



ECA Strategic Plan 2017–2020

OUR VISION: Every young child is thriving and learning.

To achieve this vision we champion the rights of young children to thrive and learn at home, in the community, within early learning settings and through the early years of school.

Our work builds the capacity of our society and the early childhood sector to realise the potential of every child during the critical early years from birth to the age of eight. ECA specifically acknowledges the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and the past and current injustices and realities for them around Australia.

We have identified five Strategic Priorities for 2017–2020; these are outlined below.

OUR VALUES:

Respect—we demonstrate our respect for children, families and professionals.

Leadership—we are courageous in promoting the rights and voice of young children.

Integrity—our work is based on evidence and expertise; it is always ethical and transparent.

Equity—we believe in social justice and equal opportunity.



Speak up for children

ECA is a courageous voice for young children and their families, representing their rights and interests in public, policy and funding debates.

1



Build social capital

ECA works collaboratively to build social capital in which all young children can thrive and benefit from Australia's future prosperity.

2



Champion quality in early education

ECA enhances the capacity of the early learning sector to provide high-quality services that amplify children's development, reduce inequity and improve long-term educational outcomes.

3



Lead and inspire professional learning

ECA develops and delivers high-quality professional resources and learning opportunities to build the knowledge base of educators, teachers and other professionals working with young children.

4



Position ECA for long-term success

ECA's future will be secured as a well-governed, sustainable, agile and innovative network that delivers benefits to our members and stakeholders.

5



Priority 1: Speak up for children

ECA is a courageous voice for young children and their families, representing their rights and interests in public, policy and funding debates. We commit to:

- 1.1 Promote the rights and wellbeing of young children.
- 1.2 Support consultation and research with young children and their families.
- 1.3 Provide advice to decision-makers on all significant issues of policy, legislation and funding that have a potential impact on young children and their families.
- 1.4 Provide informed, evidence-based guidance on areas of complexity or challenge in nurturing and educating young children.

1

Our ambitions:

- Be recognised as the leading advocacy voice for young children in Australia.
- Have a demonstrable impact on Federal Government decision making and debate in the Australian parliament.
- Lead the development of authoritative statements on young children and digital technology (2018) and play-based pedagogy (2020).



Priority 2: Build social capital

ECA works collaboratively to build social capital in which all young children can thrive and benefit from Australia's future prosperity. We commit to:

- 2.1 Work in partnership with other organisations to enhance public understanding of the importance of the early years and quality early learning.
- 2.2 Work with SNAICC—National Voice for our Children and Reconciliation Australia to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by promoting reconciliation, highlighting systemic disadvantage and advocating for improvements in policy and programs.
- 2.3 Build and promote the evidence base for enhancing social and emotional wellbeing across the lifespan through investment in the early years.
- 2.4 Influence health and social service systems to better recognise the needs of young children, including infants.

2

Our ambitions:

- Influence public debate on early childhood programs with the Early Learning: Everyone Benefits campaign (2018–2020).
- Implement our *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan* to support a reconciled nation and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (by 2020).
- Identify and champion initiatives in early childhood, health and social services that warrant (public and/or private) investment to enable young children to thrive and experience long-term social and emotional wellbeing.



Priority 3: Champion quality in early education

ECA enhances the capacity of the early education sector to provide high-quality services that amplify children's development, reduce inequity and improve long-term educational outcomes. We commit to:

- 3.1 Be a champion for quality in early childhood education and care across public, private and not-for-profit settings.
- 3.2 Promote age appropriate pedagogy and practice in early education and the early years of school.
- 3.3 Work with the early childhood sector to share knowledge, support innovation and promote research-informed practice.
- 3.4 Support, commission, publish and promote research into factors contributing to the efficacy of early education.
- 3.5 Undertake projects to enhance sector capacity, support leadership and address areas of difficulty or complexity.

3

Our ambitions:

- Consistently promote the importance of quality in early childhood education and care through the media and social media.
- Be recognised for promoting research-informed practice and innovation across service types, settings and age groups.
- Deliver the *National Mental Health in Education* project to more than 2000 early childhood services.



Priority 4: Lead and inspire professional learning

ECA develops and delivers high-quality professional resources and learning opportunities to build the knowledge base of educators, teachers and other professionals working with young children. We commit to:

- 4.1 Promote the importance of a qualified, specialised, multi-disciplinary and skilled workforce.
- 4.2 Deliver authoritative and high-quality online learning for early learning professionals that respond to sector priorities.
- 4.3 Deliver Australia's most prestigious and trusted learning events that support professional development and dialogue in the early childhood sector, including our National Conference, Reconciliation Symposium and new or reconceptualised events.
- 4.4 Promote and support the ECA *Code of Ethics* to build a deeper and collegial comprehension of the ethical and complex nature of childhood professionals' work with children, families, communities and colleagues.

4

Our ambitions:

- Be the market leader in online learning for early learning professionals through the ECA Learning Hub and related products.
- Maintain the prestige and popularity of the ECA National Conference as it becomes an annual event.
- Expand our events portfolio to increase opportunities for professional learning in pedagogy, leadership, ethics and reconciliation.
- Develop resources that support the implementation of the ECA *Code of Ethics* and ECA Statements on Children's Rights and Inclusion.



Priority 5: Position ECA for long-term success

ECA's future will be secured as a well-governed, sustainable, agile and innovative network that delivers benefits to our members and stakeholders. We commit to:

- 5.1 Review our constitution and adopt a contemporary governance structure that will:
 - make the most effective use of our resources at both branch and national level
 - support effective governance and decision making
 - position ECA for future growth and success.
- 5.2 Reshape the membership offering and value proposition to achieve sustainable membership growth across the next three years.
- 5.3 Invest in new technological solutions to improve member and customer interactions with ECA and enhance the effectiveness of our communication activities.
- 5.4 Invest in partnerships and capability that will allow us to respond to changes in our environment, produce new products and adapt how we operate to grow both our reach and revenue.
- 5.5 Continue to invest in our people and culture, including:
 - professional development and career pathways for employees
 - increased diversity in our governance and advisory structures, with particular attention to increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - facilitating leadership and governance training across the sector.
- 5.6 Apply prudent financial strategies that increase the likelihood of sustainability and security.

5

Our ambitions:

- Increase our competitiveness to grow our membership and be the largest network of both organisations and individuals working in the early childhood sector.
- Our National Board becomes known as a powerhouse of early childhood leadership and advocacy.
- Our team of staff and volunteers are highly regarded by the sector and known for professionalism, expertise and clarity of purpose.