



Introduction

Welcome to our third newsletter of the Teachers in Early Education (TEE) study. The TEE project is a four-year longitudinal study (2024-2027) funded by the Australian Research Council (DP240100249) to support the supply of a quality early childhood teacher (ECT) workforce in Australia. This newsletter is our second for the year, providing you with insights and updates about the study.

TEE Project updates

Component 1: Scoping

The first paper from the 2024 scoping review of approved ECT programs has been accepted for publication. The paper is entitled:

Garvis, S., Boyd, W & Gibson, M. (accepted). Gaps, Compliance or Variation in Australian Early Childhood Teacher Education. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*.

We are currently working on a scoping review of 2025 ACECQA-approved programs, which have increased from 103 in 2024, to 119 in 2025. Findings include:

- In 2025, 81.5% of programs were delivered by a university, while the remaining 18.5% were delivered by a TAFE, Institute, or registered training organisation.
- The 18.5% of programs consisted of 11 Graduate Diploma programs, 9 Bachelor programs, and 2 Master of Teaching programs.
- Victoria has highest number of approved programs (n=28).
- 57% of programs focused on birth to 5 years.
- On-campus delivery has grown since 2024, from 29 to 43 programs.

Interviews with early childhood teacher education academics from across Australia have also been completed (n=23) and we have begun to analyse the data. We hope to share insights soon, also sharing some of the innovative practices being implemented across Australian early childhood teacher education programs.

Component 2: Longitudinal surveys

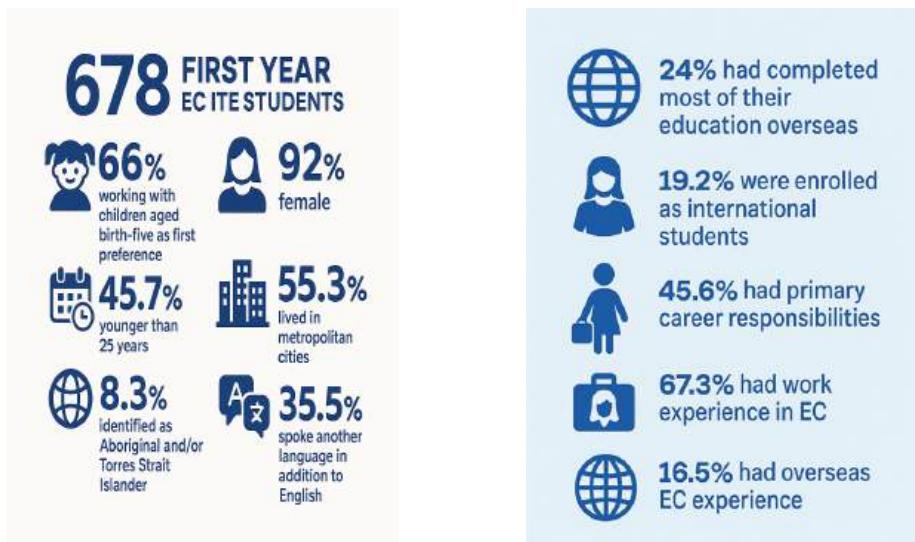
Work on analyses of 1494 responses from 2023-2025 Wave 1 survey respondents is well underway. Analyses are focusing on:

1. Students enrolled in the first year of an early childhood degree: Who they are and what are their work intentions?
2. Students enrolled in their final year of an early childhood degree: What are the personal resources and contextual factors that support or constrain their supply and quality?
3. Diploma-qualified students enrolled in an early childhood degree: (i) What motivates diploma-qualified educators to pursue an ECT degree qualification? (ii) How do personal characteristics and attributes influence the ITE program experiences and wellbeing of diploma-qualified educators during their upskilling? (iii) How do the personal characteristics and attributes of diploma-qualified educators influence their confidence and career aspirations as ECTs?
4. What features of early childhood initial teacher education programs are associated with teacher supply and quality?
5. What personal and contextual factors are associated with the career intentions of international early childhood teacher preservice teachers?

TEE longitudinal survey analysis 1: who are the first-year early childhood education students?

Despite recent attempts to address the ECT shortage in early childhood settings through supporting people to enrol in initial teacher education, surprisingly little is known about who enrols in an ECT degree in Australia or what their motivations or intentions are. Sandie, Li and Marwa have been looking at the survey data from 678 first year students across three waves (2023, 2024, 2025), 446 of whom indicated that their first preference is to work with children aged birth to five, to examine (i) their demographic characteristics; (ii) factors that influence students' decision to work with children aged birth-five; and (iii) students' work intentions (with whom, where and in what role they aspire to work) at the time of enrolling in an ECT degree.

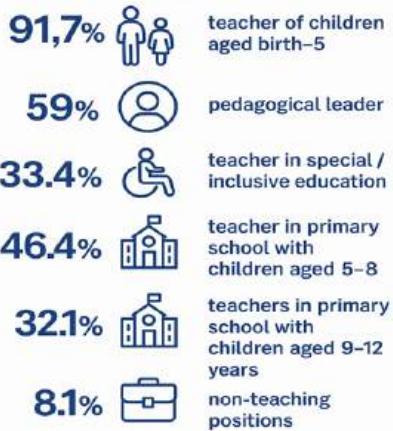
In terms of demographics, we found that of 678 first year EC ITE students:



When we compared students who indicated a first preference to work with children aged birth to five, from those who did not, we found that those who expressed a first preference to work with children aged birth to five, were **more** likely to be enrolled in a birth to five focused degree; and be older, experienced in working in EC, multi-lingual, overseas-educated, have overseas experience in EC, and be international students. In addition, they were more likely to aspire to be ECTs, pedagogical leaders, centre-directors and centre owners, than their peers who did not express a preference for working with children aged birth to five. In terms of characteristics and wellbeing, when compared to students who expressed a preference to work with older children, students who preferred to work with children aged birth to five reported: higher adaptability, poorer sleep, higher burnout and higher levels of stress.

Of those students who expressed a preference to work with children aged birth to five, the following per cent expressed an interest in the following roles:

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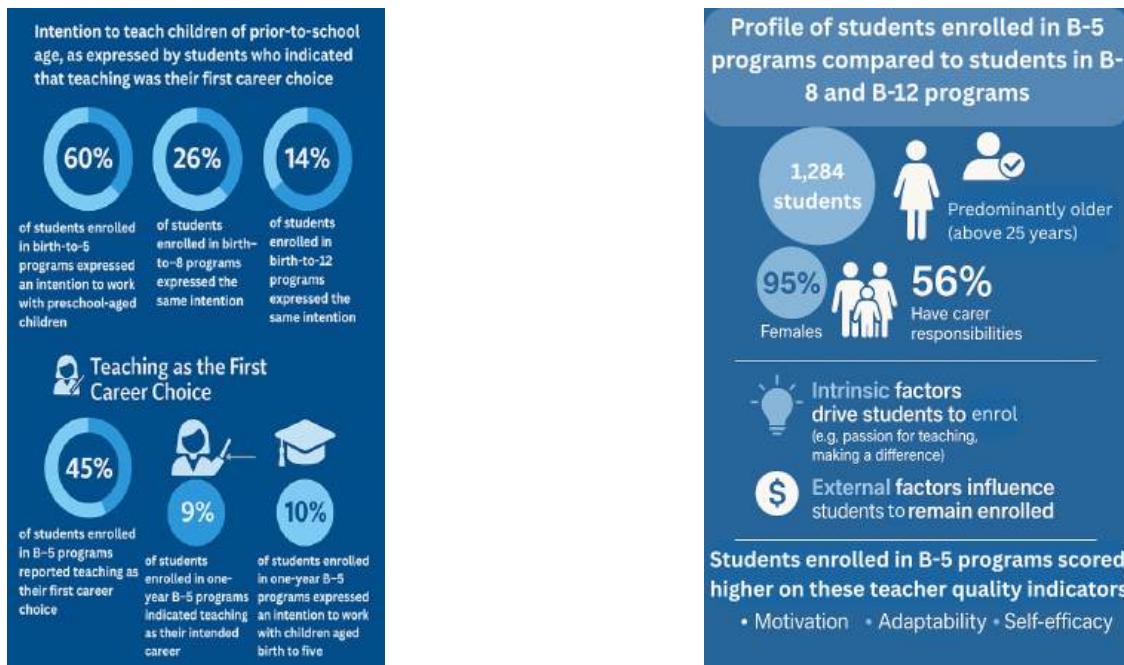


When asked their preference for organisational settings / location they would most like to work in, whilst 25.6% expressed 'no preference', 32.5% indicated a preference to work in EC organisations, with a larger percentage (18.4%) preferring not-for-profit over for-profit (14.1%) EC organisations (8.5% small business operators; 5.6% corporate / large chains). Further, 91.7% indicated that they would be interested in working in pre-school / kindergarten, whilst 59% were interested in working in long day care and 22.8% in schools.

In summary, the survey data from first-year Early Childhood Teaching (ECT) students (2023–2025) reveal a diverse cohort, with most students' female, under 25, and metropolitan-based. Many are multilingual, overseas educated, or have prior experience in early childhood education. Students who prefer working with children aged birth–five are typically older, experienced, and internationally diverse, and they report higher adaptability but also greater stress and burnout. Preferences to work with younger children are strongly linked to program type, previous EC experience, and career goals within the early childhood sector.

TEE longitudinal survey analysis 2: what are the differences between students in different programs?

Marianne and Marwa have been looking at differences in students enrolled in different early childhood teaching programs. Analyses of data from the whole sample of survey respondents ($N=1486$) showed significant differences across demographic variables.



An interesting point to note was that these B-5 students were more significantly depended on external factors to remain enrolled in their program (e.g., pay; demand for teachers).

On indicators of teacher quality, students enrolled in B-5 programs had significantly higher motivation, adaptability, and self-efficacy scores than students enrolled in B-8 and B-12 programs.

TEE longitudinal survey analysis 3: what are the distinctions between degree-qualified teachers and diploma-qualified educators?

Ashley, Marianne, Tracy and Marwa are looking at who are the diploma-qualified educators upskilling to an early childhood teacher degree qualification. They are exploring the question, 'How do diploma-qualified educators upskilling to an ECT degree qualification compare with the non-diploma students in shaping the supply and quality of Australia's ECT workforce?'

Upskilling Pathways:

Insights from Diploma-Qualified Educators in Early Childhood

Between 2023 and 2025, the TEACHERS IN EARLY EDUCATION (TEE) survey collected responses from 1,486 students in early childhood education programs.

572

respondents
held a diploma
in early childhood
education before
entering their
current studies

914

respondents
did not report
having a diploma
in early childhood
education



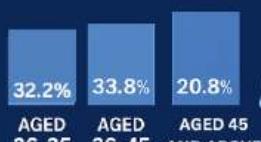
40% were in the
first year of
their studies

56.6% were in their
final year

3.3% reported that
they were in both
the first and final
year

Comparing demographic, current studies, and career aspirations and plans, data between these two groups yielded interesting significant findings as below:

DIPLOMA-QUALIFIED PARTICIPANTS



64.3%
HAVE PRIMARY
CARE
RESPONSIBILITIES

95.3%
PRIMARY
DOMESTIC

70.1%
ENGLISH SPEAKING
ONLY



NSW
45.6%

30.6%
VIC

STUDY PATTERNS AND EXPERIENCE

70,6%

of diploma respondents
report over 6 years of
professional experience



42%

exceeding 10 years



50,2%

study part-time



72,7%

study online



90,4%

enrolled in
undergraduate
programs



69,6%

enrolled in birth to
5 years program

When asked about whether teaching birth-5 was their first career choice, non-diploma respondents were less likely to indicate 'yes' (65.7%). Similarly, non-diploma respondents expressed greater interest in working with early primary (76%) and upper primary (49.3%) students.

Component 3: TEE tool

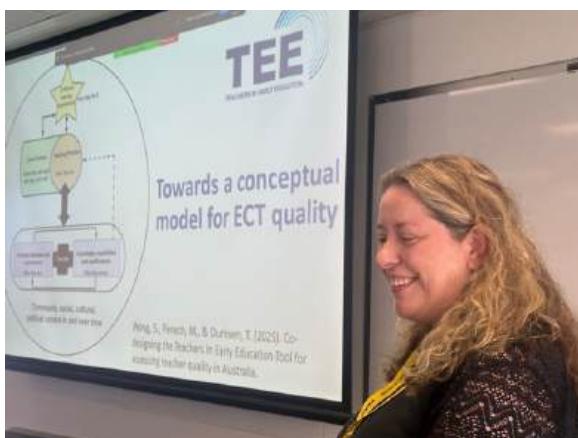
We thank all Stakeholders who have contributed to supporting the development of the TEE Tool – a Tool for assessing early childhood teacher quality in context.

Based on an initial two-day workshop in 2023, and follow-up survey, we developed an initial conceptual model of early childhood teacher quality – and published the findings in:

Wong, S., Fenech, M., & Durksen, T. L. (2025). Assessing Teacher Quality in the Early Years: Co-Designing the Teachers in Early Education Tool in Australia. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 50(3), 244-260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391251358008>

Stakeholder feedback, and our reading of the literature, made it clear to us that the TEE Tool needed a well-informed, theoretically robust, underpinning conceptualisation of early childhood teacher quality – which, as we are all aware, is a 'contested concept'. We therefore returned to the literature to address the research question: *How has early childhood teacher quality in birth to five early years settings been conceptualised?* Understandings from this review, alongside previous stakeholder input, have led to what we think is a sound conceptualisation of early childhood teacher quality - that underpins the on-going development of the TEE Tool. A paper on this literature review and conceptualisation is currently under review.

This work has led us to the first draft of TEE Tool, which we shared with our Stakeholders in a second Stakeholder workshop in October 2025. We provided Stakeholders with an overview of the TEE project and reiterated our commitment to co-design of the TEE Tool. Participants generously shared their expertise in reviewing and refining the Tool, resources, and methods.



*TEE Tool
Stakeholder
Workshop, 31st
October 2025,
The University of
Sydney*

We are profiling our TEE member: CI Professor Susanne Garvis

Susanne Garvis is a professor of early childhood education at Griffith University who has worked in higher education in Australia, Sweden and Norway. She is an internationally renowned early childhood education expert within policy, quality,

and learning. Susanne has worked with various governments, professional organisations and NGOs across the world where her research has informed teacher education, policy development, and professional learning. She is a mixed methods

(quantitative and qualitative) researcher with extensive experience in quality improvement, pedagogical practices and teacher education. Her focus is on supporting voice and lived experience within her research.

TEE CI Professor Susanne Garvis



TEE presentations

AJEC symposium AJEC Research Symposium 2025 Perth 1st October: Provocation Presentation: *Ways forward for early childhood teacher education in Australia*. Susanne Garvis and Wendy Boyd attended the presentation.

In the short provocation we were able to share some insights from the 2024 scoping review of approved ECT programs. The provocations at the symposium were designed to create discussion with the audience. Insights were gained from the audience on reflections of the current diversity across early childhood teacher education programs in Australia.

Four papers from TEE – two focused on the Wave 1 survey and two on the development of the TEE tool – will be presented as a symposium at the [Australian Association for Research Conference \(AARE\)](https://aare.edu.au/), to be held at the University of Newcastle, November 30 - December 4.



TEE CI's
Professor
Wendy
Boyd, and
Professor
Susanne
Garvis with
TEE RA
Jessamine
Giese PhD,
at the
AJEC
Research
Symposium,
1st October 20
25, Perth

TEE publications

Garvis, S., Boyd, W & Gibson, M. (accepted). Gaps, Compliance or Variation in Australian Early Childhood Teacher Education. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*.

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TEE media impact

Our TEE lead investigator, Professor Marianne Fenech, spoke on the ABC 7.30 Report in July about how fast-tracked early childhood education courses are putting children at risk. Video is available [here](#) and ABC online article is available [here](#)



Professor Marianne Fenech on the ABC 7.30 Report, July 2025

2025 TEE Project Survey gift card winners

Thank you to all participants who completed our TEE survey. Wave 2 and 3 participants were sent their \$25 gift cards in October.

Congratulations to the following ten wave 1 survey participants who won \$100 gift cards for completing the survey: Lai Wei, Md Yousuf Hossain, Andrew, Nadine Arnold, Emily Paternoster, Jayme Cooper, Mutya Angela Carpio, Ashika Wijerathna, Asri Aspani and Niki Williscroft.

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