



## President's Report



### Hello ECA Members and Friends

ECA Queensland branch held the association's AGM in March. It is a very proud honour to have been elected President and I look forward to the hard work, the challenges and of course the pleasure of working with dedicated people, the organisation at large and to continue the great work of ECA.

I have been involved in the early childhood sector for almost 21 years. Working for approximately ten years within the kindergarten sector and now lecturing in early childhood has provided me with some unique insights into the specialised needs of children and families of Queensland. My new role supporting the learning of our future teachers and of course future ECA members has provided a different perspective of early childhood. The networks I have established and the knowledge I have gained from my early childhood roles will certainly guide and influence the questions and answers I take to the table when working with fellow ECA members. This month has provided the opportunity to start discussions with members and other Associations in regards to concerns with the loss of play in Prep environments. Anecdotally, many members as well as pre-service teachers have expressed their concerns for the loss of play in prep.

I encourage members who are currently working within prep who are feeling pressured to eradicate play from their programme to share your stories with us. I would also encourage members to send real stories and data regarding the Modern Award in services.

The current spotlight on early childhood education has certainly provided the opportunity for many positive reforms within the sector.

As this reform unravels, it is important that members and associations work together and stand strong, ensuring the voices of children are heard and acted upon.

Committee members are involved at many levels within government working parties ensuring that ECA has influence and continued voice.

Thank you to the outgoing 2010 ECA Queensland Branch Committee and in particular to Jo Darbyshire, outgoing President for her years of dedication. Luckily for Committee and in particular myself, Jo has kindly agreed to stay on as Vice President to support a seamless change.

Introducing our new Executive, elected during the March AGM:

- President: Lisa Palethorpe
- Vice President: Jo Darbyshire
- Secretary: Karen Dungey
- Treasurer: Danielle Twigg
- Qld National Director: Jenny Cartmel
- Executive Members: Bev Fluckiger, Lyn Bower, Susan Grieshaber, Christine Maher, Helene Hodgson, Louise Thomas, Marilyn Casley
- Associate Members: Margaret Brannock, Juliette Job, Noelene McBride
- Turn It Up* Editor: Susie Garvis

As with any community organisation, I am always in awe of dedicated volunteers who so selflessly offer their time and expertise to attend meetings and action tasks. This type of support is hard to measure, knowing that these busy individuals with family and work commitments; still manage to find time to support the successes of ECA in Queensland and Nationally. Early childhood is currently a moving feast, significant change and reform often requires the ECA committee to respond quickly to industry requests. I am aware that committee members have been quick to come together to provide feedback and expertise on pending documents, policy and proposed regulations. This was certainly highlighted within the first few weeks upon taking up my new role as President, when we were required to respond to the proposed national regulations. However it is not just our committee that is diligent to 'speaking out' for children. Many of our members, took the opportunity to provide feedback to committee regarding national reform issues. I look forward to working with committee and our members to ensure that all Australian children deserve the best opportunities we can provide them.

Finally, next month, the committee will celebrate the positions of Honour Life Membership provided to Juliet Job, Margaret Brannock and Noelene McBride. Unanimously, it was voted that Juliet, Margaret and Noelene should be congratulated for the dedicated work they have provided for ECA Queensland for many years. They have quietly inspired many people and worked tirelessly to path the way for ECA past and future success.

Lisa Palethorpe



## Peninsular Group

**The Peninsular Group of ECA has been reinstated.**

**The new committee was elected at a meeting held on 16 May 2011:**

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- President: Reesa Sorin
  - Vice President: Donna McGaw
  - Secretary: Moniek de Kievith
  - Treasurer: Leslie McLelland
  - Committee Members: Annabel Daunt Watney and Deb McGuinness

We look forward to working collaboratively with other early childhood groups in far north Queensland, and within the "umbrella" group, the Far North Early Childhood Network (FNECN). We are currently planning a forum for 29 October in Cairns, to be sponsored by these groups collaboratively as FNECN. The topic will be revisiting brain research and its impact on policy and curricula, particularly the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We hope to showcase best practice as it looks and relates to both brain research and the EYLF.

## Brisbane Childcare Centre Wins Workforce Innovation Award

**The Bulimba Child Care Centre has won the award for Excellence in Creating a Learning Culture in the Workplace awarded by the Workforce Council.**

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The Bulimba Child Care Centre has been recognised for its innovative strategies and its commitment to supporting the education of early childhood staff.

Karen Broomfield, Co-director says that almost half of its educators are studying for qualifications over and above those required for their jobs and a further 8 external students mentored already this year at the centre proves its commitment to education.

*"This is combined with study-friendly work conditions like coordinated shifts, study days, staff goal setting, staff recognition and award programs, a strong budgetary commitment to funding Professional Development and the creation of a professional library all ensure our staff succeed"* adds Karen.

Di Farmer, MP for Bulimba believes the award is well deserved. *"The Bulimba Child Care Centre is widely acknowledged in our local community for its well-informed and thoughtful approach to looking after our children,"* Ms Farmer said. *"They make a practice of being at the forefront of whatever is considered best practice in child care,"* she added.

Bev Book, Co-Director, says that *"teachers are learners too. Within our small centre we work very hard to think outside the square in order to support and motivate our staff and our workplace students to be successful at juggling the balls of work, study and life! This creates great outcomes for them personally, the children in our care, the centre as a whole and our industry in general. Research shows that if we successfully meet the needs of the staff they are more likely to continue working at the centre which directly impacts on the quality of Early Childhood Education offered in our Centre."*

The 2011 Health and Community Services Workforce Innovation Awards celebrate innovation, while showcasing the diverse range of strategies being used to enhance the capacity of the Health and Community Services Industries within Queensland.

The Health and Community Services Workforce Council Inc (Workforce Council) is a peak body which leads and influences workforce development and innovation in Queensland's Health and Community Services Industries.

The Excellence in Creating a Learning Culture in the Workplace category recognises organisations that promote a culture of learning in the workplace through ongoing activities and enduring processes that generate enthusiasm for discovering and sharing knowledge and practice.

The Bulimba Child Care Centre was originally established in 1942 to meet the needs of families within the area who were having difficulties raising their children while their husbands and fathers were fighting in World War 2.

What sets this centre apart and makes it so highly valued by its families is that it is a non-profit community-based service with a strong culture of fostering family involvement and offers a friendly, nurturing, stimulating and educational environment.

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The Centre is run by a voluntary Parent Management Committee which provides leadership in policy management, mentoring and improving working conditions.

To contact the centre, please contact Bev Book or Karen Broomfield on (07) 3399 8971 or email: [bcccdirector@bigpond.com](mailto:bcccdirector@bigpond.com)

# Workforce Innovation Awards Finalist: Katrina Keable from Bulimba Childcare Centre

**We are fortunate to have Katrina Keable, an outstanding Young Employee who is innovative, dedicated to her job and committed to her study and her advancement in our industry.**

Katrina started with us in March 2010 when she had just turned 19 years old. Katrina started her child care journey at another service but was unhappy there. She did, however, decide to persevere with her passion for educating young children with us – and we are lucky she did! We were impressed with Katrina from the moment she came to the interview and she started as an apprentice studying towards a Certificate 3 in Children’s Services. In 2010, she worked with the Toddler aged children and filled the role of a particularly popular educator who has been tempted away from Australian shores to fulfil her dream of travelling around the world. Katrina made a positive impact right from the start as she worked hard to win over team members, children and parents. Katrina is currently employed to work full time in the Nursery Room alongside a Group Leader.



Despite working full time and enduring devastating personal tragedy during 2010, Katrina took only 8 months to complete her study when the usual time is at least 1 year. After taking Christmas off, she returned to work with a new vigour (‘new year, new life’ she says) and promptly enrolled herself in a Diploma of Children’s Services. Two weeks into the course and she had already completed her first assignment.

Katrina continues to make an impact on every aspect of our service and her own practice. She was looking through an educational supply catalogue recently and noticed some play equipment she longed to use with her group. Unbeknown to the team, she set about making it happen. She went to our local Bunnings store that weekend and spoke to the community liaison there about her dream and soon had the store donating some materials and equipment to transform her vision into reality. Katrina created a series of outdoor balancing beams that incorporate all the natural elements missing in our centre and that are such an integral part of the Early Years Learning Framework. She enlisted the help of a carpenter friend for the more precise woodworking skills and she added the natural designs and tactile elements for the children. Katrina has used materials including reed, stones of varying size and texture and wood patterns routed into the surface. The artistic, natural and challenging resource created by Katrina is being enjoyed by the children. In recognition of this work, Katrina not only received a monthly staff award for her efforts (in fact, was nominated by her peers) but she was also handpicked to work as part of a small centre team on a project with leading playground designer Prue Walsh regarding the redevelopment of our playgrounds. This will be a huge and long term project that will include lobbying government for funding, sourcing grants and working with many PMCs. Katrina is also involved in developing the design concepts.

Katrina is working on a new project now with our youngest nursery children. She has the responsibility of bringing nature and its elements into their playground within the confines of an area tight for space, a very young age group and a budget tight for dollars! Katrina has begun thinking outside the square already with planters hanging outside the fence line where they are still able to be admired and learned from but where they are safe from little hands!

We have included comments about Katrina offered by parents and colleagues during our annual Performance Review process. These parents have entrusted Katrina with the care and education of their most precious assets. It is a great compliment to Katrina that so many of these parents and peers took the time to sit down and reflect and record their feelings and opinions. These were consistently glowing, and Katrina also had the highest return rate of these parent feedback sheets of all the staff team.

“I have enjoyed working with Katrina this year and hope that she has had opportunities to grow and learn this year and that this will lead to being confident and able to have her own group one day.”

**From the peers**

“Katrina supports the group leaders and works fantastically as a part of the team. She knows what needs to be done.”

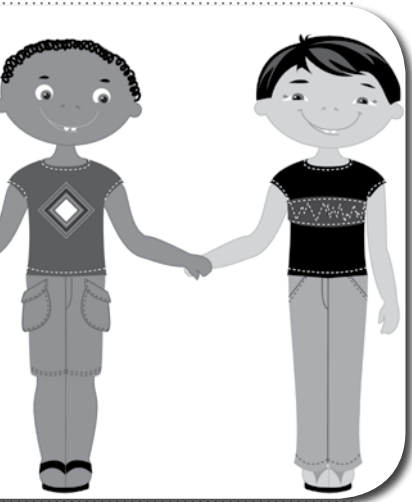
Nina won’t leave without specifically saying goodbye to Katrina.”

**From the parents**

“Katrina is professional, intelligent, kind and great with the children – could not ask for any improvement!”

“We see Katrina as a lovely caring person and are very happy to have her looking after Helena.”





## Project Evaluation Finds Great Outcomes for Children of Newly-Arrived Families

The recent evaluation of a key *Save the Children Australia* program has highlighted the importance of the early years for children of migrant and refugee backgrounds and provided insight into the factors impacting on their development.

Conducted by Edith Cowan University's Social Justice Research Centre, the evaluation of the *It Takes a Village: Multicultural Early Learning Program* explored the role of the program in building "social capital" of children and families from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The study revealed that involvement in the *It Takes a Village Program* had an overwhelmingly positive impact on both the children and their mothers. Mothers reported that the early childhood component of *It Takes a Village* prepared their children for school, encouraged them to play positively with others, and helped them to be generally more confident and trusting.

*Save the Children* State Manager Western Australia, Glyn Davies said,

*"The findings of the study are very exciting, because they show what a positive impact innovative programs like It Takes a Village can have on the development and successful integration of children from newly-arrived backgrounds. The study reveals that when families are consulted and energies are directed into providing engaging and culturally appropriate activities for both mothers and their children, whole families benefit as a result."*

The study found that as a result of their involvement in the program, women from newly-arrived backgrounds benefited from, and were empowered by, having access to parenting advice and guidance, meaningful activities such as sewing and English classes, settlement support, and the creation of strong social networks.

*"This is particularly important for women and children who often experience high levels of isolation due to an inability or lack of confidence to speak English," Mr Davies said. "The evaluation certainly reflects the extent to which welcoming and culturally appropriate programs can provide crucial support for newly-arrived families. We believe this has the potential to impact on the wellbeing of children far into the future."*

The *It Takes a Village program* currently operates across three sites in the south-east corridor of the Perth metropolitan area and a new program site is being piloted in Tasmania.

