HumanAbility

Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care - Entry Requirements Review

Consultation Strategy
June 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project details

Project full name and code:	24-003 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care - Entry Requirements Review
Project shortform name:	Diploma of ECEC Project
Project Manager:	Rosalie Staggard
Consultation Manager	Larry Price

1.2 Purpose of the Consultation Strategy

Underpinned by the HumanAbility Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Engagement Principles, the purpose of the Consultation Strategy (strategy) is to support the Diploma of ECEC Project (the project) in identifying key stakeholder groups and providing objectives, methods and timing for consultation.

The strategy will also outline communication channels and tools throughout the life cycle of the project.

A detailed Engagement Action Plan and Stakeholder Register will be developed in consultation with the Technical Committee and Project Team.

1.3 Intended audience

The intended audience for the strategy is the Project Manager, Technical Committee Consultation Manager, Project Team, DEWR and key stakeholders.

2. Background

2.1 Overview of the project

The current entry requirement for the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is having a significant impact on the number of people who are eligible to apply to undertake the qualification.

In response to stakeholder feedback and to improve accessibility to the qualification a project will be initiated to:
- Review the entry requirements for the Diploma.
- Undertake a mapping exercise between current and past Certificate III in ECEC qualifications.
- Create a bridging skill set to support more flexible entry requirements.

- Develop a pre-entry assessment tool that will be used to determine whether a combination of earlier Certificate III qualifications combined with experience would be equivalent to the current Certificate III qualifications.
- Review, revise and relaunch the DEWR-funded Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) toolkit.

2.3 Importance of stakeholder engagement in project success

Stakeholders will play a crucial role in shaping the project. We're committed to hearing from a diverse range of voices, including training providers, industry bodies, unions, employers, system users and government agencies.

HumanAbility will engage with key stakeholders through consultations to gather insights and feedback which will provide valuable perspectives, inform changes to the entry requirement and the development of resources.

3. Stakeholder engagement objectives and scope

3.1 Stakeholder engagement objectives

- Establish and coordinate a Technical Committee consisting of a mix of training providers, employers, unions, peak bodies, and government who, in combination, can provide expertise on all aspects of the project including the impact of changes to entry requirements.
- Foster collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders from diverse sectors, including training providers, industry bodies, unions, employers, government agencies, students and direct beneficiaries of the programs.
- Gather diverse perspectives and insights to inform changes to the entry requirement and the development of resources.
- Ensure stakeholders feel heard and valued throughout the project, promoting transparency and inclusivity.
- Keep stakeholders informed of consultation opportunities, project timings and progress.
- Through ongoing industry stewardship, review and monitor the impact of project outputs.

3.2 Scope of stakeholder engagement activities

In Scope
- Consultation with key stakeholders across the children's education and care sector on the entry requirements to CHC50121 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and the recognition tools being developed within the project.
- Engagement methods and schedule of activities as outlined in section 5.

Out of Scope
- Consultation that might reflect or indicate changes to the qualifications and units of competency within the CHC Training Package.

- Consultation to inform the current or future iterations of the workforce report.
- Consultation with stakeholders in aged care, health, human services, sport and recreation sectors, unless they also deliver services or provide support in the children's education and care sector.
- Engagement methods and activities outside of the project life cycle and/or not listed under section 5.

4.   Stakeholder analysis

4.1 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder groups were identified and mapped according to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and practices of engagement.

The mapping exercise identified how we will engage with and what methods will be applied to each stakeholder group to inform project outcomes, as outlined in section 5.

Further stakeholder analysis, in consultation with the Technical Committee will identify key stakeholder organisations and individuals to consult throughout the project lifecycle, including the methods of engagement. A stakeholder register will be developed to capture intended and actual consultation outcomes.

Note: the stakeholder register will remain confidential as it will contain names and details of HumanAbility's partners.

4.2 Stakeholder categories

Stakeholder group	Benefits of involvement	Level of interest / Level of influence or expertise	Methods of engagement (IAP2)
Children's Education and Care Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)	Direct experience and understanding of the qualifications – provide advice to HumanAbility as expert representatives from across the sector	High / High	Collaborate
Training providers, including public and private providers – TAFEs, private RTOs, schools	Direct experience and understanding of the qualification and entry requirements	High / High	Collaborate
Assurance and regulatory bodies	Have direct influence on the children's education and care system	High / High	Collaborate
Industry Training Advisory Boards	Understanding of the qualification and entry requirements	High / medium	Involve

Stakeholder group	Benefits of involvement	Level of interest / Level of influence or expertise	Methods of engagement (IAP2)
Unions	Advocate for improved training and pathway opportunities for children's education and care workforce	High / high	Involve
Employees working in children's education and care settings	Direct beneficiaries of project outcomes and can identify barriers to participation in training	Medium / high	Involve
Government agencies - state	Develop state-based early childhood strategies, have high impact through funding models and place-based initiatives	Medium / high	Involve
Government agencies - national	Develop national early childhood and community sector strategies	Medium / high	Involve
Industry peaks	Advocate for improved training and pathway opportunities for children's education and care workforce	High / medium	Involve
Students – including student undertaking the qualifications or considering studies	Direct beneficiaries of project outcomes and can identify barriers to participation in training	Medium / high	Involve
Higher education providers	Consulting on how changes to entry requirements may impact articulated entry pathways/ credit for ECEC Diploma holders into the Bachelor would be beneficial	Medium / medium	Consult
Research organisations, including NCVER	Relevant data and research papers may inform project outcomes	Medium / medium	Consult
Major employers across children's education and care sector, including private and public providers	Direct experience in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the workforce	Medium / medium	Consult
SME across children's education and care sector including private and public providers	Direct experience in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the workforce	Medium / medium	Consult

Stakeholder group	Benefits of involvement	Level of interest / Level of influence or expertise	Methods of engagement (IAP2)
Local government (as employer)	Direct experience in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the workforce	Medium / medium	Consult
Priority cohort - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	Provides First Nations people with the opportunity to actively contribute to project outcomes. Consultation designed in partnership with NACCHO and the ACCHO network	Medium / medium	Consult

5.   Strategic approach

HumanAbility will undertake stakeholder consultations nationally to seek views from a range of stakeholders identified above on current entry requirement for the Diploma of Early Childhood and Education.

Consultation will cover a range of geographical areas in every state and territory, including metropolitan, regional, and rural settings.

The stakeholder register, feedback, engagement outcomes will be captured in HumanAbility's Stakeholder Relationship Management (SRM) system.

Below is a high-level plan for engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, including engagement methods and timing aligned to project deliverables. A detailed engagement approach, including which stakeholders will be consulted, when and where the consultations will take place, will be outlined in the Engagement Action Plan.

5.1 Engagement methods

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
Consultation with Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)	To provide advice on the establishment of Technical Committee, suggestions for engagement and feedback on project deliverables	Key influencers	At scheduled IAC meetings (during the lifecycle of the project)
Technical Committee	To provide governance and oversight of the project	Key influences	As needed throughout the project lifecycle
1:1 interviews	Deep dive interview process to understand the challenges associated with the current entry	High influence or expertise / high interest	Two interviews in each state/territory,

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
	requirements to the Diploma of ECEC		metro and regional (virtual)
Consultation workshops – in person	Facilitated group discussions to understand the challenges associated with the current entry requirements to the Diploma of ECEC and to workshop possible solutions	High influence or expertise / high interest	Up to two workshops in each state/territory, metro and regional
Consultation workshops – online	Facilitated online discussions to understand the challenges associated with the current entry requirements to the Diploma of ECEC and to workshop possible solutions	Medium/high interest / medium influence	Up to four online workshops
Online portal	Two-way channel that enables project documents, including a consultation paper to be publicly available and capture stakeholder feedback, comments, and submissions	All stakeholders	Open for consultation period
External meetings and events	To leverage opportunities to promote the project, gain buy-in and encourage participation	High interest / medium influence	As required
Cross JSC Consultation	Information session/s with JSCs that have carriage of programs that intersect with CHC	Jobs and Skills Councils	Not required for this project
Professional development workshops	Focussed on how to utilise both the pre-assessment and RPL toolkits.	Targeting trainers and assessors who are involved in selecting students and administering RPL	One in-person workshop in each state/territory, supported by 5 virtual workshops, enabling participation from rural, regional and remote areas

5.2 Timing

Project stage	Timing	Engagement methods
Project set up and initial drafting	May – June 2024	Consultation with IAC – to gather insights on TC membership and stakeholder identification

		TC – to gather advice on Consultation Strategy and initial draft products/deliverables Written communications/publications
Public and government consultation and incorporating feedback	July - August 2024	All methods as above TC – to gather advice on incorporating feedback Written communications/publications
Final submissions and reporting	September – November 2024	TC – to gather advice on final draft products/deliverables Consultation with IAC Written communications/publications
Endorsement & release	November – December 2024	Written communications/publications Professional development workshops

Exact timing will be detailed in the Engagement Action Plan, to be developed in consultation with the Technical Committee.

5.2 Consultation questions

Consultation questions will be developed by the project team and refined by the Technical Committee.

Through the methods outlined in Section 5.1, consultation with stakeholders will be structured to:
- Understand challenges associated with the current entry requirements to the Diploma of ECEC.
- Inform changes to the entry requirements.
- Provide advice relating to the development of resources.

6. Communications

6.1 Objectives

- Ensure children's education and care stakeholders are aware of the project, its objectives and HumanAbility's consultation strategy.
- Inform stakeholders of consultation opportunities, key project dates and progress via multiple and accessible communication channels.
- Build stakeholder trust via the transparent communication of engagement gateways, project updates and developments.
- Foster an involved community of stakeholders which contributes industry experience and knowledge to HumanAbility's project to identify and implement solutions.
- Disseminate project outputs for use by stakeholders.

6.2 Communication Channels and Tools

Communications tool	Purpose	Audience	Timing
HumanAbility website	A dedicated webpage where all project information and activities can be accessed easily. This webpage will include an engagement mechanism for stakeholders to register interest, provide submissions and feedback, and access project updates.	• Project stakeholders • Public	• To be determined in consultation with TC
News alerts, HumanAbility newsletter	Project participants and other key stakeholders will receive news alerts via email when there is a project updates. Additionally, project updates will also be published via HumanAbility's general newsletter.	• Project stakeholders • All HumanAbility stakeholders	• To be determined in consultation with TC
Social media	Publish project consultation opportunities, updates, and other activities on HumanAbility's social media channels of LinkedIn, Facebook, and X (Twitter) to reach as many and diverse stakeholders as possible. Links will be provided to the HumanAbility webpage to encourage engagement with the project. Stakeholders can increase HumanAbility's social media reach by sharing its content on their social media channels.	• Project stakeholders • Public	• To be determined in consultation with TC
Industry news media	Leverage relationships with key stakeholder organisations with newsletters to share HumanAbility project consultation opportunities and other activities.	• Project stakeholders • Industry stakeholders	• To be determined in consultation with TC
Email/mail merge		• Project stakeholders	• To be determined in consultation with TC

7. Evaluation and Feedback

- Stakeholder feedback on the engagement activities outlined in the plan is important to ensuring the project is a successful collaboration.
- Feedback will be gathered during consultation workshops and via the dedicated project webpage.
- Additionally, the Technical Committee and Industry Advisory Committee will provide advice relating the effectiveness of the consultation in driving project outcomes.