.85%
Unemployed	3	2.33%
Retired	24	18.60%
Total	129	100%

For member employer details, represented in Table 9.2, we can see that the 122 employed AGECS members listed 135 different employers. Similarly to the Memberpress data, question responses came in the form of comment boxes meaning that there was variation in the answers provided. Where applicable the employers were categorised according to the categories that had been used for the Memberpress data, and one new category of 'school' was added. Compared to the Memberpress data (Table 6.1), the percentage of AGECS members who responded to the survey employed by CBC services is significantly lower. This could potentially indicate two things, perhaps the number of AGECS members working as teachers in CBC services has lowered over time and AGECS members are leaving teaching to work in other related roles, or it could indicate that AGECS gets more engagement from members who are not in front line teaching roles. Both responses, however, show that if AGECS is to meet its constitutional obligations, which are inextricably linked to CBC services, that there needs to be a push to attract and engage those working in teaching roles.

Employer type	No. of members	
CBC Service	33	24.44%
EYM	11	8.15%
Local Government	9	6.67%
NFP and Community Organisations	22	16.30%
Relief Agency	4	2.96%
School	5	3.70%
Self-employed	7	5.19%
State government	15	11.11%
Tertiary - TAFE	2	1.48%
Tertiary - University	17	12.59%
Other	10	7.41%
Total	135	100.00%

Of the CBC employed survey respondents, Table 9.3 offers a breakdown of the types of CBC service. Considerably fewer respondents (6.45%) worked in privately run LDCs when compared to the AGECS member section (Table 6.2) showing 24.89% of members working in privately run LDCs at point of joining up. AGECS members who engaged in the survey were more likely to be working in a stand-alone kindergarten than any other type of service.

CBC Service type	No. of members	
Community run LDC	8	25.81%
Independent school ELC	6	19.35%
Kindergarten	15	48.39%
Private LDC	2	6.45%
Total	31	100

Having established the types of employers AGECS members who completed the survey were working with, Table 9.4 breaks down the roles which these members reported. There were 110 respondents who provided 148 roles, broken down in Table 9.4. This is similar the AGECS member section in which we saw multiple AGECS members at the point of signing up hold multiple roles. The most significant contributor to this phenomenon is the combination of ECTs who hold nominated supervisor and educational leader positions within the one service. The second most common occurrence of survey respondents holding an additional role was casual lecturer/academic roles alongside teaching roles. This is an interesting point, if the Council were to consider the resource of AGECS members, rather than only the provision of resources for AGECS members.

Additionally, Table 9.4 shows the roles that were self-nominated in the survey were consistent with the roles members self-nominated at time of joining AGECS (Table 6.3). However, the 'other' category was represented more in the survey respondent data (11.49%) than in the data collected at sign up (2.42%). Roles that were categorised as 'other' were quite broad and included school psychologists, Koori Educational Support Officer, senior policy and program officers, a full-time student and volunteer positions. This could indicate that several AGECS members have moved out of early childhood to work in separate fields, or it could indicate that AGECS has such a broad purpose that it attracts outliers as members.

Role title	No. of members	
Advisor	5	3.38%
Casual relief teacher/educator	8	5.41%
Coach/Mentor	4	2.70%
Consultant	4	2.70%
Coordinator	6	4.05%
Director	7	4.73%
ECT	39	26.35%

Educational leader	14	9.46%
Educator	5	3.38%
Inclusion support	2	1.35%
Lecturer/Academic	15	10.14%
Manager	10	6.76%
Nominated supervisor	7	4.73%
Other	17	11.49%
Teacher - Primary	2	1.35%
PSFO	1	0.68%
Team Leader	2	1.35%
Total	148	100.00%

10. Experience and Qualifications

For this section, updated information on AGECS members' highest level of qualification is identified. In order to compare AGECS members to the national 'average' ECP, we also collected additional information regarding the studying status of members and the experience of members. Table 10.1 shows the highest level of qualification of AGECS members who responded to the survey. Table 10.1 shows that the majority of AGECS members are university qualified (95.57%), with less than 6% of members holding a diploma qualification, and no AGECS members holding a certificate as their highest qualification. As mentioned in the previous section 'AGECS Member Profile', many of our older members held diploma qualifications as that was the requisite qualification for early childhood teachers at the time.

This is a stark difference from the national ECP profile (Table 3.1), in which only 12.3% of ECPs hold a bachelor's degree or above. This difference is an important factor for the Council to consider when future planning, as it shows that early childhood teachers (as opposed to co-educators) are the group of practitioners represented in the AGECS membership base, and the group we are getting the most interaction from.

Highest qualification	No. of members	
Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education	9	6.98%
Master's degree	44	34.11%
Bachelor's degree	51	39.53%
Graduate diploma	18	13.95%
Diploma	7	5.43%
Certificate	0	0.00%
Total	129	100.00%

Table 10.2 we see that most AGECS members are not currently studying. It is unsurprising that the number of AGECS members undertaking study (86.82%) is lower than the national statistics (76.3%) (Table 3.2), as AGECS members are already highly qualified. Furthermore, for the members who are studying, master and doctoral degrees are more represented than bachelor and graduate diploma degrees.

This question enabled respondents to provide some additional information on their response to this question. Of those currently studying, only two listed recognised degrees, with the others listing unclear or self-directed study. The recognised degrees listed were graduate certificate in education research, which is a pathway qualification for higher research degrees like Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education and a master’s degree in environment and sustainability (which the respondent indicated was their second master’s degree).

Currently studying	No. of members	
Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education	3.88%	5
Master's degree	3.88%	5
Bachelor's degree	2.33%	3
Graduate diploma	1.55%	2
Diploma	0.0%	0
Certificate	1.55%	2
Not currently studying	86.82%	112
Total	129	100

Finally, we asked AGECS members for their years of experience in the workforce. Table 10.3 shows that survey respondents are experienced ECPs, with over three-quarters reporting more than 10 years of experience (79.07%), and over half of all respondents reporting more than 21 years of experience.

The ECEC NWC 2021 offered ‘10+ years’ as the highest option (Table 3.3), and 31.6% of ECPs across Australia had that much experience. When compared to the 33.9% of ECPs in the ECEC NWC 2021 who reported having three years of experience or less, this shows that nationally the ECEC workforce is in need of educational leadership.

With only 3 respondents having less than 3 years of experience, this data indicates that the academic awards program is not effectively engaging graduate teachers. Furthermore, it shows that AGECS members are experienced ECPs, compared to the national average, and that this detail could inform future planning decisions in terms of what is offered to members, but also offering these experienced ECPs a platform to share their own expertise developed over decades of practice.

Years worked	No. of members	
<1 year	1	0.78%
1-3 years	2	1.55%
4-6 years	11	8.53%
7-9 years	13	10.08%
10-15 years	15	11.63%
16-20 years	12	9.3%
21+ years	75	58.14%
Total	129	100.00%

Conclusion

This report has illuminated the stark differences between AGECS members and the 'average' early childhood professional. We have established that compared to the national statistics, AGECS members are considerably more experienced, and hold a significantly higher proportion of university degree qualifications. These two factors combined highlight the unique role of AGECS as an early childhood association. As a 100-year-old organisation who exemplify and advocate for excellence in early childhood, it is validating that the membership of AGECS is representative of this. We have also found that there is a portion of AGECS members who do not work in early childhood education settings but are engaging with us consistently. These members are situated in influential positions in the field, including state government and peak bodies. These factors call for a renewed focus on attracting emerging leaders in the early childhood profession.

The purpose of this report was to inform the AGECS Council of the composition of AGECS members, in comparison with the national statistics of early childhood teachers and educators, for the Council to undertake a consultation with the early childhood community. This report uncovered that some assumptions being made about the composition of our membership were flawed. Clarifying the target audience of AGECS, without excluding those who fall outside of this target, is the first step in the consultation phase of the community engagement project.

Determining the information sought from consultation is the second step in the consultation phase of the community engagement project. Other factors that might influence the consultation phase include the dearth of knowledge we have on the contexts and motivations of current early childhood professionals, including what their future career goals include, and valuing their personal lives that contribute to their role in children's lives, including their cultural background, language/s spoken and interest in early childhood education. This report informs AGECS Council members of the statistics about ECPs and AGECS members, but it does not identify their day-to-day practices, including struggles and triumphs, interests and skills, or life experiences, which is all key information to know when considering the cause and impact of mass exodus of workers from ECEC settings.