



# Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

March quarter 2015

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the March quarter 2015.

Key findings for the March quarter 2015 include:

- 1,211,200 children attended approved child care, up 7.4 per cent since with the March quarter 2014.
- 821,880 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 5.9 per cent since the March quarter 2014.
- 16,966 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 4.7 per cent since the March quarter 2014.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,541.2 million, up 19.7 per cent since the March quarter 2014.

## Introduction

This report presents information on the numbers of children and families using approved child care, the costs of care and the numbers and types of child care services in Australia. It includes data from the Child Care Management System (CCMS), MyChild website, Department of Human Services and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

During the March quarter 2015, 821,880 families used approved child care services for their 1,211,200 children.

- In terms of affordability, 92.4 per cent of these families are estimated to have received Child Care Rebate (CCR), with up to 50 per cent of their out-of-pocket costs covered by the Australian Government.
- In terms of availability, in the March quarter 2015, there were 16,966 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

**Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, March quarter 2015**

State and territory	Number of children using approved child care <sup>1</sup>	Number of families using approved child care <sup>1</sup>	Number of approved child care services	Estimated Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlement <sup>1</sup> ('000)	Estimated Child Care Rebate (CCR) entitlement <sup>1</sup> ('000)	Estimated number of families receiving CCR <sup>1</sup>
NSW	404,860	278,760	5,755	\$264,620	\$270,075	254,010
Vic.	304,810	199,570	3,941	\$245,478	\$195,186	185,770
Qld	274,500	186,730	3,472	\$166,224	\$149,461	172,240
SA	84,460	56,900	1,305	\$40,880	\$38,307	53,230
WA	93,720	65,780	1,579	\$46,968	\$59,945	61,310
Tas.	22,600	15,590	375	\$10,210	\$9,802	14,430
NT	9,120	6,500	184	\$3,450	\$7,990	6,310
ACT	26,400	18,230	355	\$8,565	\$24,025	17,740
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1,211,200</b>	<b>821,880</b>	<b>16,966</b>	<b>\$786,395</b>	<b>\$754,791</b>	<b>759,380</b>

<sup>1</sup> As families and children may use services in more than one state or territory and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Child Care Usage

### Children

During the March quarter 2015, 1,211,200 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 7.4 per cent since the March quarter 2014. For children aged 0–12 years using approved child care, this represents 30.8 per cent of the 3,861,920 children aged 0–12 years in Australia.

During the March quarter 2015, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (660,760 or 54.6 per cent), Outside School Hours Care (382,580 or 31.6 per cent), Family Day Care and In-Home Care (220,420 or 18.2 per cent), and Occasional Care (6,670 or 0.6 per cent).

**Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	641,740	631,400	658,400	664,890	660,760
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	179,200	192,510	203,790	208,380	220,420
Occasional Care	6,920	7,430	7,750	7,630	6,670
Outside School Hours Care	354,020	367,940	369,630	339,260	382,580
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,127,730</b>	<b>1,161,150</b>	<b>1,201,110</b>	<b>1,184,750</b>	<b>1,211,200</b>
<i>Per cent of Australian population<sup>2</sup></i>	29.2%	29.6%	30.6%	30.2%	30.8%

1 As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

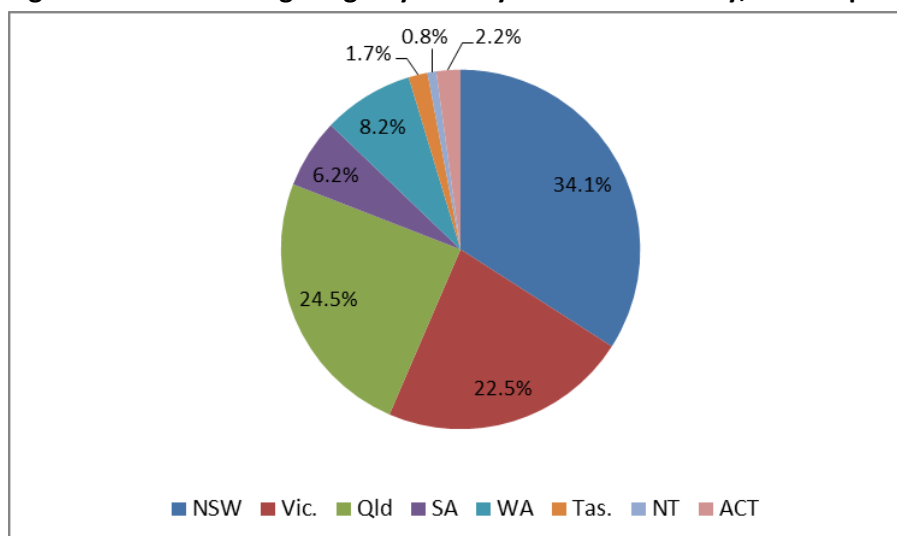
2 Number of children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Australian children aged 0–12 years.

NOTE: There was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period, due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014. Accordingly, the number of children that attended vacation care (and therefore Outside School Hours Care) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun. 2014.

In the March quarter 2015, the largest proportion of children attending Long Day Care was in New South Wales (34.1 per cent), followed by Queensland (24.5 per cent) and Victoria (22.5 per cent).

**Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, March quarter 2015**



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

**Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2015**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia <sup>1</sup>
Long Day Care	225,560	148,350	161,620	41,290	54,250	11,310	5,230	14,340	<b>660,760</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	80,170	79,560	34,190	10,520	14,170	5,000	530	2,700	<b>220,420</b>
Occasional Care	2,270	2,440	600	110	990	120	0	150	<b>6,670</b>
Outside School Hours Care	115,460	87,600	91,310	36,440	30,070	7,950	3,680	10,330	<b>382,580</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>404,860</b>	<b>304,810</b>	<b>274,500</b>	<b>84,460</b>	<b>93,720</b>	<b>22,600</b>	<b>9,120</b>	<b>26,400</b>	<b>1,211,200</b>

1 As children may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

While most children who used approved child care, used services located in major cities (945,850 children), around one in four (271,940 or 22.5 per cent) children used services located in regional and remote areas.

**Table 4: Number of children using child care by service type and region, March quarter 2015**

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional <sup>1</sup> and Remote Australia <sup>2</sup>	Total <sup>3</sup>
Long Day Care	498,740	163,970	<b>660,760</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	175,750	45,730	<b>220,420</b>
Occasional Care	3,940	2,730	<b>6,670</b>
Outside School Hours Care	310,720	72,750	<b>382,580</b>
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>945,850</b>	<b>271,940</b>	<b>1,211,200</b>

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

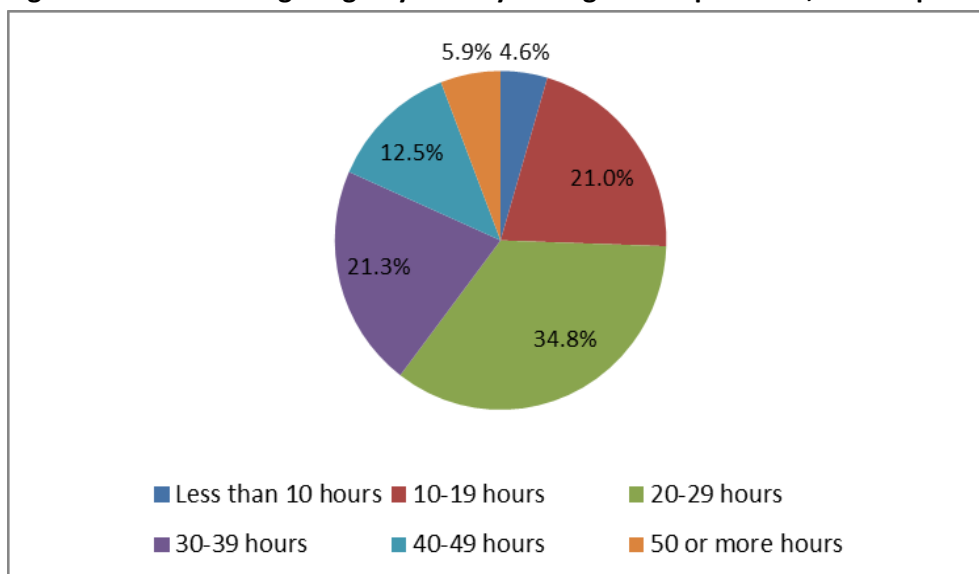
2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the March quarter 2015, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 25.4 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 28.1 hours per week.

**Figure 2: Children using Long Day Care by average hours per week, March quarter 2015**



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

**Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	27.8	27.6	28.0	27.7	28.1
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	31.3	31.1	31.6	32.2	32.8
Occasional Care	11.8	11.4	11.8	11.5	12.0
Outside School Hours Care	12.1	10.8	11.7	10.1	11.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.4</b>

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Families

During the March quarter 2015, there were 821,880 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 5.9 per cent since the March quarter 2014. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has increased by 18.5 per cent since the March quarter 2014.

**Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	517,770	518,170	535,930	539,630	532,950
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	104,130	110,690	116,190	117,790	123,400
Occasional Care	5,840	6,240	6,390	6,310	5,600
Outside School Hours Care	250,370	261,440	263,200	243,200	269,930
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>776,330</b>	<b>797,860</b>	<b>819,970</b>	<b>811,310</b>	<b>821,880</b>

<sup>1</sup> As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

NOTE: There was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period, due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014. Accordingly, the number of families that used vacation care (and therefore Outside School Hours Care) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the March quarter 2015, 278,760 families (33.9 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 199,570 families (24.3 per cent) in Victoria and 186,730 families (22.7 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (532,950 or 64.8 per cent) of all families had children in Long Day Care and around one-third of families had children in Outside School Hours Care (269,930 or 32.8 per cent).

**Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2015**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia <sup>1</sup>
Long Day Care	184,760	120,580	125,840	33,620	44,010	9,110	4,370	11,690	<b>532,950</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	46,670	39,430	21,160	6,120	8,200	3,450	370	1,600	<b>123,400</b>
Occasional Care	1,900	2,050	510	100	820	90	0	130	<b>5,600</b>
Outside School Hours Care	82,300	62,510	63,430	25,180	21,090	5,540	2,660	7,450	<b>269,930</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>278,760</b>	<b>199,570</b>	<b>186,730</b>	<b>56,900</b>	<b>65,780</b>	<b>15,590</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>18,230</b>	<b>821,880</b>

<sup>1</sup> As families may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Indigenous children and families

During the March quarter 2015, 28,800 Indigenous children (2.4 per cent of all children) used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased by 4.8 per cent since the March quarter 2014.

**Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	17,570	17,030	17,240	16,950	18,340
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	3,810	3,880	4,030	4,030	4,600
Occasional Care	180	180	180	190	190
Outside School Hours Care	7,130	7,380	7,340	6,020	6,900
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>27,490</b>	<b>27,580</b>	<b>27,910</b>	<b>26,420</b>	<b>28,800</b>

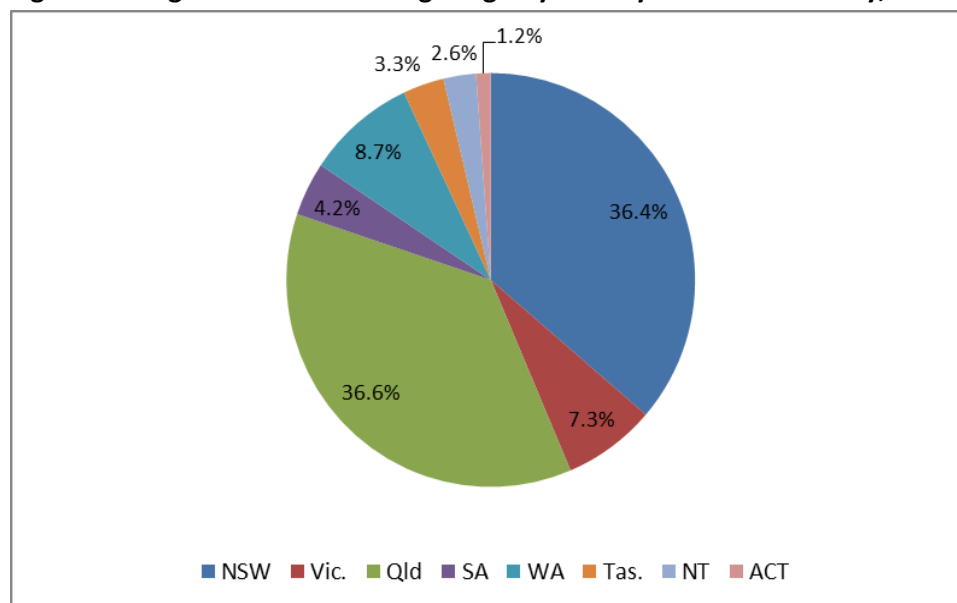
<sup>1</sup> As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

NOTE: In the Mar. quarter 2015 there was a change in methodology to more closely reflect the indigenous representation of children and families in child care

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The largest proportion of Indigenous children attending Long Day Care was in Queensland (36.6 per cent) and New South Wales (36.4 per cent).

**Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, March quarter 2015**



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Compared with all children, a smaller proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care, in each state and territory (13.3 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years, and 30.8 per cent all children aged 0–12 years, nationally).

**Table 9: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2015**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia <sup>1</sup>
Long Day Care	6,670	1,350	6,720	770	1,590	600	470	210	<b>18,340</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,910	740	1,240	190	210	330	40	30	<b>4,600</b>
Occasional Care	120	20	20	10	20	10	0	<10	<b>190</b>
Outside School Hours Care	2,060	630	2,310	520	560	350	380	110	<b>6,900</b>
<b>Total Indigenous children using approved child care<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>10,340</b>	<b>2,640</b>	<b>9,930</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>28,800</b>
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>15.3%</i>	<i>16.8%</i>	<i>15.4%</i>	<i>12.0%</i>	<i>8.4%</i>	<i>15.3%</i>	<i>4.4%</i>	<i>18.7%</i>	<b>13.3%</b>

1 As children may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

2 Number of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Indigenous children aged 0–12 years.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data and ABS Cat. No. 3238.0 Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001 to 2026 (30 April 2014)

Half of all Indigenous children who attended child care did so in regional or remote Australia (14,400 children or 50.0 per cent).

**Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, March quarter 2015**

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional <sup>1</sup> and Remote Australia <sup>2</sup>	Total <sup>3</sup>
Long Day Care	8,830	9,590	<b>18,340</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,470	2,160	<b>4,600</b>
Occasional Care	80	120	<b>190</b>
Outside School Hours Care	3,830	3,080	<b>6,900</b>
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>14,610</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>28,800</b>

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.



During the March quarter 2015, 19,850 Indigenous families used approved child care, an increase of 8.7 per cent since the March quarter 2014.

**Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	13,190	12,960	12,980	13,180	14,290
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,330	2,340	2,380	2,440	2,790
Occasional Care	130	140	140	150	160
Outside School Hours Care	4,730	4,900	4,890	4,120	4,680
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>18,260</b>	<b>18,260</b>	<b>18,280</b>	<b>18,190</b>	<b>19,850</b>

<sup>1</sup> As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

NOTE: In the Mar. quarter 2015 there was a change in methodology to more closely reflect the indigenous representation of children and families in child care

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

More than one third (7,330 or 36.9 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales; another third (6,780 or 34.2 per cent) had children in approved child care located in Queensland.

**Table 12: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2015**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia <sup>1</sup>
Long Day Care	5,340	1,060	5,080	630	1,200	460	400	170	<b>14,290</b>
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,220	360	740	100	120	240	30	20	<b>2,790</b>
Occasional Care	90	20	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	<b>160</b>
Outside School Hours Care	1,390	440	1,570	340	360	240	270	80	<b>4,680</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>7,330</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>6,780</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>19,850</b>

<sup>1</sup> As families may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Availability

### Services

During the March quarter 2015, 16,966 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 4.7 per cent (759 services) since the March quarter 2014. There were 9,356 Outside School Hours Care services which accounted for 55.1 per cent of all services and 6,656 Long Day Care services which accounted for 39.2 per cent of all services.

**Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

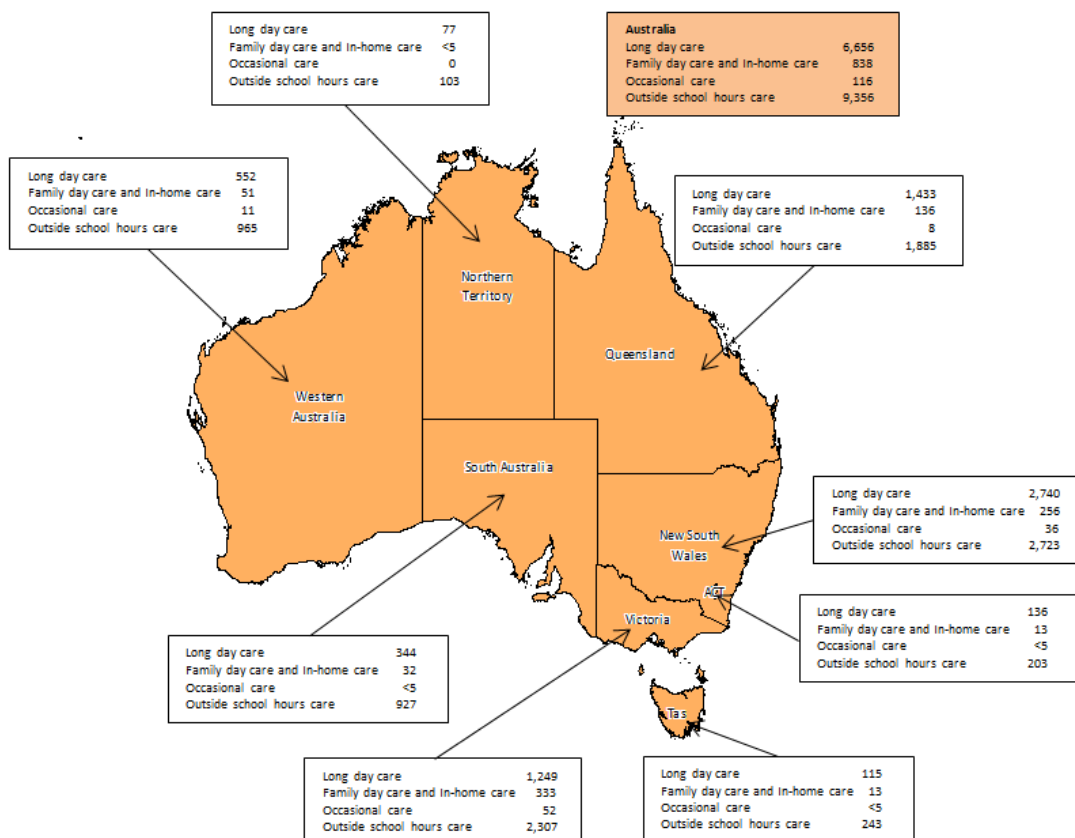
Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	6,450	6,606	6,601	6,623	6,656
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	714	783	829	840	838
Occasional Care	119	117	115	116	116
Outside School Hours Care	8,924	9,177	9,172	8,605	9,356
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,207</b>	<b>16,683</b>	<b>16,717</b>	<b>16,184</b>	<b>16,966</b>

NOTE: There was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period, due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014. Accordingly, the number of vacation care services (and therefore Outside School Hours Care services) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the March quarter 2015, around one third of services were located in New South Wales (33.9 per cent), with 23.2 per cent in Victoria and 20.5 per cent in Queensland.

**Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2015**



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Affordability

### Costs of care before Australian Government fee assistance

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the March quarter 2015 was \$8.00, an increase of 4.2 per cent since the March quarter 2014. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$9.50 per hour for Occasional Care services to a low of \$6.45 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services.

**Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, March quarter 2014 to March quarter 2015**

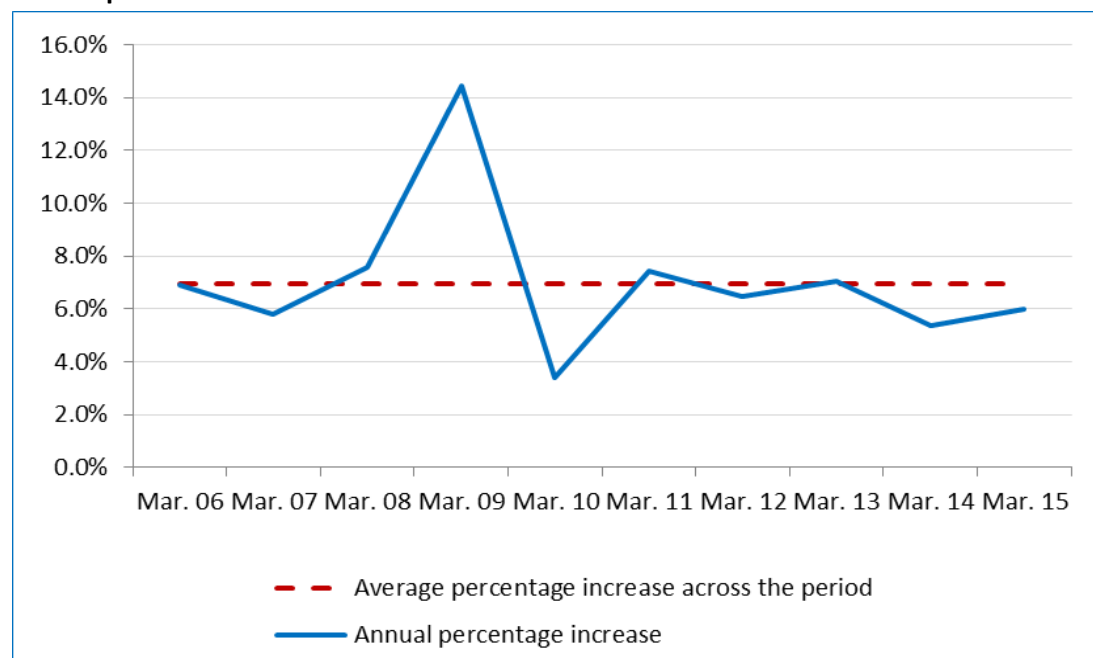
Service type	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14	Mar. 15
Long Day Care	\$7.80	\$7.95	\$8.05	\$8.05	\$8.30
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$7.95	\$7.95	\$7.90	\$7.90	\$7.85
Occasional Care	\$9.15	\$9.25	\$9.35	\$9.40	\$9.50
Outside School Hours Care	\$6.15	\$6.35	\$6.30	\$6.55	\$6.45
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$7.65</b>	<b>\$7.75</b>	<b>\$7.85</b>	<b>\$7.85</b>	<b>\$8.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Hourly fee for each service type is calculated by dividing the sum of all fee amounts by the sum of all hours for each service type.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The average hourly fee for Long Day Care increased by 6.0 per cent from the March quarter 2014 to the March quarter 2015. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 7.0 per cent for the period from the March quarter 2006 to the March quarter 2015.

**Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, March quarter 2006 to March quarter 2015**



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of child care for eligible families through the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate to help parents with the cost of approved child care. During the March quarter 2015, the total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate was \$1,541.2 million. The majority (\$962.9 million or 62.5 per cent) of this was paid in relation to families using Long Day Care services.

**Table 15: Total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlements by service type, March quarter 2015**

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$396,193	\$566,745	\$962,939
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$334,098	\$107,227	\$441,325
Occasional Care	\$1,271	\$1,867	\$3,139
Outside School Hours Care	\$54,832	\$78,951	\$133,783
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$786,395</b>	<b>\$754,791</b>	<b>\$1,541,186</b>

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data – based on estimated entitlements.

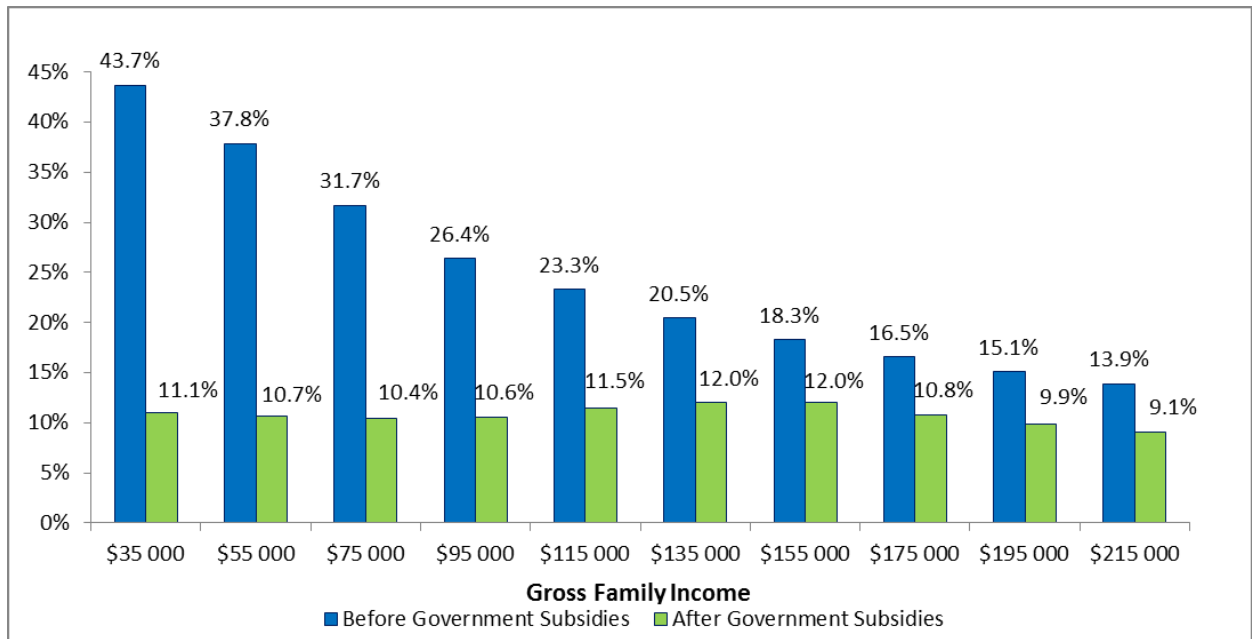
### Costs of care after Australian Government fee assistance

The child care out-of-pocket costs for families are determined by a combination of the fees services charge, the type of child care used, the amount of care used by families for their children and the amount of Australian Government subsidies that families are entitled to.

Before Australian Government child care subsidies were taken into account, out-of-pocket costs for families varied from 43.7 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 13.9 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year.

After Australian Government child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs were significantly reduced, varying from 11.1 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 9.1 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year.

**Figure 6: Out-of-pocket costs<sup>1</sup> for one child in Long Day Care before and after Australian Government subsidies, March quarter 2015**



1 Out-of-pocket costs (before and after Australian Government subsidies) are shown for families with one child using Long Day Care for 50 hours of care per week.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Vacancies

Table 16 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the March quarter 2013 to the March quarter 2015 by service type.

It appears that vacancies in Long Day Care services peak in the March quarter of each year (nearly 81,000 in March quarter 2013, over 92,000 in March quarter 2014 and approximately 98,500 in March quarter 2015) and that the number of vacancies then declines throughout the year.

**Table 16: Child care vacancies by service type, March quarter 2013 to March quarter 2015<sup>1</sup>**

Service type	Mar-13	Jun-13	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	Jun-14*	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15
<b>Long Day Care</b>									
Total number of services	6,268	6,310	6,360	6,471	6,443	6,606	6,601	6,623	6,656
Per cent services reporting	83%	84%	91%	90%	93%	90%	91%	90%	91%
Proportion with vacancies	89%	89%	86%	86%	90%	88%	87%	87%	91%
Average vacancies	80,630	78,250	68,490	66,410	92,340	83,740	75,230	70,160	98,510
<b>Family Day Care</b>									
Total number of services	447	499	560	605	642	714	761	772	771
Per cent services reporting	54%	50%	47%	46%	40%	38%	36%	36%	34%
Proportion with vacancies	81%	83%	80%	85%	85%	87%	87%	85%	91%
Average vacancies	6,980	6,890	7,130	7,500	8,610	8,690	8,070	8,400	8,120
<b>Occasional Care</b>									
Total number of services	118	119	119	119	119	117	115	116	116
Per cent services reporting	51%	55%	63%	66%	61%	59%	60%	68%	65%
Proportion with vacancies	55%	61%	52%	53%	55%	54%	51%	47%	55%
Average vacancies	320	380	310	300	330	320	280	310	450
<b>Before and After School Hours Care</b>									
Total number of services	6,219	6,292	6,314	6,306	6,514	6,633	6,589	6,628	6,841
Per cent services reporting	63%	62%	66%	66%	65%	63%	63%	62%	55%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	87%	88%	89%	89%	90%	91%	91%	90%
Average vacancies	84,550	88,010	96,160	100,410	101,880	103,570	107,900	109,790	92,350
<b>Vacation Care</b>									
Total number of services	2,332	2,426	2,482	2,467	2,403	2,544	2,583	1,977	2,515
Per cent services reporting	57%	57%	60%	56%	60%	58%	59%	75%	58%
Proportion with vacancies	71%	69%	72%	71%	73%	69%	73%	71%	73%
Average vacancies	23,860	22,650	29,480	26,200	29,130	28,280	33,370	32,280	32,020

<sup>1</sup> Data relating to the small number of reporting services with all places not meeting the relevant vacancies definition have not been included in this report.

\* June quarter 2014 vacancy data has been updated to reflect a reference week that better represents long term vacancy patterns.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

## Technical Notes

### General counting rules

Use of child care services is counted for each individual child using approved child care services. An instance of child care usage is defined as at least one child care attendance per child care service for the quarter irrespective of duration or frequency. For example, a single hour at an Occasional Care centre or 40 hours per week throughout the quarter at a Long Day Care centre, are both counted as an instance of child care usage.

Children and families are recorded for each of the service types that they use during the quarter. Children and families using more than one service type during the quarter or financial year are counted only once within each applicable service type category and only once within the 'Total' category for the relevant time period. Note that as children and families may use more than one service type in any particular timeframe the sum of the component parts may not equal the 'Total' category.

Changes in service type numbers need to be understood in the context of counting rules. Prior to the implementation of the Child Care Management System (CCMS) all services with an 'active' status were included regardless of attendance. This resulted in a small number of services being included in the data that did not actually have any children in attendance. Under CCMS a service is counted as 'active' only if it had at least one child attending at some time during the quarter, thus aligning the counting rules for children, families and services.

### Data sources

Data included in this report comes from the following sources:

- The majority of data is extracted from the Child Care Data and Reporting System (CCDARS). CCDARS is a Department of Education and Training based data storage system for data collected from approved child care services via the Child Care Management System.
- Supplementary data is sourced from the MyChild website and the Department of Human Services.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data is included in this report for comparison purposes.

**Revisions:** Due to changes in the administrative system, data may be revised to ensure the most accurate, up-to-date figures are published.

### Vacancy information

All approved services are required to regularly report their anticipated vacancies according to a standard definition, to the Department of Education and Training. For most services, a vacancy is defined as a permanent full day vacancy that the service is willing to fill.

The information contained in this report (Table 16) relates to specific reference weeks. As is standard practice, a reference week is used to represent the quarter and reduce errors due to potential inconsistencies in reporting. For the March quarter 2015, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care and are reported for the week 23 March to 29 March 2015. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 19 January to 25 January 2015.

As the June quarter 2014 vacancy data has been revised, the reference week used to calculate the vacancies for Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care and Before and After School Hours Care are reported for the week 26 May to 1 June 2014. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 14 April to 20 April 2014 for New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, 7 April to 13 April 2014 for Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory, 28 April to 4 May 2014 for Tasmania. Vacation Care results are calculated using a 4 day reference week for New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory due to a public holiday coinciding with school holidays.

## Definitions

**Approved care:** Care provided by Long Day Care, Family Day Care and In-Home Care, Outside School Hours Care and Occasional Care services approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit on behalf of families.

**Average number of vacancies:** As services report vacancies for each day of the week, the number of vacancies for each service is averaged out across the weekdays, that is, it is the sum of vacancies on each weekday divided by five. The total number of vacancies in an area is the sum of the average vacancies per service.

**Child Care Benefit (CCB):** A payment made by the Australian Government to families to assist with the cost of child care.

**Child Care Management System (CCMS):** This is the electronic system used for the administration of CCB. Under CCMS, approved child care services submit attendance information to the Department of Education and Training over the internet. Data in this report are primarily sourced from the CCMS.

**Child Care Rebate (CCR):** A payment made by the Australian Government to assist eligible working families with the out-of-pocket cost of child care. CCR is calculated based on the gap between the fees charged by the child care service and the CCB paid in respect of fee relief. Families who satisfy the work/training/study test requirements may be entitled to receive CCR for 50 per cent of all out-of-pocket costs up to an annual limit.

**Family Day Care:** Family Day Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children on behalf of an approved Family Day Care service.

**In-Home Care:** In-Home Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in the child's own home on behalf of an approved In-Home Care service.

**Long Day Care:** This is a centre-based form of child care service. Long Day Care services provide quality all day or part-time care for children of working families and the general community.

**Occasional Care:** This is a care type mainly for non-school aged children. These services cater mainly for the needs of families who require short-term care for their children.

**Outside School Hours Care:** Services provide care for school aged children before and/or after school during the school term. Some services also provide care on 'pupil free' days. Vacation Care is also included in this category. Vacation Care services provide care for school children during the school holidays. Vacancies are reported separately for Before and/or After School Hours Care and Vacation Care.

**Reference week:** For Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and/or After School Hours Care and Occasional Care services, the reference week for vacancy information is selected as one of the last available weeks that is not affected by school or other holiday periods and a week that provided a consistent (with other weeks in the quarter) level of services that had reported across the quarter. The reference week includes weekdays only as most services do not operate on weekends. The reference week for Vacation Care is based on each state and territory's school holiday periods.

**Region:** Regions of Australia are classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2011. This classification divides each state and territory into several regions on the basis of their relative access to services.

**Reporting services:** The services that reported their vacancy information for the reference week. This includes a small number of services that reported vacancy information and indicated they were not operational for the week.

**Service:** Child care services are approved by the Australian Government to receive CCB on behalf of families. Most Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Vacation Care services and some In-Home Care and Occasional Care services are approved child care services. The total number of services refers to the number of services that were active during the March quarter 2015, that is, they had at least one record of child care attendance in the quarter.

**Vacancy:** Anticipated availability that child care services are willing to fill for each week they are operational. This is an ongoing full day vacancy for Long Day Care and Family Day Care, full day vacancy for Vacation Care and Occasional Care services and an ongoing full session vacancy for Before and/or After School Hours Care.



ISBN

978-1-76028-542-5



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