

ECA NSW BRANCH

Newsletter

December 2018

Dear members

Best wishes to all our supportive members for a very happy Christmas. May 2019 be a happy and productive year!

Thank you to all who attended our National 'Being the Difference for Children and Families' Conference in Sydney.

It was a pleasure to be part of such a large event with over 2050 national and international delegates. The sheer number of delegates who attended demonstrates the strength of early childhood education and advocacy in Australia. The conference was organised by the ECA National office events team and actively supported by ECA NSW volunteers. The International Convention Centre was an outstanding venue to host such a prestigious event. Our thanks to everyone who helped make this event so memorable.

Our next ECA conference hosted by ECA Tasmania will be held in Hobart from 25th to 28th September 2019, so keep a lookout for the conference information. As the Hobart conference venue will have limited capacity, we anticipate that registrations will fill quickly for the 'From Vision to Action'. Please register early to avoid disappointment.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to ECA NSW.

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes

Carol Burgess

President ECA NSW



We are delighted that the new National Early Childhood Australia President is Chris Legg from NSW.

Chris is CEO of KU Children's Services and she is a very highly considered advocate for all Children's Services.

We would also like to congratulate Ian Alchin on his temporary appointment to the role of Deputy National President of Early Childhood Australia.



Early Childhood Australia

New South Wales Branch

ECA NSW EXECUTIVE

President

Carol Burgess

Vice President

Natalie Grenfell

Executive

Rose Todd (Secretary)

Nan Greig (Treasurer)

Jan Langtry

Ian Alchin

Chris Legg

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ECA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Highlights

Former ECA President and NSW life member, Margaret Young won the Barbara Creaser award.

The following is an extract from Margaret's presentation:

'Many of us are drawn to Early Childhood Australia (ECA) as a 'voice for young children', and many help make that voice loud, strong and true. ECA's 80th year is a good time to reflect on what this means and how it happens, especially through the 2018 conference theme of 'Be the difference for children and families' that captures much of the spirit of advocacy and suggests even greater advocacy action. However, advocacy can mean different things to different people. By its very nature, it presents challenges and can raise questions, concerns as well as congratulations.'

Margaret reflected on these issues and the role of ECA and its advocacy over the years. Margaret discussed some of the motivators, challenges and strategies that have characterised ECA's advocacy work, along with achievements, frustrations, 'works in progress' and emerging issues.

Further considering this year's theme, 'Making a Difference', Margaret acknowledged the vital role of individuals in ECA's advocacy, and paid tribute to the wide range of people who have made, and continue to make, a difference for young children. She also explored the many ways of doing this and the challenges involved. She stated that 'We all have a part to play!'



Ian Alchin (ECA Board Member), Carol Burgess (ECA NSW President), Natalie Grenfell (ECA NSW Vice President) & Chris Legg (ECA National President) attending the 80th Anniversary celebrations of Early Childhood Australia at Admiralty House.

The event was hosted by the patron of Early Childhood Australia His Excellency Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Dr Sandra Cheeseman who was awarded the ECA Doctoral Thesis award at the ECA 2018 conference.

ECA NSW nominated Sandra for this national award for her paper that challenges normative assumptions about infants and educator practice.

"My research aimed to better understand, as far as possible from the infants' perspective, how they experienced curriculum, in order to offer a reconceptualisation of infants as curriculum consumers," she said. "My study investigated infants' encounters with curriculum and attempted to come closer to understanding what it is like for infants to experience curriculum in their childcare setting in order to reveal the potential hidden, silenced or taken-for-granted aspects about curriculum for infants."



CONFERENCE *Scholarship winners*



Scholarship winners: Natalie Rich, Jordan Martins, Katie Howard, Carol Burgess (ECA NSW President), Tegan Baker, Jessica Gibbs, Cherie Longdon

ECA NSW Supported six educators for registration at the conference. They all reported having an excellent time and felt the experience will enhance their teaching.

Cherie Longdon **Style St Childcare**

I had the most wonderful time at the ECA conference and was so thankful to have been a recipient of a scholarship. The themes of the conference were so rich and the delegates and speakers were so inspiring. Since the conference we have been using the "Ethics in Action" folder and have had some really in-depth conversations about ethical dilemmas and have made good use of the ethical decision making cycle. I was very inspired and in awe listening to Dr Stuart Shanker speak about self-regulation and how important it is not only for the children but also us as educators. The breakout sessions were amazing and at times it was hard to decide which session to attend.

This was my first ECA conference and I was blown away by the professionalism and strength of our industry. I met so many people and had some amazing reflective discussions around the sessions. I really didn't want it to end. I'm wishing and hoping and praying to get to the next instalment in Hobart. Thank you ECA NSW for this amazing opportunity!

Katie Howard **Amy Hurd ELC Wagga**

I would like to say a big thank you for the opportunity to attend the ECA conference in Sydney. The financial support allowed me to experience this conference with my colleagues, which was wonderful. We were able to 'bounce' ideas off each other and bring back phenomenal knowledge to our service.

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to keynote speakers, in particular Dr. Shanker. He gave me so much knowledge and inspiration to continue with my work and implement some strategies into my service.

I was also lucky enough to attend a session on the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process which has given me confidence to plan and implement our RAP back here at Amy Hurd.

Being able to network with fellow educators from other services was priceless, and we were so fortunate to develop a relationship with another scholarship recipient, that we plan to interact with in the future through the pre-school room, writing letters and maybe one day a visit to Tumut.

There was so many other wonderful points, too many to mention. The conference was such an enormous event and I am so happy to have been able to attend and re-spark that flame for Early Childhood Education.

Natalie Rich **Armidale Preschool**

The 2018 ECA Conference was a truly inspiring experience. I loved being able to hear some fantastic speakers such as Catherine Hudson, Anthony Semman, Dr. Stuart Shanker and Australia's Queen Of Common Sense, Maggie Dent. As a result, my practices and philosophy have been challenged, encouraging professional growth and development. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference, network with peers and organisations and continue on my professional development journey. Hope to see you in 2019!

Regional EVENTS

Central COAST

The Central Coast Group of ECA is holding Political Forum on 11 February 2019.

The purpose is to provide a platform for local political representatives to share their vision for early childhood and to give early childhood practitioners an opportunity to voice their major concerns.

A panel of politicians has been invited to speak for 10-15 minutes each and later address questions. Leading stakeholders in the early childhood sector will be given opportunity to submit one question each and there will also be questions from the floor. We will be providing young children from the Central Coast an opportunity to contribute with a display of letters/pictures about their concerns. Local media have been invited to attend.

Illawarra & SOUTH COAST

ECA Illawarra & South Coast end of year regional gathering.

Our ECA Members and friends from Shoalhaven and Illawarra enjoyed an end of year gathering at Wallaroo Children Centre, Shellharbour.

Bridget Bardon from Early Childhood Australia presented on the important topic of Educator Wellbeing and Self Care and the National Education Initiative – Be You.

We shared strategies for self-care and supporting colleagues in the workplace and explored the online professional learning accessible through the National Education Initiative that can support educators and learning communities across the country. Thank you to the team at Wallaroo for providing such a lovely venue and delicious food! We look forward to seeing all members and friends in 2019!

Hunter REGION

The Hunter region held a successful evening focusing on educator wellness. The speaker from Be You was excellent and inspired all. Amanda Holt, Hunter regional representative made care packages for all participants.



Awards for Early Childhood Educators

Two Early Childhood Educators have won prestigious awards for their work with Early Childhood Education in the Riverina.

The award is sponsored by Early Childhood Australia, Riverina Branch. The awards were announced at an annual dinner at the International Hotel.

Alicia Marshal from Be You spoke about working with children and families to achieve their best possible mental health through promotion prevention and early intervention. Be You is a single, integrated national initiative to promote mental health from the early years to 18 years.

The Winner of the 'High Achiever Award' was Sharon Gill from St Mary's Rainbow Preschool. Sharon is the long standing Director of the Preschool and was recognised for the development of the 'Bush Block' – a new nature based play learning environment. With the support of the Wagga Wagga Anglican Parish, Sharon was instrumental in the acquisition and subsequent redevelopment of this space which has been to develop to introduce the children to the past Wiradjuri world and develop a nature based learning program.

The winner of the 'Making A Difference Award' was Tanya Green from KU Koala Preschool. Tanya has no spoken language. She has taught children the importance of sign language through teaching many everyday signs. Tanya has helped the KU community to develop an understanding for being aware of similarities and differences in people and the need to practice inclusive ways.



Megan Casey, Kathy Flannigan, Bridget Brustolin, Tanya Green (winner), Kirrily Brassil, Dimity Cowley



Lincoln Gill, Jess Gill, Sharon Gill, Rev David Ruthven, James Hamilton (Treasurer, Wagga Anglican Parish)



Tanya Green, Sharon Gill, Tracey Snow (Riverina representative for Early Childhood Australia, NSW Branch)

Conversations

Interested in having ECA NSW visit your region?

Next Conversations evening will take place on Thursday 8th February 2019.

Please send in your EOI in having the conversations evening in your area.

The February meeting will be held in the Sydney region.

Email office@nsw.earlychild.org.au if you are interested in being the host.

NSW Premier's Early Childhood Education Scholarship

ECA NSW congratulates Ljiljana Kocic as the recipient of the 2019 NSW Premier's Teacher Scholarship (Early Childhood).

Early Childhood Australia (NSW branch) and Modern Teaching Awards (MTA) co-sponsors the \$10,000 NSW Premier's Early Childhood Education to support further study in early childhood education.

Ljiljana completed her Early Childhood and Primary degree through the University of Western Sydney and now teaches at Lansvale Primary School in the Preschool. Ljiljana and her colleagues have been involved with a creativity program through the Sydney Opera House and this involvement inspired Ljiljana to apply for the scholarship. The scholarship will allow Ljiljana to travel overseas in 2019 to explore, 'Creativity and Inquiry' by attending a number of Reggio inspired creativity conferences in the United States and also visit a range of different education programs and settings exploring creativity and play in the Preschool - Year 2 setting.

The 2018 winner of the NSW Premier's Early Childhood Education Scholarship Rosanne Pugh was able to study *The Intersection Between Early Childhood Education for Sustainability and Reconciliation*. Rosanne completed a comparative study of complementary initiatives in Australia and New Zealand Early Childhood Services.

The program aims to deliver significant outcomes for scholarship recipients, students, teacher colleagues, and school communities by exploring best practice in your chosen subject area.

The 2020 study tour scholarship will open in January.

For more information check out:

education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/jobs-and-opportunities/scholarships/premiers-teacher-scholarships

Rosanne (second from left) is pictured with the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, Minister for Early Childhood Sarah Mitchell and Minister for Education Robert Stokes.



KidsMatter has become Be You

Building on the work of KidsMatter, the Be You initiative is growing a mentally healthy generation.

What is Be You?

Be You is a single, integrated national initiative to promote mental health from the early years to 18 years. It's for every Australian educator from early learning services through to secondary schools, including future educators.

Be You is led by Beyond Blue in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace funded by the Australian Government.

Be You's vision is that every learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient – a place where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health through promotion prevention and early intervention.

Mental health starts with early childhood...

Development and life experiences during this time contribute strongly to a person's mental health and wellbeing during childhood and later in life.

Early Childhood Australia, as a Be You delivery partner will continue our commitment to the importance of early childhood and ensuring our youngest children, and those who are dedicated to their learning, development and wellbeing have a voice.

Be You offers early learning services and schools:

- evidence-based, flexible online professional learning, complemented by a range of tools and resources to turn learning into action
- Be You Consultant support for learning and action to inform, guide and demonstrate achievements in meeting National Quality Standard requirements
- opportunities to participate in interactive events and build professional networks blogs for learning and reflection.

The cost... your time and internet connection!

Is your service or school ready to start?

To sign up your service or school, register here.

<https://beyou.edu.au/register>

Experiences in the early years affect long-term mental health, relationships and learning. This knowledge forms the foundation of KidsMatter's work with educators, early learning services and schools.

You can still find us on Facebook too.

