



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

ECA STRATEGIC PLAN 2025–2030

OUR VISION: EVERY YOUNG CHILD IS THRIVING AND LEARNING

Our purpose

The early years are the foundation of lifelong learning and wellbeing. Early Childhood Australia (ECA) champions the right of every child to thrive and learn through the crucial years from birth to the age of eight.

Our aspirations

By the year 2030, we would like to contribute to an Australian society in which:

- young children are active agents in their lives, their communities and their learning environments
- high-quality early childhood education and care is an entitlement for every child and is accessible for every family
- early childhood education is a respected profession with an expanding body of knowledge and pedagogies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being are valued, respected and celebrated
- families raising young children have the resources, information and support they need
- the interests of young children and their families are taken into consideration in public policy and decision-making.

Our Strategic Priorities

To contribute to achieving positive societal change and deliver on our purpose, we have five Strategic Priorities:



1

A VOICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Our advocacy amplifies the voice of young children, families and the early childhood profession.



2

BUILD PROFESSIONAL AND SECTOR CAPABILITY

Our work builds the capability of educators, early childhood services and schools to be ethical, inclusive and effective.



3

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPACT

We partner with others to champion the importance of the early years and improve outcomes for all children.



4

LEADER IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EVENTS

We are leaders in the provision of quality-assured resources and learning opportunities for early childhood professionals.



5

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE

We invest in our people and technology platforms to be socially, financially and environmentally sustainable and effective.

Our values

CHILD-CENTRED

Children are citizens of today and tomorrow.

LEADERSHIP

We demonstrate clarity of purpose in every action and decision.

TRUST

Our work is based on evidence and expertise.

INTEGRITY

We are ethical, transparent and accountable.

INCLUSION

Every child and every person has the right to be valued and to participate.

DIVERSITY

We recognise and value difference in ways of being and cultural knowledge.

Commitments under each of these priorities are outlined on the following pages. Everything we do is founded on the ECA *Code of Ethics* and our organisation's values.

A voice for young children

Our advocacy amplifies the voice of young children, families and the early childhood profession.

Engagement

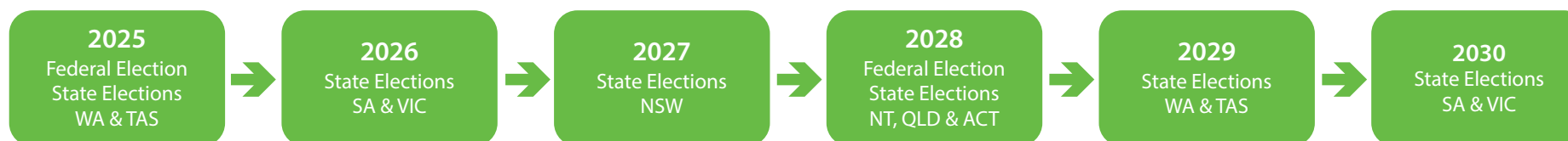
- 1.1 Engage with children and families, professionals and researchers working with children to inform our advocacy.
- 1.2 Facilitate opportunities for consultation and co-design opportunities with children, families and early childhood professionals on policy reform and program initiatives.
- 1.3 Continue to champion the importance of play and play-based learning in the lives of young children, including through ECA's *Statement on Play* and associated resources.
- 1.4 Support our State/Territory Committees, regional networks, advisory groups and special interest groups to engage in advocacy on behalf of communities or cohorts with diverse or unique needs aligned to ECA's values and agreed policy positions.

Communication

- 1.5 Communicate key messages through our advocacy work that includes working with the media, building our communication reach and expanding our use of social media.
- 1.6 Contribute to initiatives that support families with young children to understand the importance of the early years and access the information and support they need.

Policy advocacy

- 1.7 Assess the impact of policies, legislation and program changes on young children and their families—particularly during parliamentary elections, budget processes and times of crisis response (e.g. fire, drought, community trauma).
- 1.8 Prepare submissions to parliamentary and governmental processes on matters relevant to young children and early childhood services in consultation with our members, stakeholders, State/Territory Committees and advisory groups.
- 1.9 Collaborate with members and others to raise the profile of the early years through Early Learning Matters Week, other campaigns and collaborative advocacy initiatives.
- 1.10 Consider ECA's role in international advocacy and development as a global citizen.



Please note: The Election schedule is subject to change.

Build professional and sector capability

Our work builds the capability of educators, early childhood services and schools to be ethical, inclusive and effective.

Beyond quality

- 2.1 Champion continuous improvement in early childhood education and care, both within the sector and in the broader social discourse, looking beyond regulatory or managerial approaches to quality.
- 2.2 Refresh the *ECA Code of Ethics* in consultation with the sector and expand the resources available to facilitate a deeper, shared understanding of the ethical and complex nature of early childhood professionals' work with children, families, communities and colleagues.
- 2.3 Refresh the *ECA Statement on Young Children and Digital Technologies*—to be released in 2025.
- 2.4 Redevelop the *ECA Statement on Inclusion* and extend our suite of resources to support the following objectives:
 - Early childhood services are available and accessible to all children, embracing all abilities.
 - Early childhood professionals have the skills and knowledge to take a strengths-based approach to diversity, including cultural diversity, neurodiversity, disability and developmental differences.

Workforce initiatives

- 2.5 Work with early childhood professionals to raise the status of their work, and strengthen the professional identity of educators, teachers and service leaders across setting types. Beginning with EYSAC and workforce scholarships in Tasmania from 2025, ECA will actively pursue workforce initiatives and projects that:
 - promote and foster career pathways, including qualification options
 - adopt a nationally consistent approach to professional registration
 - apply teaching standards in early childhood settings
 - facilitate access to professional learning and development, including mentoring and coaching.
- 2.6 Promote the use of professional language in early childhood settings and more broadly in the public discourse.

Features of highly inclusive practices in ECEC settings:

- evidence of connection to culture, identity and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- family-centred practices that recognise and value family diversity, including (but not limited to) culturally and linguistically diverse families, children and families with neurodiversity, and LGBTQI+ families
- children of all abilities at all levels of development are supported to thrive and learn
- children and families in regional and remote areas have equity of access to appropriate service models and programs
- children growing up in complex families and communities are safe and supported through collaborative and integrated practices across agencies and professions
- for children experiencing trauma, service delivery and practice are strengths-based and trauma-informed.

Priority 2

Partnerships for impact

We partner with others to champion the importance of the early years and improve outcomes for all children.

Social and emotional wellbeing

- 3.1 Work in partnership with Beyond Blue, headspace and participating services to deliver Be You Early Learning as part of the National Mental Health in Education Initiative to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of all young children in education settings. Our focus is to support engagement with the framework and have a deeper impact on practice in participating services.

Inclusion and early intervention

- 3.2 As a Partner in the Community to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Darwin urban region (NT), we support families and children with emerging developmental differences, helping them to access early supports and peer support, and for those who are eligible, we assist them to navigate the NDIS. Our focus is to grow our early support work across the NT and continue to be a high-performing and valued NDIS partner.
- 3.3 As the Inclusion Support Agency across the NT, we work to enhance the capacity and capability of early childhood services to include all children by providing professional development and support, resources and expertise. We advocate to enhance access to early childhood services for cohorts of children at risk of missing out and pursue opportunities to demonstrate innovative practice through collaboration and partnership.
- 3.4 Foster partnerships with organisations and consortiums to reduce disadvantage across the lifespan through appropriate investment in the early years and mitigation of risk factors such as family violence, drug and alcohol misuse, and financial hardship.

Reconciliation

- 3.5 Fully implement ECA's Reconciliation Action Plan, which includes actions for collaboration and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations across our work in policy and advocacy, conference and events, publications and online learning as well as recruitment, staff training and procurement.
- 3.6 Recognise the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and work with them to promote the interests and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and communities.

Sector coordination

- 3.7 Support State/Territory Committees to take an active role in sector coordination at the jurisdiction level.
- 3.8 Facilitate a sector leaders' network to coordinate the work of large providers, research academics and thought leaders across the early childhood sector.
- 3.9 Expand our capability and influence through partnership agreements with organisations that have aligned values and objectives.
- 3.10 Engage with policy and practice initiatives that support cross-disciplinary collaboration and integrated service provision, providing more holistic responses to young children and their families—particularly in communities with high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Leader in professional learning and events

We are leaders in the provision of quality-assured resources and learning opportunities for early childhood professionals.

National Conference and events

- 4.1 Strengthen continuity and delegate engagement across our annual ECA National Conferences, building professional connection, identity and aspiration. This includes ongoing development of the ECA Colloquia on Leadership and Ethics.
- 4.2 Add a colloquia option to the annual ECA Reconciliation Symposium from 2026, and review the format in consultation with Reconciliation Australia and SNAICC—National Voice for our Children.
- 4.3 Develop a calendar of events each year in consultation with State/Territory Committees to provide regular opportunities for members to participate in professional learning and networking, including the Australasian Journal of Early Childhood (AJEC) Research Symposium; the Regional, Rural and Remote Early Childhood Forum; and state/territory events.

Publications and resources

- 4.4 Support, publish and translate research relevant to early childhood education and care through our publications, including AJEC, *Every Child* magazine and other series.
- 4.5 Expand the range and utilisation of publications (digital and hard copy) that we produce to support pedagogy and practice in the early years in response to the needs and priorities of the sector.

ECA Learning Hub

- 4.6 Expand the reach and impact of the ECA Learning Hub as Australia's leading source of online learning for early childhood professionals, with authoritative, quality-assured content developed in accordance with adult learning principles and hosted on a user-friendly platform.
- 4.7 Expand the range of learning opportunities on the ECA Learning Hub for a diverse audience through microlearning opportunities, courses and programs to enhance pedagogy and practices. Explore opportunities to collaborate on combinations of online and in-person modalities of learning with professional coaching and mentoring.
- 4.8 Maximise the reach and accessibility of our online learning through partnerships, funded projects and flexible purchasing options that represent good value for professionals and students both in Australia and overseas.
- 4.9 Invest in evaluation and market research to assess and enhance the impact of our professional learning on practice at both the individual and service level.

Professional learning topics 2025–30

- Social and emotional development
- Language and literacy development
- Child safety and preventing harm
- Inclusion and cultural responsiveness
- Holistic approaches to understanding and guiding children's behaviour
- Transitions and routines
- Nutrition and physical wellbeing
- Educator wellbeing
- Early childhood career progression and longevity
- Building management capability
- Fostering leadership
- Cross-disciplinary practice and integrated service models

Sustainable and effective

We invest in our people and technology platforms to be socially, financially and environmentally sustainable and effective.

Governance

- 5.1 Continue to evolve our governance structures to adopt contemporary best practice, ensuring that ECA is accountable to members and roles are clear across the National Board, State/Territory Committees and advisory groups—with appropriate investment in skills and capability.
- 5.2 Optimise member benefits, including opportunities for representation and advocacy as well as networks and events, while also reducing confusion over membership levels and benefits.

People

- 5.3 Strengthen consistency and capability across our management team to ensure that we have talented, high-performing employees across the organisation as a result of good practice in recruitment, onboarding, supervision and performance appraisal.
- 5.4 Implement ECA's Professional Learning Strategy to invest in skills development and foster career progression opportunities across our workforce.
- 5.5 Enhance internal communication to maximise opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise across our teams (Be You, NDIS and ISP, Professional Learning, Events, Marketing and Communications).

Online platforms

- 5.6 Refresh the ECA logo, website and app to:
 - update the branding and style of our major platforms
 - improve functionality of the ECA Shop, including membership renewals and purchases
 - incorporate an 'Every Educator' web platform as a professional identity initiative
 - better integrate digital marketing with the ECA Shop
 - implement sales functionality within the ECA Learning Management System (LMS).
- 5.7 Invest in improvements to our online platforms and cybersecurity to ensure members and customers can interact with ECA confidently and with satisfaction.

Financial sustainability

- 5.8 Develop and implement an ECA Business Development Plan to strengthen our financial sustainability and performance.
- 5.9 Work with State/Territory Committees to maximise revenue opportunities and invest reserves in a way that protects the organisation over the long term.
- 5.10 Explore international markets for online learning through partnerships with aligned organisations and networks overseas.
- 5.11 Undertake a sustainability audit across our programs and teams to demonstrate and strengthen our credibility as an environmentally and socially responsible organisation. This includes meeting our commitments on procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers and minimising the risk of modern slavery.