Dear members

It has been yet another interesting and challenging twelve months in the early childhood education and care sector in NSW and across Australia.

Once again over the course of the year we have been involved with many committees and groups who work to achieve quality, social justice and equity in all issues relating to the education and care of children.

Here at ECA NSW we advocate for and promote the specific needs and interests of NSW members through state based initiatives, regional groups and communication with national office. We aim to increase the understanding of and support for continued investment in early childhood education.

I wish all our members a very joyful Christmas and may 2020 be a happy and productive year for us all.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to ECA NSW.

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes,
Carol Burgess
President ECA NSW
In early November, ECA NSW held an interesting Conversations evening, discussing Teacher Accreditation: Building capacity, connecting teachers and helping make visible the teaching practice of NSW’s early childhood teachers.

Presenters were Merise Bickley, Head of Early Childhood, NSW Education Standards Authority and Alexandra Harper, Senior Policy Officer.

Presenter Alexandra Harper

Congratulations to Ms Christine Legg, Chief Executive Officer, KU Children’s Services and President of ECA national for securing a position on the NESA Board. Chris’s knowledge and commitment to Early Childhood Education will be an asset to NESA and Early Childhood accreditation process.

Also...

Congratulations to Nancy Chang, the new Executive Director of Early Childhood Education. We welcome continued consultation and stakeholder engagement with the NSW Department of Education.

We also wish Tracy Mackey well in her new role as CEO at the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

The Illawarra/ South Coast had a great turn out at Mount Warrigal Public School. Many were new to the regional network so it was great to be connecting with new early childhood people working in school settings and reconnecting with our loyal South Coast ECA advocates. Special thanks to Amanda from Mount Warrigal Public School Preschool for arranging the school hall venue. Merise Bickley from NESA did a fabulous job presenting.
Sound Scouts
Free Hearing Health Check for School Students

An estimated 10% of school children suffer from hearing loss which, if left undetected, can lead to speech, learning and behavioural problems.

The Sound Scouts App provides an indication of a child’s hearing health and generates an automated report that can be shared with parents. This report details the child’s listening abilities, in quiet and in noise. It is game based so fun and easy to use. Over 570 schools have now adopted the App to help identify the increasing number of hearing issues in school-age students. The App is endorsed by Hearing Australia.

There are two ways that preschools can be involved

1. COMMUNICATING TO PARENTS

Sound Scouts want to raise awareness to ensure as many school students as possible get access to the hearing check while it’s being funded by the Department of Health. They understand how busy preschool schedules can be and would be grateful if preschools would send an email to parents advising them of this valuable free hearing health service.

2. IN PRESCHOOLS

Preschools can adopt the hearing check program by simply downloading the Sound Scouts App onto an Apple iPad or Android tablet. You’ll require a set of good quality headphones (like the Sennheiser HD100 or 300’s) and a quiet room. Testing takes approximately 8-10 minutes per child.

Here is the link to the Sound Scouts website: https://www.soundscouts.com.au/schools
The NSW Curriculum Review Interim Report was released in October – Nurturing Wonder and Igniting passion: Designs for a future school curriculum – www.nswcurriculumreview.nesa.nsw.edu.au

Over 200 online submissions have been received in addition to written submissions, mostly from secondary schools. Comments consider the syllabus content, overall structure of the curriculum, and focus of learning in the senior years of school, noting overcrowding of the curriculum (especially in primary school) and the importance of developing deeper conceptual understanding, integrated curriculum and content flexibility.

It has been suggested that there is greater continuity and seamless learning from preschool through the school years and post-school, noting that different curricular and pedagogical approaches can result in separation in the continuum of learning e.g. play-based pedagogies in the early years of school. There is also discussion in the primary sector about language instruction and the need for more resourcing to meet diverse needs. ECA NSW continues to provide input through the public consultation process.

ECA NSW attended the NSW ECEEN Sustainable Practice Recognising Outstanding (SPROuts) Practice Awards in November, at Betty Spears Child Care Centre. We congratulate the 2019 recipients – Concord West Rhodes Preschool, KU West Pymble Preschool, KU Padstow Preschool and KU Chatswood Community Preschool.

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is pleased to announce the 2020 AJEC Research Symposium, Children’s rights and research, will be held on 13 and 14 February 2020 at Macquarie University Sydney, Australia. For details follow this link: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/events/ajecsymposium

ECA NSW is looking for expressions of interest from members interested in attending the Symposium. The EOI should stipulate how ECA NSW could financially support a member to attend. Applications to be no more than one page and to be received email by Monday 7 January, 2020. Email office@nsw.earlychildhood.org.au