



Early Childhood
Australia
Northern Territory Branch

Annual Report 2011

Achievements

Promoting ECA in the community

Nightcliff Sea Breeze
Festival Children's Week
Family Fun Days -
Naidoc Week-Homeless
Connect - Danila Dilba
Family Fun Days-Teddy
Bears Picnic- Harmony
Day - Disability
Awareness Week
Brain Development
presentation to the
Territory Parenting
Support Group – radio
interviews - advertising





Teddy Bears Picnic



Katherine C4C Expo



Harmony Day

Achievements

Promoting ECA to the Early Childhood Sector

Members Meetings Alice Springs and Darwin Region -
ECA EYLF PLP Workshops -
Department of Education
Quality Matters Conference -
Department of Education
NQF Workshop - NT Key
Stakeholders Advisory Group -
Round Table Discussion in
Gray Community – Early
Childhood Working Group
Palmerston– ACT group Alice
Springs – Branch Newsletter
sent to Pre-Schools



Members Meeting

Achievements

Promoting ECA through our Programs

Inclusion Support
Agency – Northern
Territory Early
Childhood Resource
Library – Palmerston
Family Connections
(C4C)



Our Office



Assisting isolated
families to connect
with their children
and community



Library

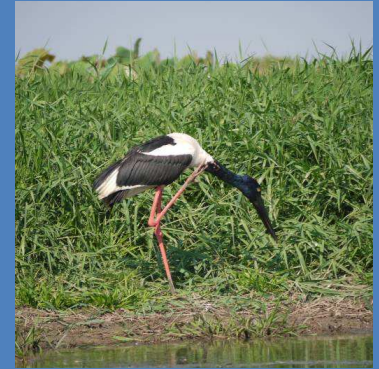


**Inclusion Support
Facilitators**



Working in remote communities

Challenges



- Sustaining Advocacy momentum
- Providing opportunities for early childhood educators and teachers to share - breakdown the school/childcare wall
- Accessing regional and remote educators families and children
- Ensuring the rights of Indigenous children are kept in the spotlight
- Attracting a wider cross-section of Early Childhood Educators and Teachers

Challenges

- Attracting more members
- Creating a business arm of the Branch
- Improving our Governance
- Establishing a Northern Territory early childhood social media network



Keeping equipment clean

Priorities

- Early childhood educators and teachers embracing similarities and differences – Members meetings
- Align the branch activities and reporting with the 2012-2014 ECA strategic directions
- Strategic direction for the Inclusion Support Agency tender in 2012
- Advocating for children in out of home care
- Implementation of the NT Early Childhood Plan

Presidents Report

**Presented at ECA NT Branch AGM 14
October 2011**

Recently at the National Early Childhood Australia Council meeting ECA NT Branch presented 'the year in review' and I was proud to see our list of achievements including advocating for young children at community events, submissions to government, attending key stakeholder meetings, the successful service delivery of our programs and our first members meetings in both Darwin and Alice Springs.

One of the highlights of the year has been the National Organisations commitment to connect and assist the branches to achieve ECA's mission and strategic directions. Nationally ECA branches face similar challenges of a volunteer committee system with administration, geographical and time input limitations, however the goal of improving the outcomes for children requires a culture of 'doing'.

Advocating for young children at both a local and national level requires a strategic approach and a shift from round table discussions to engaging our membership to reflect and participate in improving the outcomes for young children in their everyday practices and

community. ECA NT Branch is committed to moving forward and facilitating robust discussion and giving a voice to children, families, early childhood practitioners and students.

I would particularly like to thank Maree Toll and Gloria Hackett for their commitment and outstanding management of the ECA NT branch and their unwavering voice for young children. Also as a committee, we would like to thank Karin Davies for her excellent administrative support and the Inclusion Support team who not only undertake their role as Inclusion Support Facilitators but also loudly advocate for young children and promote ECA in the community. Finally, I would like to thank the committee for their hard work, dedication and guidance to achieve ECA's strategic directions.

Sarah Lloyd
President ECA NT Branch



Board Directors Report

Presented at ECA NT AGM 14 October 2011

I would like to thank the NT membership for allowing me the opportunity to represent the Branch on the National Board as a Director for the last three years. I have found the experience one of great personal and professional growth. I would also like to thank the MacDonnell Shire for their continued support in allowing me the time to attend meetings.

In the last year I have attended and participated in all Board meetings except for one. I also missed out on the Board Retreat last February due to personal reasons.

I am part of the Board subcommittee for the ECA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and this will be progressed in the next six months with the aim to have a draft available for Council next year. In relation to the RAP it has been stated to me by Margaret Young, President of ECA, that "I think it would be important to say that the NT branch has a unique role in this process and we will look to them to be our compass on this important matter!! " We do need to do some more thinking on how to engage our members in this very important discussion.

The Board is constantly looking at improving the way it governs the organisation and has done a lot of work on policies, procedures and developing guidelines for the way it works. The Board has for a while been involved in discussions around succession planning with a large turnover of Board positions happening next year. We have done some work with a consultant on the best way forward at this time and are confident that we can provide a smooth transition.

A major focus of the Board has been improving the relationships with the Branches, to this end the National Office has been working on providing templates for reports and setting up IT systems and web pages. The Board reports back to Branches about discussions and decisions made at Board meetings and has a telephone link up with Branch Presidents after all Board meetings.

With our Branch reports to the Board we are able to raise issues and challenges that are important and sometimes unique to the Northern Territory.cont

Board Directors Report ...continued

I have found the other Board members to be truly interested and concerned about the government policies on 'Closing the Gap' and the impact on Aboriginal communities and families.

The issue of Teacher qualifications in the new NQF was also raised and then followed up at a National level.

Children of asylum seekers have also caused a lot of discussion this year culminating in an ECA position paper being published. This is a very clear document articulating the need for governments to address the rights of all children. This paper is available on the ECA website.

Alison Breheny
NT Director

Treasurers Report

**Presented at ECA NT Branch AGM 14
October 2011**

We now live in financial climate which is very much global and the current state of play has many countries in challenging positions. This fact makes making financial decisions that much more difficult. ECA NT Branch has returned a profit for the financial year of 2010/11. ECA NT Branch depends primarily on grants for income. While this is a very acceptable way to do business, it does place the branch in a very vulnerable position financially if tendering for programs was unsuccessful.

An organisation that depends relies on Government funded grants needs to keep a finger on Government policy in order to make financial decisions as we have seen governments in other nations cut back on social services spending. I believe Australia is not immune to this practice. This does not mean that business should be viewed as all doom and gloom it just means that we should make every effort to make the business climate work to our advantage by being vigilant and being informed about current policy matters around children's services and how funds are

allocated.

ECA NT Branch management of financial business is carried out by the manager in conjunction with a bookkeeper and is audited annually. The board's responsibility is to oversee and set financial direction. All board members plus the manager are responsible for the financial management of the business.

It is a misconception and a financially very risky practice for Not-for-Profit organisations to budget for a breakeven yearly financial result. Not-for-Profit organisations in order to stay in business is required to have some understanding of the current financial climate in order to make sound business decisions.

I look forward to the coming year.

Heather Havens
Treasurer ECA NT Branch

Mangers Report

Presented at ECA NT AGM 14 October 2011

The programs ECA NT ran in the financial year were:

Program	Government Program	Funding Bodies	Contract Status
Inclusion Support Agency Northern Region NT	Inclusion and Professional Support Program	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.	3.5 Year Contract Funded until 30 th June 2012
Palmerston Family Connections	Communities for Children	Australian Red Cross under Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Yearly Contract Funded until 30 th June 2012
NT Children's Services Resource Library	Inclusion and Professional Support Program	CHILD under Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.	Yearly Contract Funded until 30 th June 2012

Mangers Report continued.....

The Inclusion Support Agency:

Under the ISA we have supported 150 Child Care Services, 110 children have been supported through Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) and or Flexible Support Funding (FSF). These children have been supported in Centre Based Care (CBC), Family Day Care (FDC), Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and Vacation Care (Vac C) Programs; some will have had multiple applications in the 12 month period as they moved into OSHC and Vac Care from either CBC or FDC. The number of children from the Priority Groups i.e. disability, CALDB, Indigenous and Refugee that have been supported by having an additional worker being in their environment exceeds 700. (This is for FSF only, we do not collect the ISS figures)

We have travelled to Groote Island, Elcho Island, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Nguiu, Jabiru, Katherine, Batchelor, Eva Valley, Jilkminggan, Ngukurr, Mataranka, Beswick as well as supporting services in Darwin, Palmerston and the rural areas. We have networked with and facilitated Child Care Services interactions with Early Intervention Services, including Government, NGO's and the private sector.

Palmerston Family Connections:

We have worked in close partnership with Danila Dilba Indigenous Health Service and Good Beginnings in delivering family support through the Palmerston Family Connections. This is a unique service delivery model where the staff from the three organisations work side by side in an integrated manner to support disadvantaged families.

We have continued our good relationship with Australian Red Cross through this funding and our commitment to the project was acknowledged with extra funding being made available to us.

This project has taught us a great deal. The importance of a shared vision and work culture cannot be underestimated. Also our willingness to support our staff to have the skills they require and the standard of professionalism we expect of them have all been commented on favourably.

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Mangers Report continued.....

NT Children's services Resource Library:

We have continued to operate the northern NT Children's Services Library and have purchased many new resources especially around the Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging Being and Becoming. We have an increased membership coming from the Pre-school sector.

Staff:

In order to run these programs and achieve the outcomes required in our service agreements we must have high quality staff. There are 9 people employed and I am very happy to report that we are now fully staffed for the first time in several years. We continue to have a heavy emphasis on the professional development of our employees. During the past year they attended a range of sessions, workshops and conferences, over 22 in number.

The two day training by Cross Cultural Consultants with a focus on Community Development was one of the most useful

ones. The Inclusion Support Facilitators have commented on the effectiveness of the strategies learnt and how they are having deeper conversations with indigenous educators. We aim to have all our employees do a cross cultural training every 18 months.

The Stuart Shanker presentation at the CHILD Australia Conference in Perth was another highlight for our staff and we are incorporating this new research into our support for educators with children they find challenging.

I would like to publicly acknowledge what a great team we have here at ECA NT Branch – Gloria Hackett, Karin Davies, Robyn Blake, Irene McCarthy, Frances Czoloszynski, Diane Cox, Julie Cadd and Erica Pickworth. When I stepped away from work in February they continued to work as a team even though we were short staffed and effectively down 2.5 positions. The leadership shown by Gloria during this period with the support of Karin and the rest of the team has been fantastic.continued....

Mangers Report continued.....

I would also like to thank the Committee for their support during this year when I have been unable to work.

The Future:

All of the Inclusion Professional Support Program, the National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP) – 1 contract, the Professional Support Co-ordinators (PSCs) – 8 contracts, the Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) – 7 contracts and the Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs) – 67 contracts are all going to tender to source providers for the Programs from July 2012 until June 2015.

We expect the tenders to be called during this month or next. We will be going for the Inclusion Support Agency contract for the northern region of the NT. Although we have won the tender on two previous occasions 2001 and 2006 there are no guarantees about this one.

Maree Toll
Manager