



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children



2022–2023

Early Childhood Australia **Annual Report**



OUR VISION: Every young child is thriving and learning

Our role in achieving this vision is to be an effective advocate for young children and a champion for quality outcomes in early childhood education and care. We specifically acknowledge the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and the past and current injustices and realities for them around Australia. Our work is informed by our:

- commitment to children's rights
- knowledge of early childhood development, learning and pedagogy
- commitment to an inclusive and just society
- respect for the rights and aspirations of families
- members' input and active involvement.

Early Childhood Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the Elders both past and present.

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President's report



'We are a more diverse board now, with directors that bring a range of perspectives, skills and experience to the challenges and opportunities available to ECA.'

In my first year as ECA National President, it has been a privilege to work with, and for, ECA members. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of the State and Territory Committees and attend a number of ECA events. It has been good to hear the enthusiasm people have for ECA as well as ideas for further strengthening our work.

The priorities that members have raised with me tend to be related to our advocacy work, including the need to advocate for the early childhood profession and for changes to the way the sector is funded by government. The challenges of workforce shortages and inadequate support for inclusion and social equity are issues most frequently raised. The importance of ECA maintaining and growing effective relationships with federal and state/territory governments are well understood.

There is also a strong interest in ECA's role in providing professional development as well as facilitating opportunities for networking and peer-to-peer support. Some of the State and Territory Committees are regularly hosting events both in-person and online. The national events we hold are also important to our members and stakeholders.

I am grateful to my fellow board members for their contribution to ECA. This year the National Board has been focused on consolidating the organisation and embedding the new governance structure. We are a more diverse board now, with directors that bring a range of perspectives, skills and experience to the challenges and opportunities available to ECA.

I would like to thank and acknowledge Christine (Chris) Legg who stepped off the board this year after serving for five years as National President. Chris has been an active member of ECA throughout her career, serving on both the NSW Committee and the National Board. She was National President during a time of significant change. Following extensive consultation, we changed ECA's governance structure, inviting our branches to integrate with the national organisation and change the way we appoint the board. This was a brave testament to Chris' leadership skills. We also had to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, advocating for support and protection for early childhood educators and teachers. People who were on the board and working in the organisation at this time found Chris to be a calm, intelligent and empathetic leader whose counsel was reliable and valued. I myself had the privilege of working with Chris as a board director prior to her departure. There is also a strong sentiment of respect and recognition that Chris was generous with both

her time and her wisdom. She leads for the greater good—not concerned with personal interest or ego but rather with shared goals and a strong vision for high quality early childhood education and care and a thriving profession.

As I write this, we are looking forward to welcoming two new board members this year—Anne Hollonds and Alistair Gibbs. Anne is currently the National Children's Commissioner and has a long track record in advocacy for children and families. Alistair has been a long-standing member of ECA's Victorian Committee and brings a commitment to critical thinking and advocacy around issues impacting children, communities and the profession.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Brown'.

Trevor Brown
ECA National President

ECA Board Members



Trevor Brown



Jackie Wilson



Tony Fairbairn



Chris Legg



Italia Parletta



Simon Fewings



Jane Bourne



Dr Marina Papic



Dr Pauline Roberts



Beverley O'Connell



Alison Evans

CEO's report



'Over the past 10 years ECA has grown to be a truly national organisation with over 110 employees, and every single one brings knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to their work.'

This has been a year of consolidating ECA after significant changes in our governance structure, bringing the majority of branches to be integrated with the national organisation—considerably expanding its size. This will have long-term benefits, allowing us to streamline functions and provide support to State/Territory Committees focused on advocacy and member benefits.

I think it is particularly important to recognise the trust and commitment that ECA members and leaders have shown through this process of change. This includes all those who have nominated for positions on the National Board and/or the State/Territory Committees, participated in National Council meetings, and served on our various advisory groups. People across the ECA network have been generous with their time and their wisdom over the year, demonstrating their commitment to the vision—'Every young child is thriving and learning'.

It has also been a big year in federal politics. The election of a new federal Labor government in 2022 created significant opportunities for consultation and advocacy. I was pleased to be invited to the Jobs and Skills Summit in September 2022 which included substantial recognition of the importance of early childhood education and care to the Australian economy; both as an investment in the future workforce through improving education outcomes as well

as a mechanism to increase women's workforce participation. Then in February 2023, myself and a number of ECA leaders participated in the Early Years Summit—a historic gathering of people with practice wisdom, research evidence and advocacy experience to support the development of a national 'Early Years Strategy'. I look forward to seeing where this takes us as a nation.

Early childhood has been the focus of both federal and state/territory government consultation processes including an ACCC inquiry into the market for the supply of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, a Productivity Commission inquiry into universal early childhood education and care, and the SA Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care. There is potential for substantive reform to the way we finance and deliver early childhood services in Australia.

ECA has also been pursuing its own Strategic Priorities, developing a new Reconciliation Action Plan that was launched in Hobart at the Reconciliation Symposium in June 2023, as well as finalising our *Statement on Play* for release at the National Conference in Adelaide in October 2023. We have also delivered a number of major projects this year for government and non-government partners.

Looking ahead, we are feeling positive about the future. Be You Early Learning has been funded for the next four years and now has over 6,000 early childhood services participating, a testament to the work of Judy Kynaston and her team. The Inclusion and Early Intervention team is thriving under the leadership of

Janet Williams-Smith and providing very valuable input into our national work.

Our events continue to grow in terms of both size and success, thanks to Elmarie Snyman and the Events team, with the transition to an annual national conference well received by our members and stakeholders. The ECA Learning Hub is also achieving great success and we are seeing a surge of interest in our publications, with credit to the Professional Learning team led by Shae Haylen. I also want to say thank you to Christopher Jones for supporting collaboration across the ECA network and seeing a number of key initiatives through to completion, as well as extending a warm welcome to Chris Barry who joined the team this year to lead our Marketing and Communications work.

Over the past 10 years ECA has grown to be a truly national organisation with over 110 employees, and every single one brings knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to their work. I am grateful to lead such an incredible team.

Samantha Page
Chief Executive Officer

ECA State and Territory Committees



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Chair: Susan Jackson

The overarching objectives informing the work of the ECA South Australia Committee are to lead and inspire professional learning, champion 'beyond quality' in early education, and consistently be aware of and respond to political and bureaucratic initiatives. The 2022–23 financial year has been extremely busy and productive for us.

Key achievements

- Participation in the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care via joint and individual submissions and participation in the Round Table consultations was a major focus for 2023. The work was collaborative, time consuming, inspiring and daunting, and the process offered opportunities for advocacy and deep thinking about what is important for young children in South Australia and beyond. The implementation of the final report offers both opportunities and risks that will impact South Australia in the short and long term. With a commitment to ECA's vision of 'Every young child is thriving and learning', we will continue to implement the Strategic Priorities of speaking up for children, collaborating for impact and championing 'beyond quality'.
- The SA Committee is collaborating with the wonderful ECA National Events team to create the 2023 ECA National Conference, taking place at the Adelaide Convention Centre from 4 to 7 October 2023. We are proud to have Auntie Suzanne, a Kurna Elder and one of our committee members, Welcoming participants to Country and designing the conference artwork. The conference will contribute to both our State and National ECA commitment of 'Leading and inspiring professional learning'.
- After finalising the closure of the South Australian Incorporation, we have been rebuilding our committee roles and working with National Office to learn about integrated membership and the new

way of working. We decided to utilise a distributed leadership structure, and the majority of committee members have taken on lead roles in areas they are interested or experienced in. This links in with establishing a state structure that will be sustainable and effective to enact the five National Strategic Priorities within the South Australian context.

- We are in the process of recognising past member Andrea McGuffog with a new Andrea McGuffog Memorial Award to sponsor action research.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Chair: Tanya Steers

The ECA Western Australia Committee offers support and information to early childhood organisations, services, professionals, parents and policymakers about relevant issues regarding children, their families and their place in the community. Our primary imperative is to promote the interests and wellbeing of young people and those who work with them.

Key achievements

- The ECA State Conference 2022 was the highlight of our year, celebrating digital literacies in the early years. It was hosted at Curtin University and Dr Karen Murcia from the ARC's Digital Child was our keynote speaker.
- Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) committee continues to provide amazing opportunities to learn and develop Noongar culture individually and within classrooms through song, dance and cultural histories. A highlight this year was the promotion of Thomas Mayo's online discussion about the Voice to Parliament campaign and his book, *Finding The Heart Of Our Nation*.
- Our pedagogy committee has provided some wonderful insight into the *Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0)* by unpacking each of the new areas, reflecting on the changes, and delving deeper into those that remain.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Chair: Kylie Keane

Over the year the ECA ACT Committee has taken part in several advocacy initiatives and hosted some key sector events, including the 2022 Education and Care Awards Gala and the 2022 ECA National Conference.

Key achievements

- The 2022 Education and Care Awards Gala united the sector amidst challenging times of uncertainty and heightened demand on essential workers. A sold-out event with 350 delegates in attendance, it was a memorable celebration that highlighted the sector's achievements. It was an honour to be joined by Yvette Berry MLA, ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister Berry provided our delegates with a welcome address and presented our awards for Innovation in Pedagogy and Practice.
- The highlight of the year was of course hosting the 2022 ECA National Conference—'Passion to Power: Our Future Profession'. The conference served as a platform for diverse participants to come together and exchange valuable and practical knowledge and develop meaningful and long-lasting networks and connections. The success of the conference not only demonstrated growth on a professional level for the ACT State Committee but has also enabled the provision of ongoing opportunities for enacting the Strategic Plan.
- Over the past year, the commitment to the Strategic Plan has yielded noteworthy achievements, particularly in the realm of advocacy. Active involvement in the Productivity Commission submission and valuable feedback provided for the Education (Early Childhood) Amendment Bill demonstrates a dedication to fostering positive change within the sector. Our commitment towards reconciliation was exemplified through scholarships to the ECA Reconciliation Symposium afforded to members as well as funding a member from our State Committee to attend, which has led to a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group.

VICTORIA

Chair: Nicole Pilsworth

The ECA Victoria Committee provides members and the early childhood sector many opportunities for networking and professional learning through our forums, Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and advocacy work. ECA Victoria continues to be consulted as a peak body and is represented on several advisory groups, including the 'Best Start, Best Life' advisory group focused on the implementation of the significant reforms happening over the next nine years in Victoria.

Key achievements

- Together with the Department of Education, we managed a successful project to implement the Child Information Sharing reforms in Victoria. This included a series of workshops and a one-day conference held in July with around 180 delegates.
- We facilitated consultation sessions with members together with representatives from the Department of Education focused on the implementation of the 'Best Start, Best Life' reforms. Our participation on the taskforce advisory group contributed to the implementation of the recent reforms announced by Premier Daniel Andrews: free kindergarten, 30 hours of kindergarten for four-year-olds, and the establishment of 50 government early learning centres.
- The committee hosted a series of member forums on professional identity and amplifying children's voices in the context of the ongoing reforms in Victoria.
- ECA Victoria facilitates three active SIGs which meet on average once a term and focus on equity, access and participation. 'Let's Reflect' considers unpacking the expectations and professional identity of teachers and educators. 'Talking Reconciliation' is an opportunity to engage in rich dialogue about how we honour First Nations perspectives in our curriculum and beyond.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Chair: Carol Burgess

ECA NSW has been very involved with the ECEC initiatives occurring across the state over the past twelve months because of the commitments made by the previous, and now current, state government. ECA NSW's membership base has continued to grow across our seven regional groups.

Key achievements

- Our Conversations Evenings continue to attract large numbers of participants. These are presented as Zoom meetings once every six weeks. We aim to present diverse speakers from a wide range of subject areas to provoke conversations and questions, and provide a unique way for our members to network with others. We have heard from both federal and state politicians and from the Productivity Commission, which has given members the opportunity to interact personally with politicians. We also had Sam Page speak to members about ECA and what is occurring nationwide.
- As part of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Group for the NSW Department of Education, we discuss and advise on issues that affect the early childhood sector in NSW. This has been invaluable this year as NSW has a new government and they have made many commitments to early childhood education.
- ECA NSW have allocated scholarships for ECA members working in early childhood education and care settings. We offered six scholarships for the Reconciliation Symposium in Hobart and six scholarships to help cover the cost of in-person conference attendance including registration, accommodation and travel. An additional six scholarships were for online conference attendance, to fund the registration fee, and to help cover a replacement staff member.

QUEENSLAND

Chair: Ali Evans (2022) / Kirsten Holland (2023)

The ECA Queensland Committee offers information, resources and services to early childhood organisations, services, professionals, parents and policymakers about child development and early childhood education and care. The committee consists of a broad membership of individuals, services and organisations representing the interests and welfare of young children across the state.

Key achievements

- Under Eights Week, our annual event for advocating the importance of play and learning in early childhood, saw many early childhood services and schools hosting events and activities related to our theme 'PLAY—You, Me and Our Communities'.
- The ECA QLD Committee had the pleasure of receiving a Certificate of Patronage at an afternoon tea event for Under Eights Week at Government House Brisbane, hosted by the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, and Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD.
- Planning is underway for the 2024 conference to be held in Queensland from Tuesday 17 to Friday 20 September 2024. A small conference committee has worked on developing the conference title and themes which will be launched at the end of the Adelaide conference. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to Queensland in 2024.
- We held our online and in-person event, 'ECA QLD Early Career Professional Conversation—Wellbeing for Children' presented by Dr Vicky Abad (Kids Music Beat) and Maree Kirkwood (Be You), followed by a panel discussion with our early career sub-committee members. Some of our regional early career members were online in the professional conversation chat to keep our online audience engaged during the discussion.
- Our early career educators also participated in ECA QLD networking events throughout the year including the Under Eights Week celebration at Government House.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Chair: Liz Chick

The intention and role of the ECA Northern Territory Committee is to promote ECA's vision and purpose, supporting ECA's membership and advocacy by identifying key issues, priorities and policies that influence young children. We are a key source of professional support and development for ECA members in the Northern Territory.

Key Achievements

- ECA NT Committee contributed to a submission on behalf of ECA National for the Northern Territory Preschool Review addressing the following questions:
 - Where is preschool situated in the context of a holistic early childhood system?
 - What makes for a high-quality preschool program?
 - Who is high-quality preschool for?
 - How might the system better support the delivery of quality and more equitable preschool services?
 - How can the approach to funding be simplified to better support delivery for providers and families?
- ECA continues to be a visible presence in the Northern Territory's early childhood sector, providing opportunities for members and non-members to contribute to their own, and others', professional learning journeys. We continue to provide a number of full scholarships to the Reconciliation Symposium and National Conference. This year we have also offered 10 full scholarships (five urban and five remote) to participate in ECA's Leadership Program. A communities of practice framework will underpin this course as an opportunity for ongoing collaboration, professional development and support for the two groups.
- ECA NT Committee has commenced engagement with Larrakia Elder, Dr Christine Fejo-King, to work alongside other Elders and Traditional Owners to document Cultural Safety Protocols, practices and perspectives in the Territory. It is our goal that this document will inform ECA NT Committee and other organisations on how we can provide cultural safety for any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenter visiting the NT or leaving to present outside of the NT.

TASMANIA

Chair: Annette Barwick

Over the year, the activities and advocacy efforts of ECA Tasmania have been in line with our guiding principles, with the first and foremost of these being 'children are central in decision-making in supporting them to learn and thrive'. In a year of changes, we are excited to be able to share some of the Branch's significant achievements.

Key achievements

- In August 2022, the Premier of Tasmania announced the intention to provide universal access to early learning, in the year before kindergarten, for every three-year-old child with education and care services being the preferred provider. The 'Working Together' program's planned expansion was another key policy area announced. These two complementary initiatives, through education and care services, are set to provide quality early learning to Tasmanian children from three years of age. We continue to advocate for all children aged birth to eight to have access that is facilitated by a skilled and qualified workforce.
- The Branch's two workforce projects in Tasmania, 'Early Years & School Age Care' (EYSAC) and the 'Community Services Industry, Workforce Coordination Project' continued in collaboration to address critical workforce challenges. A key achievement was the EYSAC partnership with ECA National and Workforce Australia for the development of a 'Good Fit Tool' funded through the Department of Employment & Workforce Relations.
- In light of the considerable discussion around language used to describe ECEC occupations, the Branch completed a submission in response to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Review Consultation.
- We continued to have representation on the Child & Youth Safe Organisation Framework, Sector Consultation Committee, and provided this important information to the sector, including a face-to-face presentation at the AGM in September.



Year in review

ECA Impact and Collaboration

The new Impact and Collaborations team was formed in July 2022. This team oversees and implements a number of ECA key functions, including:

- advocacy, policy and government relations
- support collaboration across the ECA network
- marketing and strategic communications
- branding and image management and development
- customer service.

ADVOCACY, POLICY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Policy and Government Relations team worked to ensure that ECA can exert a position of influence on government decision-making, leading the development and promotion of public policy that benefits young children and drives quality improvement in the delivery of children's services. This includes building partnerships and strong relationships to support ECA campaigns and initiatives (including ECA Statements).

Key achievements

- Several significant government reviews were undertaken during the 2022–23 financial year. Some of these include:
 - 'National Vision for Early Childhood Education and Care'
 - Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Childcare (sic) Inquiry
 - South Australian Royal Commission
 - National 'Early Years Strategy'
 - Independent Review of NDIS.
- Momentum for Early Learning Matters Week 2022 built throughout the year, culminating in its celebration during 17–21 October 2022. We had 125 services register an Early Learning Matters Week event; 632 RSVPs to social

media events; and 1,160 subscribers to the Early Learning Matters updates. We also responded to interest from 39 politicians and provided resources to connect them with local services.

SUPPORT COLLABORATION ACROSS THE ECA NETWORK

The Impact and Collaboration team worked closely with the ECA State and Territory Committees, providing advice, guidance and facilitation. An essential part of this was ensuring regular communication between head office and the committees. The team provided support for collaborative projects, initiatives and activities to strengthen ECA at state/territory and national levels; to grow our membership; and create opportunities for members to engage with our work. We also helped facilitate collaboration across the ECA network, including between the eight State and Territory Committees; regional networks; the National Reconciliation Advisory Group; and stakeholder management more broadly.

Key achievements

- Implementation of the SharePoint platform to support document storage and sharing for ECA State and Territory Committees. The platform allows for effective information-sharing between head office and the committees, including monthly finance and membership reports, ECA logos, letterheads, etc.
- Supporting states and territories on a range of initiatives and projects including:
 - NSW State Election Forum in Sydney
 - Child Information Sharing reforms project in Victoria
 - South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Supporting State and Territory Committees with design, editing and communication services and support for initiatives and projects.

MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

The ECA Communications and Marketing team has been committed to working across ECA's communication channels to disseminate news and information to keep members and the ECEC sector informed. The Strategic Communications team coordinates communication activities across ECA to strengthen our capability for effective advocacy and sector leadership. The Marketing team focuses on the sales of ECA products, events and services. ECA's marketing activities aim to increase market share and revenues from our products. This has a direct impact on building our professional capability and improving service quality while also contributing to ECA's financial viability.

Key achievements

- The ECA App was successfully launched on 27 April. Promotion for the App was conducted via a member email and through our social media channels. The ECA App is for everyone in the early childhood sector, offering inspiration, news and tools to support educator practice.
- The team implemented a new industry standard e-newsletter platform, which includes quality reporting features, effective list management and integration with our current systems. This has resulted in significantly improved efficiencies, effectiveness and engagement over the previous platform.
- The team successfully launched the joint ECA/Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) *Position Paper on Early Childhood Mathematics*. Work to disseminate information and promote the content continues on social media and via an email marketing campaign.

BRANDING AND IMAGE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Impact and Collaboration Studio team provides professional design and editing to ensure the ECA brand and image are implemented correctly and to maintain the professionalism of the organisation. The team's work includes image support, branding and innovative design evolution across ECA initiatives and products to position ECA as a trusted voice, effective advocate and reputable supplier, and to ensure the Association continues to stay current and relevant, in line with emerging trends. The Studio team also provides branding and image support for ECA events, communication, marketing and advocacy work as well as for ECA groups and teams including the states/territories and other ECA initiatives.

Key achievements

- Undertaking extensive design and editing work across all ECA events, including event materials, promotions, and printed and digital collateral.
- Undertaking design and editing of digital and print projects for the Communications and Marketing team.
- Exhibiting at a significant number of early childhood conferences and events to promote the ECA brand, membership and products. This includes the ECA Reconciliation Symposium, Sparkways Event, G8 Conference, Australian Childcare Alliance Conference, Reggio 2023 and Australian Primary Principals Association Conference.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The ECA Customer Service team is committed to providing high quality and proactive member and customer service. The team responds to enquiries and facilitates customer purchases of membership, subscriptions and ECA Shop products. They also provide technical support and enquiries for the Learning Hub platform. They facilitate the logistics and distribution of products and customer access to ECA services and events.

Professional Learning

The ECA Professional Learning team spans three key functions: the ECA Learning Hub, Publications and Production, and Special Projects. Together, the team aims to lead and inspire educators at all stages of their careers, connect research with practice, and champion quality in early education.

Professional Learning continued to lead our sector during this year with innovative evidence-based professional learning, online learning, publications and resources.

ECA LEARNING HUB

The ECA Learning Hub successfully transitioned to Moodle Workplace at the start of 2023, enhancing the function and features of the Learner Management System (LMS) with minimal disruption to learners. The transition to Moodle Workplace was an important step in improving learner experience, as well as enabling functionality around transcripts, reporting and user management. Following on from this transition, the team's attention moved to the next phase of the LMS upgrade, which included the rollout of tenancies. The tenancies will group learners by organisation and allow for organisation-based reporting and user management.

The announcement of the new nationally approved learning frameworks has had implications for content for the ECA Learning Hub, with a number of core courses significantly impacted by the updates. The team worked swiftly to decommission and update core courses, with the remaining courses being reviewed as part of an ongoing quality assurance process. Notable efforts to support the sector's transition to the new frameworks included a highly successful live webinar series with key authors of the revised frameworks, as well as fast-tracking the redevelopment of introductory courses for the *National Quality Framework* and the *Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0)*. In addition, a new introductory course for *My Time, Our Place (V2.0)* is in development and expected to be available in the coming months.

ECA PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTION

The Publications and Production team have continued to publish ECA's quality subscription publications *Every Child* magazine, *Research in Practice* series (RIPs) and *Everyday Learning* series (EDL), as well as supporting the promotion of existing and new professional learning products. The priority has been to dedicate additional time and resources to best forecast the planning of ECA's core publications and refine processes to continue producing publications that are high quality and affordable.

In addition to focusing on the core publications, the Publications and Production team also forged ahead with scheduling and managing the content and production of new ECA signature titles: *Reconciliation in Action*, the *Box of Provocations: Birth to Threes Pedagogies*, and the *ECA Management Fundamentals Program* which will all publish in the upcoming financial year.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Bespoke projects have been successfully launched this past year for a variety of key stakeholders, including the Alannah & Madeline Foundation Communities of Practice on Online Safety; the FDCA bespoke online course, *The role of the family day care coordinator: Leading quality resource*; the Rainbow Families online course, *Beyond the rainbow: Family diversity in early childhood* and family diversity book packs; and the 'Inclusion in Early Childhood' program.

Key achievements

- The ECA Learning Hub's transition to Moodle Workplace and deploying courses to third-party platforms using an innovative sharing solution.
- Publications and Production teams' collaboration with authors to publish quality core publications.
- Special Projects have completed a variety of funded projects that support the team's work towards ECA's Strategic Plan priorities. In particular, courses supporting inclusion, diversity and equity have been fast-tracked with significant uptake in the sector.

Events

The ECA Events team delivered a range of national and local events and conferences with delegate numbers ranging from 40 to over 2,000 participants. We partnered with various ECA Committees to deliver and support some of our State and Territory initiatives such as the ACT Education and Care Awards and Gala dinner, virtual events for the SA 'Ethics in Action: Dialogue with Catharine Hydon', and the NSW Election Forum. We also partnered with the VIC Committee on the Promoting Children's Health & Safety Conference, 'Embedding a Culture of Information Sharing in Early Childhood'.

We would like to thank each of our speakers, presenters, facilitators, delegates, sponsors and exhibitors who joined us for the National Conference and all other events in the past year.

Key achievements

- At the 2022 ECA National Conference, 'Passion to Power: Our Future Profession', we hosted more than 2,200 participants in person and virtually. The energy, both around the venue and online, was exhilarating. The connection and sense of shared drive among delegates truly brought the conference theme to life.

It was so heartening to see participants from across the sector and beyond coming together to share knowledge and experiences and build connections.

'The ECA Conference was such a wonderful experience to share with so many like-minded, passionate and highly educated professionals that I could learn from, be motivated by and engage with. This was my first ECA conference (and it won't be my last) and it has reignited my passion and my "why" for what I do every day. Thank you!' —Conference delegate

- Thank you for joining us at the 2023 ECA Reconciliation Symposium in Nipaluna (Hobart). It was fantastic to have over 300 in-person participants and meet on the lands of the Muwinina and Palawa peoples.

We were honoured to have such an incredible diversity of speakers who shared their stories, research and experience so generously with us. Our roundtable format enabled all participants to enter the discussion at a point that suited their individual stage and context. We thank participants for sharing their work and ideas, and thank table facilitators for helping to guide the conversations.

Our speakers impressively outlined the need for embedding reconciliation within the early childhood sector. We heard everything from historic perspectives through to current-day concerns that all Australians need to be aware of, and we were inspired and encouraged to Be a Voice for Generations. We would like to thank all of our speakers, sponsors and exhibitors for sharing their multiple perspectives and helping us move a step further in our journey of reconciliation.

'It was amazing, went well beyond my expectations, provided lots of knowledge to take back to my team and share with our local community. Looking to consult with local community to discover information and knowledge about the Aboriginal culture in the local area.' —Symposium participant

- The Conference and Events team partnered with the NSW Government to host over 170 registrations for the 2023 NSW Munch & Move HPO Professional Development Webinar Series. The succession of webinars looked at the current landscape of the early childhood education and care sector, the new updates to the *Early Years Learning Framework*, and a practical session that looked into how we can incorporate healthy eating and active living strategies to create culturally safe environments in our early childhood education and care settings. We value working with partner organisations and governments.

ECA Northern Territory

It's been a busy year across the nation for both the NDIS and Inclusion Support Programs (ISPs), with the federal government undertaking national independent reviews for both programs across the sector.

As a result of these reviews both the NDIS Darwin Urban Region Partnership (Early Childhood Approach) and the Northern Territory Inclusion Support Program (NT-IA) contracts have been extended for a further two years to the end of June 2025.

The 'National Vision for Early Childhood Education and Care', and the development of a national 'Early Years Strategy' alongside the ACCC and Productivity Commission inquiries into ECEC are underway.

There is a NT preschool review underway, as well as an evaluation of the 'Families as First Teachers' (FaFT) program and an audit of unregulated Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) services.

Key achievements

- ECA NT has been providing input to the NDIS Independent Review Panel on practice insights regarding families and children at the beginning of their NDIS journey.
- In the last 12 months ECA NT welcomed 403 new families into the early childhood approach pathway. ECA NT is currently supporting 887 families, including those with NDIS funded plans and those receiving either early supports or early connections.

'We feel incredibly lucky to have been guided and supported from the beginning of Sophie's journey with Early Childhood Australia. That support helped pave the path for where Sophie is now, the progress she has made through access to therapies, and helped me through the range of emotions I felt as a mum trying to come to terms with the uncertainties of what I saw with the emerging issues challenging Sophie.' —Parent of a child being supported by ECA NT

- It's been a very busy year with a strong focus on community engagement and supporting services with workforce challenges. With the national shortage of early childhood educators, attracting and retaining educators—particularly in remote communities—has been a challenge. This has led to some ECEC services having to either close or cap numbers of children attending.

In the last 12 months the ISP has supported 195 eligible NT ECEC services with 130 Strategic Inclusion Plans (SIPs) in place. The program has had over 300 requests for inclusion support with 10 Innovative Solutions projects either in the pipeline or already approved. In the last six months the ISP has been focusing on community development and stakeholder engagement which has been supporting children, families and communities to access ECEC services.

- ECA NT has supported the Productivity Commission in visiting the NT to see how the inquiry into early childhood education and care needs to attend to some of the structural and systemic issues of inclusion, participation and productivity for children and families living in remote communities.



Early Childhood Australia is proud to empower educators and early learning services to support the mental health of our youngest citizens through Be You.

Be You supports educators to nurture positive, inclusive and resilient learning communities where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health.

In 2022, early learning services continued to operate with challenges relating to staffing shortages alongside the continued impact of natural disasters and heightened levels of community trauma in some areas.

Simultaneously, the ECEC sector is growing and changing. The number of early learning services registered with ACECQA increased to over 17,000 in 2022. Job advertisements for early childhood educators increased by over 60% between financial years 2020–21 and 2021–22, with significant growth forecast into the future.

There is also an emerging consensus that mental health and wellbeing is central to children's healthy development. The 2022 revision to the *Early Years Learning Framework* explicitly references mental health for the first time. It contains 112 references to wellbeing, compared to 34 in the original version. The *National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* emphasises the tremendous contribution that ECEC can make to lifelong mental health, stating 'There is nothing that will have more impact on improved mental health outcomes for all Australians than early intervention.' Acknowledgement of the importance of mental health extends to educators too. The *National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy*, released in 2021, identifies promoting educator wellbeing as a core action and singles out Be You as a key enabler.

These developments underline the continuing urgency and relevance of Be You to the fast-changing ECEC sector. Keeping up with these changes requires resilience and agility, and Early Childhood Australia has continuously tailored and adapted recruitment and engagement approaches to meet learning communities where they are.

Key achievements

- There are over 6,500 early learning services now participating in Be You, representing 36% of all ACECQA registered services. We have delivered implementation support sessions with approximately 5,000 session or event registrations received during the two-year contract period, and a conversion rate to attendance of approximately 41%.
- We have deepened our commitment to scalable ways of working through partnerships with large providers and stakeholders, leveraging the multi-layered organisational structures such as area managers and other support roles. These partnerships also present an excellent opportunity for us to increase scalability by leveraging implementation resources and champions within providers.
- We designed, developed and delivered the Planning for Implementation modules and digital workbook, in collaboration with the Centre for Evidence and Implementation. This package consists of five practical and 'bite-sized' (15–20 minutes) interactive modules corresponding to the five stages of the Be You Implementation Cycle.

Audited Financials

Early Childhood Australia

ABN: 44 950 767 752

Concise Consolidated Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Early Childhood Australia

ABN: 44 950 767 752

Concise Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Income			
Revenue	4	17,559,717	15,043,093
Other income	4	35,400	26,552
Total income		17,595,117	15,069,645
Expenses			
Communication		(82,211)	(75,786)
Consulting		(598,120)	(326,738)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(516,907)	(503,018)
Development		(253,206)	(142,584)
Event expenses		(1,235,233)	(448,101)
IT platforms, project specific		(378,541)	(310,882)
Labour costs		(11,968,413)	(11,358,640)
Occupancy		(963,417)	(717,923)
Postage		(183,924)	(170,673)
Printing		(3,010)	(47,396)
Promotion		(141,274)	(115,938)
Finance costs		(40,866)	(48,460)
Cost of sales of publications		(236,588)	(167,333)
Travel costs		(731,849)	(357,641)
Other expenses		(923,525)	(1,019,865)
Total expenses		(18,257,084)	(15,810,978)
Profit for the year		(661,967)	(741,333)
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax			
Fair value movements on investments held at FVOCI		(1,301)	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		(1,301)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		(663,268)	(741,333)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Concise Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents		9,954,927	3,771,206
Trade and other receivables	5	324,314	1,197,319
Inventories		237,560	327,651
Other financial assets		78,730	-
Other assets	6	834,640	1,049,111
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		11,430,171	6,345,287
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Other financial assets		63,309	64,609
Property, plant and equipment	7	202,724	213,079
Intangible assets	8	812,488	479,006
Right-of-use assets	9	423,883	645,460
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		1,502,404	1,402,154
TOTAL ASSETS		12,932,575	7,747,441
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors and accrued expenses		976,596	863,225
Lease liabilities	9	211,528	230,159
Employee benefits	10	892,251	1,016,009
Income in advance	11	7,319,300	3,150,337
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		9,399,675	5,259,730
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	9	267,773	475,503
Employee benefits	10	172,616	142,003
Provision for make good		50,000	50,000
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		490,389	667,506
TOTAL LIABILITIES		9,890,064	5,927,236
NET ASSETS		3,042,511	1,820,205
EQUITY			
Reserves	12	2,517,654	657,634
Retained earnings		524,857	1,162,571
TOTAL EQUITY		3,042,511	1,820,205

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Early Childhood Australia

ABN: 44 950 767 752

Concise Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2023

	Note	Retained Earnings	Financial asset reserve	Asset purchase reserve	Program development reserve	Redundancy reserve	Administration reserve	State and territory reserves	Total
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2022		1,162,571	-	4,564	175,433	35,000	50,000	392,637	1,820,205
Profit (loss) attributable to members of the parent entity		(661,967)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(661,967)
Total other comprehensive income for the year		-	(1,301)	-	-	-	-	-	(1,301)
Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners									
Contribution of equity from affiliates		1,885,574	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,885,574
Transfers to/from reserves arising from state and territory activities		(50,118)	-	-	-	-	-	50,118	-
Other transfers to/from reserves		(1,811,203)	-	(4,564)	(175,433)	(35,000)	(50,000)	2,076,200	-
Balance at 30 June 2023		524,857	(1,301)	-	-	-	-	2,518,955	3,042,511

2022

	Note	Retained Earnings	Asset purchase reserve	Program development reserve	Redundancy reserve	Administration reserve	State and territory reserves	Total
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2021		815,591	100,000	400,000	35,000	80,000	-	1,430,591
Profit/(loss) attributable to members of the parent entity		(741,333)	-	-	-	-	-	(741,333)
Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners								
Contribution of equity from affiliates		1,130,947	-	-	-	-	-	1,130,947
Transfers to/from reserves		(42,634)	(95,436)	(224,567)	-	(30,000)	392,637	-
Balance at 30 June 2022		1,162,571	4,564	175,433	35,000	50,000	392,637	1,820,205

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Concise Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Receipts from members, customers and government	21,545,676	15,307,020
Payments to suppliers and employees	(19,376,412)	(16,898,985)
Interest received	35,400	26,552
Finance costs	(40,866)	(48,460)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	2,163,798	(1,613,873)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Payment for intangible assets	(505,901)	(83,299)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(112,550)	(160,560)
Purchase of financial assets	(78,731)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(697,182)	(243,859)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from affiliate contributions	4,943,466	2,801,219
Payment of lease liabilities	(226,361)	(270,365)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	4,717,105	2,530,854
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	6,183,721	673,122
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	3,771,206	3,098,084
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	9,954,927	3,771,206

1 Basis of Preparation

The concise consolidated financial report of Early Childhood Australia Inc. (the Association) is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2023. The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports, and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements, specific disclosures and other information included in the concise financial report are derived from, and are consistent with, the full financial report of the Association. The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as detailed an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the Association as the full financial report. A copy of the full financial report and auditor's report is available from the Early Childhood Australia Incorporated's website.

The functional and presentation currency of Early Childhood Australia Inc. is Australian dollars.

2 Discussion and analysis of the financial statements

This discussion and analysis is provided to assist Members in understanding the concise financial report. The discussion and analysis is based on the company's financial statements and information contained in the concise financial report. This information has been derived from the full financial report of Early Childhood Australia (ECA).

During the year the ECA continued to enter into affiliation agreements with separate state and territory associations (branches) of Early Childhood Australia. Under the agreements, the branches agreed to wind-up and transfer surplus assets to Early Childhood Australia. The winding up process and transitioning of control to the Group has varied amongst the branches. The Group has consolidated the activities of the branches when effective control over decision making for the branch has occurred.

Statement of Comprehensive income

The Association's operations for the year ended 30 June 2023 resulting in a deficit of \$663,268 (2022: deficit of \$741,333).

Income and expenditure have both increased due to the broadening of the Company's activities as a direct result of the affiliation with the state and territory Company's.

Funding for the Be You, NDIS and ISP programs remain a key source of income as well as retail sales such as our Learning Hub products.

Statement of financial position

Total assets increased to \$12,932,575 (2021: \$7,747,442). Total liabilities increased to \$9,890,064 (2022: \$5,927,236). The affiliation with the state and territory associations attributed to an increase in net assets of \$1,885,574 (2022: \$1,130,947).

Statement of changes in equity

Total equity increased by \$1,222,306 to \$3,042,511 (2021: \$1,820,206.) The affiliation with the state and territory associations attributed to an increase of \$1,885,574 which has been partially offset by the operating deficit.

Statement of Cash Flows

Cash and cash equivalents increased by \$6,183,721 (2022: \$673,122).

Cash balances of \$4,943,466 were transferred to the Company upon the affiliation with the state and territory associations. However, this included \$3,035,277 of unacquitted grant funding which was matched by an obligation to provide future services.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children