

**EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES**

*Statement by Minister for Child Protection*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection)** [12.05 pm]: The Education and Care Services National Law and national regulations came into effect in Western Australia on 1 August 2012, about eight months after other jurisdictions in Australia. This includes the National Quality Framework, which sets out the rating and assessment process. The aim of the National Quality Framework is to advance the quality of services and improve outcomes for the children who use them. It also enables education and care services to benchmark quality, driving continuous improvement. Most importantly, the National Quality Framework enables families to make informed decisions about services providing education and care in their area.

I am pleased that the state government's education and care regulatory unit has made significant headway in the assessment and rating of eligible services in this state. To date, 90.2 per cent of eligible services have now been assessed and rated, with the remainder currently underway. The education and care regulatory unit is now on track to hit the milestone of having assessed and rated every eligible service as early as the third quarter of this year, which is potentially ahead of some other jurisdictions. To achieve this, staff within the unit have been working exceptionally hard assessing and publishing ratings for the highest percentage of services nationwide in 10 of the last 17 months. This is a significant achievement, given the eight-month head start that other jurisdictions had and the rapid growth of the education and care sector in WA throughout this period. Since 2013, WA's sector has grown by 24 per cent, the fastest in the nation and more than double the national average. These ratings can be viewed on the [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au) website and the website of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. The completion of this rating and assessment process should provide parents and families with assurance of the quality of services being offered in Western Australia.