



**Early Childhood
Australia**
A voice for young children

Newsletter

WA BRANCH 2011 ISSUE 1

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PRESIDENTS REPORT

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

Welcome to our first ECA WA Branch Newsletter for 2011.

We want this to be a newsletter that informs you of what the Branch and our National Organisation are doing and a place where ECA members and friends can share their work, thoughts and ideas. Our Branch Newsletter will be circulated four times a year in March, June, September and December. In addition to the Branch Newsletter I will be sending President updates every two months that will keep you informed of current information and events.

Since our AGM in October 2010 our work as a Branch has intensified and our presence become more visible in forums, consultations and roundtable discussions. A strong focus of our Branch work has centered on the development and progression of our sub-committee working groups.

The inclusion of branch members in our working groups has added to the richness and experience that currently exists within our committee. I would like to thank them for their input and participation at our branch meetings and welcome others who would like to be involved in the work of our Branch.

Currently, the National Reform agenda and consultative processes have provided us with new opportunities through which we have voiced our opinions and concerns and advocated strongly to embed early childhood in ways in which we know will positively impact on children and their families and retain our strong professional identity.

One of these opportunities emerged recently when I was asked to attend Roundtable discussions on the DEEWR Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005. I considered our input in this Review as important because of its impact on the lives of children with disabilities, their families and our work as educators. It also provided opportunities to recognise the strengths of the Standards while also making reference to: the exclusion of child-care providers within these standards, the need for a seamless process of intervention, staff training, case study examples and the challenges parents and other professionals face when navigating through the system.

A second opportunity emerged when the Branch and I were invited to attend consultation forums to consider the draft Regulations for the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care. The focus was on the provision of kindergarten in WA and we raised issues we believed were important because of their possible impact on our work, including the process for the selection of assessors. It was important our representation was visible. Discussions were fruitful and the content and processes were clearly articulated. Our CEO Pam Cahir was also present at one of the consultative forums.

Another opportunity for advocacy emerged through an invitation by the Government of WA, Department of Education to provide feedback on a *Feasibility Study into the Provision of Kindergarten (preschool) in Childcare Settings*. We considered this study important because it explored the merits of delivering kindergarten in childcare settings. Furthermore, the final report would provide information for consideration by the WA Minister for Education. Therefore, the findings we believe would have a definite impact on our work in this state.

The purpose of my report in this Newsletter has been to provide insight into some of our Branch work. The sub-committee working parties which follow will provide further depth and insight into the leadership and advocacy role of our branch and its members.

We look forward to including your contribution in future Newsletters and meeting with you at our bi-monthly branch meetings. The next branch meeting will be held on Tuesday the 19th April 2011. A flyer will be circulated shortly with details and names of our guest speakers. We see this as a great opportunity to network and learn from each other.



Elizabeth Stamopoulos
State President of ECA WA
Branch.

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Our Mission Statement

Early Childhood Australia will advocate to ensure quality, social justice and equity in all issues relating to the education and care of children from birth to eight years.



Membership

Over the past few months the ECA, WA Branch Membership Sub-committee has focused on specific issues raised by our members. We have received some constructive feedback from Family Day Care Staff regarding a new, easy to display format for the Code of Ethics and some valuable feedback regarding ways to modernise the ECA Website. At a local level ECA is a great source of information to its members regarding the early childhood sector. During Branch meetings networking is central to the business of these meetings. However, during the coming months, ECA is providing both members and non-members with a number of professional learning opportunities. Therefore the many benefits of joining ECA, establishing contact with past members and considered ways of welcoming new members to our Branch, will be our focus over the coming months.

Structures Working Party

is responsible for developing clear governance structures for the ECA WA Branch to work within. The purpose of this is to have a clear set of structures that will assist in the day to day operation of the Branch. Two key tasks the Structures Working Party will be working on in 2011 include the development of a set of current JDF's for each of the office bearer positions and to review the terms of reference for all the sub committees. At present the members are collecting data from other branches regarding JDF's and will use these to inform the development of WA JDF's.

The Advocacy/White Paper Sub-Group

is responsible for researching and drafting advocacy correspondence regarding early childhood education and care issues for the ECA WA Branch. The group is currently responding to the Labor Discussion Paper and advocating for Natural Play Spaces in Early Childhood Education and the registration of 4 year qualified teachers teaching in child care settings.

The Connections Working Party

is responsible for the development of the Newsletter, Web Site and for ongoing communication with its members. The group has now released their first ECAWA Branch Newsletter. Future newsletters will be circulated via email to our members four times a year (March, June, October and December) and will also be placed on the ECA National State Web Site. The next task will be to connect in a more effective way with our members and better promote their work in our June newsletter.

The **Events Working Party** coordinates our Branch events and is responsible for including guest speakers at Branch meetings and the Branch AGM. They have currently been involved in the organisation of our next Branch Meeting which will include The Smith Family and the YMCA.

Stephanie Jackiewicz - National Director (WA)

This is my second year of a three year term as ECA Board Director. I have found the role both exciting and challenging. When I took up this role I found I had limited knowledge of the Board's function. I feel each ECA member should have an awareness of how the ECA Board operates. There is a Director from each state and territory as well as a President, Vice President and Treasurer. The Directors, including office bearers, collectively make up the National Board of Early Childhood Australia and have the fiduciary duty common to all boards.

The ECA Board handbook (2010) states that

- ECA Directors represent ECA's widest interests and are obliged to act independently and ethically to secure the continuing well being and development of the national organisation
- Directors must ensure that the organisation is well managed but their major role is to govern rather than to manage.
- Directors (other than office bearers) are also responsible for presenting information and opinion from their home Branch to the Board as a whole, and for supporting communication between the national organisation and their Branch" (ECA Board handbook, 2010).

The responsibilities of the Directors include:

- Custodianship - Directors are trustees of the organisation as a whole.
- Governing process.
- Board/CEO relationship.

Becoming an ECA Board Director has been an enriching experience for me. I have met and worked alongside some of the leaders in early childhood in this country. This opportunity has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. It has also provided me with great insight into what is achieved by ECA as an advocate for young children. I look forward to sharing this information with you throughout my term as Director.



About your Committee

The ECA WA committee has a great deal of passion and collective experience and skills working in early childhood education and care. Some information about them is below:

State President: Elizabeth Stamopoulos is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher at Edith Cowan University and a recipient of the ECU Vice-Chancellor's Award. She has completed a three year term as a Director on the National Board of ECA, represented ECA on various national and state working parties and participated on the Early Childhood Australia Doctoral Thesis Committee.

Vice President: Amanda Hunt is the Chief Executive Officer of the Gowrie (WA). She has extensive networks in the community sector and a passion for achieving quality of life for all children and families.

Treasurer: Jennie Burns is the Executive Manager for the YMCA Perth Family and Children's services team. Jennie has special interests in the health and wellbeing of remote Indigenous Communities and assisting these communities to become self sufficient and sustainable into the future.

Secretary: Lennie Barblett is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher in the early childhood program at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. She has a keen interest in quality early childhood curriculum and practices, effective environments and young children's social and emotional development.

National Director: Stephanie Jackiewicz: joined the Catholic Education Office of WA to work with Catholic schools to deliver quality early years care and education services. Her passion is the health and wellbeing of Australia's children. She was a Senior Research Officer with the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research .

Marcelle Psaltis-Saratsis: currently works as a Lecturer in the early childhood program at Curtin University and taught at TAFE, Northern Territory University and Edith Cowan University. She is passionate about exciting, rich and appropriate programs for infants and toddlers.

Sue Fielding: in a career spanning over 20 years Sue has worked in a diverse range of early childhood roles throughout Australia and South-East Asia in both a volunteer and professional capacity. She currently works for The Smith Family in the position of Communities for Children Project Manager – WA.

Susan Teather: is a lecturer at Edith Cowan University in the School of Psychology and Social Science and is a member of the Social Justice Research Centre. Whilst her experience in the community sector has been diverse there has been a common theme with the focus being upon families and young children.

Anna Targowska: currently works as a coordinator and a lecturer in the Bachelor of Social Science (Children and Family Studies) course at Edith Cowan University. Anna is keen to keep ECA WA active in advocating for the needs of young children and their families, especially those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Indigenous backgrounds.

Margaret Waterton: has worked for the Department of Education for 30 years and is early childhood trained. Margaret's goal is to encourage a stronger participation from the school sector in the work of the ECAWA Branch so that ECA represents a broader sector across early childhood.

Margaret Owens has been Manager of early childhood services at Ngala for seventeen years. She is passionate about quality early childhood services for children and their families.

Coming Events

The Australian EYLF National Conference "Belonging, Being and Becoming in Practice"

18 April, 2011

Rendezvous Hotel, Scarborough Perth

Registrations:

<http://semannslattery.com/store/events/>

Early Childhood Education and Care Conference

"Windows of Opportunity"

18-19 June 2011

ECA WA Branch Meeting Dates

Date	Time
Tuesday 19th April 2011: Branch Meeting	6.00-7.00pm
Tuesday 21st June 2011: Branch Meeting	6.00-7.00pm
Tuesday 16th August 2011: Branch Meeting	6.00-7.00pm
Tuesday 18th October 2011: AGM	6.00pm
Tuesday 13th December 2011: Christmas Function	TBA