This issue of *Every Child* focuses on advocacy. Indeed, the newly released *ECA Strategic Plan 2017–2020* includes speaking up for children and championing quality early education as key elements. Consistently promoting the importance of quality in early childhood education and care and advocating on behalf of young children and families, while at the same time encouraging families, educators, communities and governments to listen and respond to the voices of children themselves, has always been central to our advocacy as a profession.

The *State of early learning in Australia 2017* report affirms the importance of access to high-quality early childhood education for lifelong engagement in learning and as a powerful factor in overcoming disadvantage. Australia has lifted participation in early childhood education to 91 per cent of all children in the year before school, largely in response to the introduction of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. Yet, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data continues to indicate that one in five young children begin school developmentally vulnerable, and that two in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are in this developmentally vulnerable group. Clearly, there is much more that we need to advocate for and action as a nation.

The guest statement in this edition of *Every Child* is not actually from a ‘guest’, rather, Samantha Page, ECA’s Chief Executive Officer, who writes of the advocacy at the heart of ECA’s work. Sam maintains that advocacy is the responsibility of individuals as well as peak organisations, and that we all have a role to play. Wendy Shepherd challenges us to consider how children may be witnesses to family violence and our role in supporting children to understand gender equity. Ros Cornish, ECA National President, confirms the effectiveness of advocacy, giving an important recent example of how advocacy by the ECA Tasmania Branch positively influenced and changed the government proposal to lower the school starting age. ECA’s advocacy also directly and specifically acknowledges the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and Jessica Brown’s article reminds us not to underestimate children’s capabilities in understanding and responding to issues of social justice.

As always, *Every Child* includes a range of articles written by educators who have reflected on and strengthened or transformed practice in their own workplaces. Included are articles by Alexis King on Nature Pedagogy, Jan Deans on dance-play, and Noella Goveas and Dorothy Gapanay on embedding culture into teaching and learning. Read, reflect and be inspired!

In terms of inspiration, Emeritus Professor Collette Tayler was an inspiration to all in the early childhood profession. Collette made an enormous contribution both in Australia and internationally, informing the development of policy and practice. Among much other work, Collette co-authored the OECD Report *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care* (2006), played a significant role in the introduction of the *National Quality Framework*, and was Chief Investigator for the Australian E4Kids longitudinal study. Most of all, Collette always gave freely of her time, wisdom and extensive expertise to support educators and, ultimately, young children. Collette’s recent passing means that she will be sorely missed—however, her work will be an ongoing legacy to us all.

Best wishes to all for moving forward into the New Year with renewed enthusiasm, dedication and deepened understanding of how we may best support the learning, development and wellbeing of young children and their families.

*Jackie Brien*
*Every Child* Co-Editor