



# 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

CELA acknowledges all Traditional Custodians across Australia and recognises First Nations Peoples' connection to their lands, skies and waterways. We respect Elders past, present and emerging. Together we work towards a better future for all children, families and communities.

Artwork by Megan Daley, a Ngunnawal/Wiradjuri mixed media artist.

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# Message from the CEO



It is with immense honour and pride that I present the CELA annual report, reflecting the remarkable achievements our organisation has accomplished over the 2023-24 financial year. CELA continues to be a driving force in advocating for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector and our impact is being felt far and wide. In fact, as we state in this report, the past year has been one of our most ambitious and successful to date.

Our members, predominantly community managed and small providers, continue to be the cornerstone of our success. In everything we do, we represent more than 1800 services employing over 27,000 educators and teachers nationally, and our member base continues to grow. Walking alongside and understanding the unique needs and challenges of these services and the educators and teachers they employ, has allowed us to advocate for policies that benefit, not only our members, but the entire sector and broader community.

At the heart of this community, of course, are families and children. Our continued goal is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in quality early education and care so they can reach their full potential—no matter their geographical or financial circumstances. As the research shows, quality early learning is integral to national education outcomes, and CELA is deeply committed to ensuring that every child has an opportunity to thrive and succeed.

One of CELA's most significant accomplishments this year has been our advocacy campaign for improved educator and teacher wages. Through our determined efforts, alongside the Community Child Care Association (CCC), we have been instrumental in securing the \$3.6 billion Federal Government's commitment to increase educator wages by 15%. This landmark achievement is a testament to our ability to influence policy and drive large-scale, positive change. Our leadership in multi-employer bargaining has been particularly impactful, as well as raising the voices of small and community providers through various ECEC inquiries. This work has laid the foundation for transformative reform, including universal access, professional wages and expanded community services.

As well as advocacy, our dedication to quality ECEC is realised through CELA's vast and comprehensive learning and development programs; training resources; publications such as Amplify! and Rattler; and support services—all of which I am immensely proud. I am privileged to work with an incredibly skilled and experienced team of sector specialists, many of whom have first-hand experience working as educators, teachers and directors. This insight allows them a deep understanding of the context and challenges involved in ECEC and they tailor training and support accordingly. Together as a team, we hold a deep understanding of federal, state and local government policy; diverse needs of families and children; community ambitions; impact of quality service delivery; how ECEC operates successfully; governance; and the intersection of all these elements. This unique perspective has positioned CELA as a leading authority in the field, and our influence is recognised across the country.

As this is a financial report, we are proud to announce that our organisation has achieved a surplus, despite the challenging economic climate and level of investment in impactful advocacy. This is testament to our sound management practices and that the sector chooses us to deliver learning and development, and consultancy. Without you, we would not be able to raise the revenue required to serve the sector at the current scale. We also deeply value the financial contribution of our members and our partnership with Guild Insurance.

As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. The Governments' roadmap for a truly universal high-quality learning system is a vision that we are committed to realising. Personally, while I know there is a lot more work to be done, I am buoyed by our successes. And I look forward to progressing the mission of CELA together.

**Michele Carnegie**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Community Early Learning Australia

# Who we are

**Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) is the voice for Australia's early education and care sector.**

CELA has successfully supported and advocated for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services for nearly 50 years. We are committed to early education and building the future, one child at a time.

A member-driven organisation, we are dedicated to supporting over 1,800 members that employ more than 27,000 educators and teachers nationally. Our members include community-managed not-for-profit, government, and privately-owned small providers, delivering preschool, long day care, mobile, outside school hours care, and family day care services.



CELA has supported early education and care professionals for

## 47 YEARS

Members gain access to a wealth of knowledge and inspiration through CELA's 1800 support line, publications and resources, and receive discounts on training, events and consultancy services. Through our advocacy, we provide a vital line of communication to government, ensuring member voices are heard.



### WHAT WE DO

CELA represents the interests of members and the sector by working with governments about issues and potential solutions, providing analysis and statistical evidence, and conveying the views of members. Our advocacy helps government understand how policies affect early childhood service provision and, ultimately, the families and children using these services.

We build capacity and expertise through our learning and development program for teachers and educators with a focus on supporting quality practice.

Through CELA's consulting services, we provide high level sector expertise to support the wide range of governance and operational needs of providers and services.



### OUR MISSION

1. **Quality education and care:** We deliver effective and expert support for our members, enabling them to deliver quality early education and care for all of Australia's children.
2. **Small providers, BIG voices:** We influence policy makers and government by amplifying the voices of community-based and small providers.
3. **Community is core:** We promote the value and importance of community-based early education.



Our **vision** is for all of Australia's children to have access to **quality early education**, regardless of economic circumstance or where they live.

# How we help

CELA members never have to face a challenge on their own. Our experienced sector specialists are a phone call away for general information, or for more specific advice and direction to resources. Members have access to a comprehensive range of sector information and sound expertise through CELA's 1800 support line, publications and resources, and receive discounts on training, events and consulting services. CELA provides wider sector benefits through advocacy work on behalf of members, a knowledge portal for Approved Providers, learning and development programs, and consulting services for new and established providers.

## ADVOCACY

CELA influences government and policy makers to act on the issues that affect our members and the wider sector. Our advocacy is grounded in our mission to amplify the value of early learning and ensure all children and families have access to quality, affordable ECEC, no matter their economic circumstances or where they live.



## EVENTS

CELA hosts conferences, professional learning and networking events throughout the year. Events are designed to support professional growth and provide opportunities to connect with peers and sector experts.



## TRAINING

CELA builds the professional capability of educators and teachers with all levels of qualifications, through training programs led by sector experts. We offer a wide range of topics, delivered online or in service, APST-aligned and RTO accredited courses, self-paced e-learning and micro credentials, and an Approved Provider and Governance Program for NSW providers and employees.



## MEMBERSHIP

Members can access expert guidance and operational resources to improve quality practice and service delivery. The CELA helpline is staffed by sector specialists, connecting members with the latest information.



## CONSULTING

Our skilled early education and care consultancy team help services from start-up to compliance, through ongoing quality initiatives and governance to help deliver strong early education outcomes and operational success.



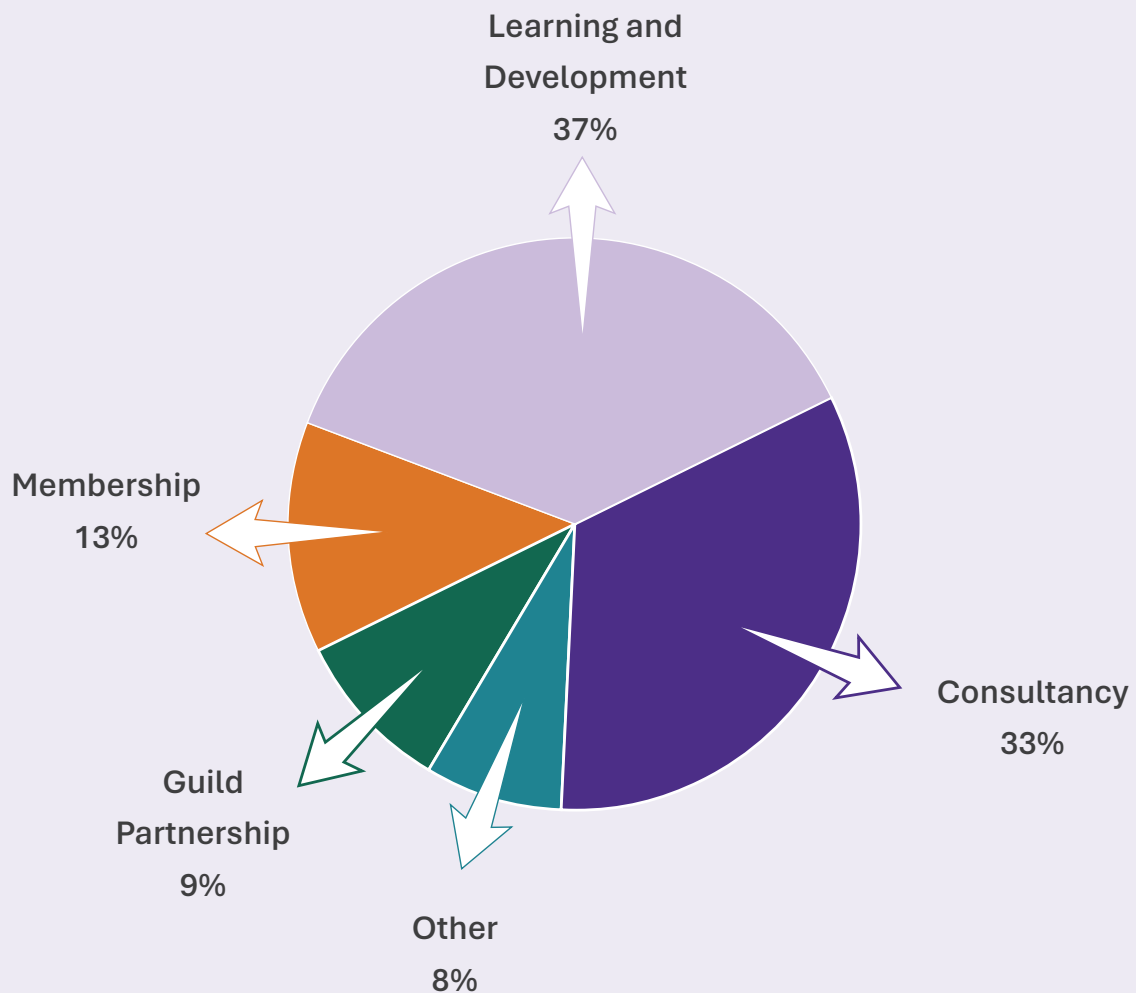
## APPROVED PROVIDER

We support new and existing providers through membership, resources, publications, professional learning and mentoring.

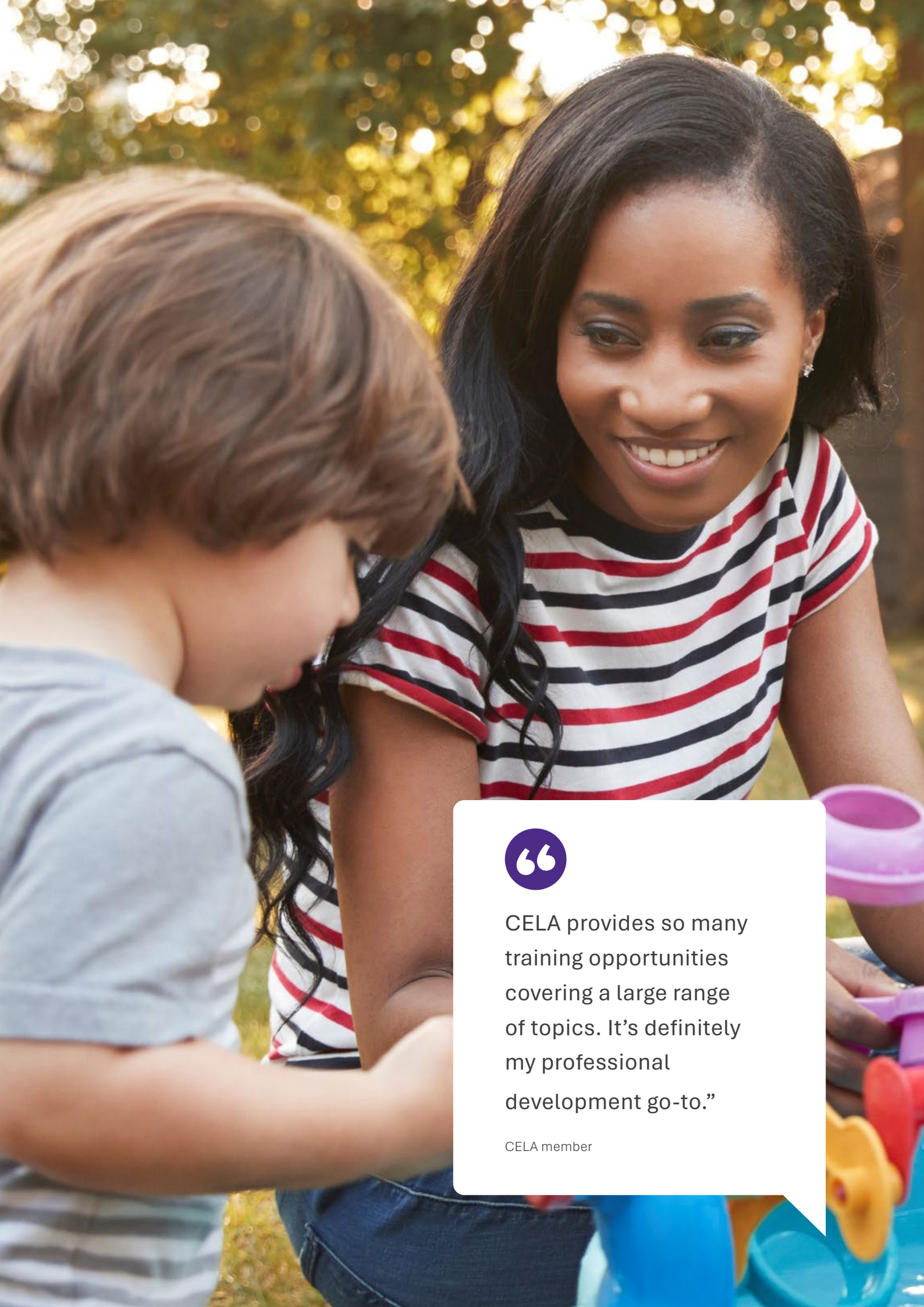
# How we are funded

Funding our mission for members and the broader sector is made possible by re-investing profits from our consultancy and professional development programs. This approach allows us to maintain low membership fees while delivering high-impact advocacy.

## Where our money came from this year:







CELA provides so many training opportunities covering a large range of topics. It's definitely my professional development go-to."

CELA member

# Advocacy to support members

## Our most ambitious year of advocacy yet

Every day, CELA represents the interests of community and small provider members to local, state and federal decision makers. Our advocacy highlights our members' issues and creates momentum to deliver solutions that support our five advocacy pillars.

2023-24 has been a groundbreaking year for the early education and care sector. With the breadth of major reform underway, we have never had more opportunities to raise our members' voices and advocate for the changes that they urgently need. CELA has led the way, campaigning for a sector that is ready for the future with universal access, professional wages and expanded community services.

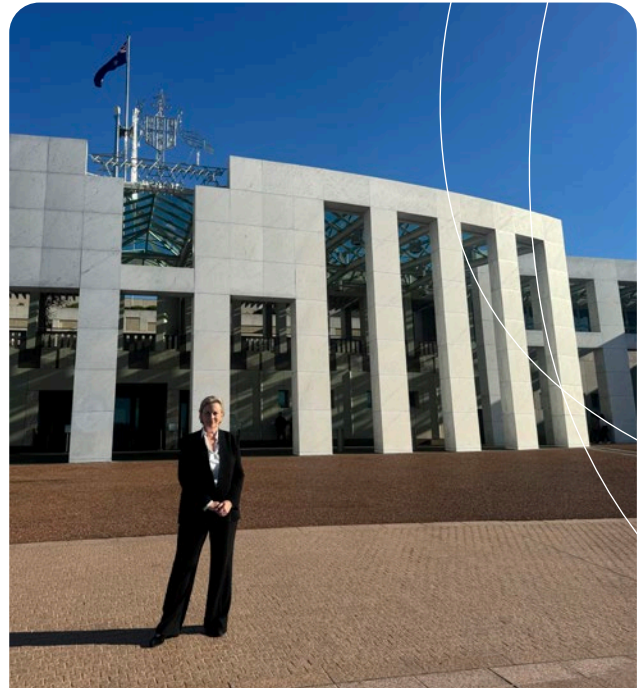
To take full advantage of these opportunities, we invested in our most ambitious advocacy campaign to date. We recognised the Federal Government's appetite for major reform and knew that community and small providers had to have a seat at the table.

To deliver this campaign, we expanded our advocacy expertise to harness this unprecedented momentum for ECEC reform. We have done this in partnership with the Community Child Care Association (CCC) to expand the weight of member voices that we can bring to decision makers, with a peak body that shares our goals and values.

Our Director of Policy and Strategy, Laura Stevens, brings extensive expertise in ECEC policy and industrial relations as well as invaluable networks within state and federal parliaments. CELA also engaged Watt Advocacy & Communications to provide specialist advocacy advice and support to guide our engagement with state and federal parliaments, particularly to secure results through the annual Budget cycle. This has meant we could deliver a high tempo advocacy campaign that has made substantive and influential contributions to state and federal ECEC reforms.

Our advocacy to government has further grown CELA's influence and access to decision makers by:

- ▶ shaping reform processes to support our advocacy objectives, informed by members' experiences
- ▶ being a trusted source for policy solutions and specialist expertise on behalf of community and small providers
- ▶ creating champions in state and federal parliaments by bringing member voices directly to decision makers.



## FEDERAL BUDGET

In May 2024 the Commonwealth Budget committed to funding a pay rise for educators and teachers. This funding will deliver improved wages as part of the multi-employer bargaining process. It is a game-changer for services who have struggled for years with workforce shortages.

In 2023-24, our priorities for advocacy to state and federal decision makers were to:

- ▶ create a sustainable workforce
- ▶ grow a stronger community sector
- ▶ put children's needs at the heart of the early education system

This is the key to delivering quality early education and care to all children, no matter where they live. It is the basis for growing sustainable and resilient services staffed by skilled and qualified educators.



CELA delivered this by focusing on two key streams for our advocacy:

- ▶ solving workforce shortages through government funded professional wages to early educators and teachers
- ▶ making influential contributions to major reform processes that will guide the Federal Government's decision on universal early education and care

### Solving workforce shortages through professional wages for early educators and teachers

CELA is helping early childhood providers deliver quality services sustainably by securing government funded pay increases through the long day care multi-employer bargaining process. This has been critical to achieving the recently announced Federal Government funding for a 15% pay increase for educators and teachers working in CCS-funded services.

We took the lead to solve workforce shortages by supporting small and community member services through multi employer bargaining. This agreement will unlock access to early education for families by paying educators and teachers what they are worth, creating the workforce foundations for transformative ECEC reform.

We've led negotiations on behalf of member services to ensure their voices were heard in Fair Work Commission negotiations. We also worked intensively across our sector and within Federal Parliament to represent the interests of community and small providers and ensure wage increases were a key priority, despite economic headwinds.

The 2024 Federal Budget was an incredible milestone, with major announcements for early education and care including a multi-billion dollar provision towards wage increases for early childhood educators and teachers. The Federal Government took the first step towards universal early education by investing in the educators and teachers at the heart of our sector.



### ADVOCACY PILLARS

CELA has five advocacy pillars which guide our work:



**Achieving quality early education**



**Building a stable workforce that is nurtured and valued**



**Ensuring viability for community and small providers**



**Improving access for vulnerable children**



**Closing the gap for rural children**



## Major ECEC Inquiries—the path to universal quality early childhood education and care

CELA has seen success in raising the voices of small and community providers in several major ECEC inquiries including by the Productivity Commission, ACCC, IPART, Early Learning Years Strategy and the National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy. This includes providing influential submissions, public statements and private briefings to highlight the current issues and solutions to support our member services.

The range and depth of inquiries reflect the Federal Government's renewed commitment to the early childhood sector and recognition of its incredible contribution to children, families, and our economy. We used a highly coordinated and targeted approach to make influential contributions that helped create a roadmap that will deliver the Prime Minister's ambitious vision for a truly universal high quality early learning system. This included actively creating opportunities for our services to share their stories and highlight the reforms that children and families urgently need. The results of these inquiries show that we've been heard.

## What's next?

Our intensive work has grown decision makers' understanding about the value of community early education services, creating momentum for the reforms that are essential to grow our sector.

But the work doesn't stop here. Our advocacy in 2024-25 will focus on working with state and federal government to turn the Productivity Commission's road map into reality. We are also committed to finalising the multi-employer agreement as soon as possible while ensuring it works to deliver the funding while supporting the continued viability and quality of services. In addition, we are extending our member support to include workplace relations services, to help our members access government funded pay increase through all approved instruments such as Multi Employment Agreements (MEA) and Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA).

**There's never been a more exciting time to work in early childhood education and care!**



## PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY

CELA has contributed extensively to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care, including two substantive written submissions, public hearings and private briefings with the Commissioners. Handed to the Minister in June 2024, the report outlines the road map for delivering universal affordable ECEC and is the final puzzle piece for the Federal Government to deliver long overdue reforms to the sector. It highlights the important role of community and small providers and adopts the following recommendations:

- ▶ delivering 30 hours of free or low-cost early education and care for all children
- ▶ growing not-for-profit and community managed services to ensure all children can access quality
- ▶ early education, particularly in childcare deserts
- ▶ investing in inclusive services so all children can maximise their potential
- ▶ creating a sustainable early education workforce through professional wages and access to professional development



# Advocacy highlights

CELA CEO meets with Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Prue Car to brief her on solutions to solve workforce shortages and childcare deserts across NSW.

CELA files joint witness statements and submissions with CCC to support the application for the ECEC Supported Bargaining Authorisation.

The ACCC releases its Child Care Inquiry Interim Report, including recommendations from CELA's submission. The initial findings include that child care fees have been increasing at a faster rate than inflation, up 20% over the past four years for centre-based care, while out of pocket costs for families have increased by 7%.

The Fair Work Commission approves the application by CELA, other peak bodies and unions for multi-employer bargaining in the long day care sector. This authorisation means negotiations can commence to establish the first ever national multi-employer agreement in the ECEC sector.

CELA CEO provided briefing to the Community Childcare Fund Restricted Grant Review (CCCFR), highlighting the importance of listening to local communities when funding the quality early education services needed to give children the best start in life.

CELA CEO co-hosts a multi-employer bargaining round table in Federal Parliament, chaired by Senator Jess Walsh and attended by Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Senators and MPs.

CELA attends the NSW Budget lock-up to brief media on new funding to improve the viability of small and standalone services.

CELA CEO meets with Reserve Bank of Australia to brief them on current ECEC workforce challenges and the impact of increases to the Child Care Subsidy.

CELA CEO attended a ACCC Roundtable with sector leaders, highlighting the importance of listening to local communities when designing the quality early education services needed to give children the best start in life.

## 2023 JULY

## AUGUST

Australian Bureau of Statistics proposes to replace names of occupations like 'Child Care Worker' and 'Child Care Centre Manager' with more contemporary titles such as 'Early Childhood Educator' and 'Children's Education and Care Service Director'.

CELA presents evidence at the first hearing held for the ECEC Supported Bargaining Authorisation before the full bench of the Fair Work Commission.

The South Australian Royal Commission into early childhood education and care releases its final report, outlining an ambitious vision for the future of South Australia's children and families, based on a universal system of quality ECEC. The Commission also recommends the Commonwealth Government support an increase in pay for the early childhood education and care workforce.

CELA CEO meets with Reserve Bank of Australia to share current data and perspectives from our members on demand for ECEC, workforce issues and factors that affect the cost of services.

CELA CEO visits the Eyre Peninsula to identify how their communities can solve critical undersupply of ECEC.

## SEPTEMBER

## OCTOBER

CELA hosts an NFP providers and peaks planning workshop with GoodStart Early Learning.

CELA and CCC submit a response to the ACCC 2023 Childcare Inquiry - September Interim Report, outlining the need to invest in a qualified workforce that can make it easier for families to access the support they need.

CELA CEO attends an IPART Public Hearing, highlighting the importance of investing in quality to deliver outcomes for families, children, educators and providers.

CELA submits a response to the IPART Independent Market Monitoring Review, identifying areas of greatest need for families and communities so they can be targeted for investment by the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund.

CELA attends the 2023 ECA conference and cohosts a seminar with CCC on the multi-employer bargaining process.

CELA CEO represents members at the first and second conference for the multi-employer bargaining process.

CEO visits Coober Pedy to hear how viability of one service is impacted by Federal funding design that does not meet the needs of children and families.

CELA CEO represents members at third, fourth and fifth conference for the multiemployer bargaining process.

CELA CEO co-hosts a joint Canberra lobby day and press conference, in collaboration with CCC, ACA and United Workers Union.

CELA CEO is a panelist at the release of The Front Project Work and Play Report 2023.

CELA CEO attends ACECQA National Workforce Summit.

CELA submits a response to the NSW IPART review of affordability, accessibility and consumer choice.

The Productivity Commission's ECEC Inquiry interim report is released, outlining its initial recommendations for a universal high quality early learning system.

CELA CEO attends the Apiary Impact Community Convening to chart the way forward on systems leadership and collaboration across the multiple major reform processes underway.

The ACCC's Child Care Inquiry final report is released. CELA's submissions are referenced over 30 times in the final report, highlighting the importance of investing in greater access to high quality services for children and families.

Discussions between employer and union representatives continue, focused on the details of a proposed draft agreement for multi-employer bargaining.

CELA CEO attended the launch of Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT Phase 2 launch in Canberra.

CELA lodged a Pre-Budget Submission for the 2024 Federal Budget, focusing on strengthening support for educators, inclusion and expanding community-led services.

CELA CEO consulted on the review into support for ECEC qualifications in regional and remote areas.

## NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

# 2024

## JANUARY

## FEBRUARY

CELA holds its 2024 AGM.

CELA, CCC, ACA and UWU host a ECEC Workforce Sector information session on multi-employer bargaining for sector leaders.

CELA CEO represents members at sixth and seventh multi-employer bargaining conference.

CELA meets with Productivity Commission Inquiry Commissioners about the need to strengthen recommendations on workforce, supply side funding, inclusion and expanding community-led services.

CELA submitted a response to the findings of the Productivity Commission inquiry interim report, highlighting the need for a clear vision for its core conclusions and recommendations on a universal quality early education system.

CELA supports RDA Eyre Peninsula to advocate in Federal Parliament, outlining how small and community managed services can unlock the potential of regional communities with the right support. Meetings with Early Childhood Education Minister the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP and Regional Development Minister the Hon Kristy McBain MP are very positive with both Ministers recognising that expanding access to ECEC is critical to building stronger regional communities.

CELA CEO provides evidence to the Productivity Commission on growing community managed ECEC, improving access to ECEC in regional areas and valuing our professional workforce.

*The voice for community and small providers of early education and care*



The NSW IPART review of affordability, accessibility and consumer choice final report is released. The report reflects many of the findings of the previous ACCC report, including that there is an undersupply of accessible and affordable ECEC in some disadvantaged areas. It finds that the funding system remains complex, fragmented and inefficient, leading to perverse outcomes which compound disadvantage, rather than ameliorate it.

CELA CEO represents the ECEC sector on the NSW Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty Committee, which is reviewing funding practices in the government funded community sectors to better provide for secure, full time employment arrangements for the essential staff working in these sectors.

CELA and the IEU begin preliminary discussions on a NSW preschools multi-employer agreement.

CELA CEO supports a NSW community-managed preschool to solve tenure issues on government school grounds.

CELA CEO meets with federal MPs on the need for capital funding to build community led services in childcare deserts.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers confirms that the Federal Budget includes a multi-billion-dollar provision towards government funded wage increases for early childhood educators and teachers.

ACECQA releases the draft Model Code and Guidelines for ECEC on taking images or videos of children. CELA conducts a consultation with members which shaped feedback to ACECQA.

CELA CEO meets with federal MPs at Federal Parliament on the urgent need to expand community managed services.

CELA hosts a post Budget Breakfast attended by our members, Board, Senators and MPs and leading advocates from The Parenthood, Child Australia (WA) and ECA. Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP delivers the keynote speech recognising the substantive contribution CELA and CCC have made to ensure the Federal Government prioritised investment in ECEC.

## MARCH

## APRIL

## MAY

## JUNE

The Federal Government's Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee report is released. CELA is proud to see that reforming the national early childhood sector is identified as one of five priority recommendations of the report. The detailed recommendations of this report reflect several areas of CELA's policy advocacy including abolishing the Activity Test, raising wages for educators and teachers and funding reform to deliver universal access to high quality ECEC.

CELA and the IEU agree to work together to initiate a supported bargaining application to commence multiemployer bargaining for the NSW preschool sector.

CELA CEO and Eyre Peninsula Regional Development Authority representatives meet with Senator Karen Grogan as part of ongoing advocacy to expand ECEC services in regional communities.

CELA surveys members to understand the potential impact of the NSW Government's investment in 100 new preschools.

CELA CEO meets with the Reserve Bank of Australia to update them on current issues facing our member services and the families they support.

Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Early Childhood Education is handed to the Federal Government. CELA makes substantive and influential contributions to this process including two written submissions, public hearings and private briefings to Commissioners.

The Fair Work Commission commences proceedings to address gender undervaluation in five priority awards including the Children's Services Award. This is part of the 2024-25 minimum wage decision handed down on 6 June. CELA attends the first hearings in this process and provides direct representation on behalf of member services.

104 NSW preschools (all CELA member services) sign on to the supported bargaining process, kick starting the process towards a properly remunerated workforce that can deliver even better results for children and their families.

ACT, NSW and QLD Budgets are handed down, representing more than \$1.5b in investments in early childhood investments.

CELA CEO represents members at ACER NSW preschool outcomes measure consultation.

CELA CEO participates in the Australian Research Council Digital Child Summit, sharing ways where technology can boost educators' capacity to enrich children's learning and help families use digital technology in safe ways.

CELA CEO Michele Carnegie joins a coalition of regional and early childhood stakeholders to launch the Access for Every Child coalition and joint statement.



## ADVOCACY IN PICTURES



JUL 23: NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

CELA CEO Michele Carnegie, Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP and CCC Executive Director Julie Price at the Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP's speech.



AUG 23: FAIR WORK COMMISSION

CELA's CEO Michele Carnegie in Melbourne at the Fair Work Commission hearing to kick start the process towards a properly remunerated workforce that can deliver even better outcomes for teachers, educators, children and their families.



SEP 23: FEDERAL PARLIAMENT ROUNDTABLE

CELA services and educators discussed the importance of solving workforce shortages through multi-employer bargaining with Minister Aly, Senators and MPs.



# ADVOCACY IN PICTURES



**OCT 23: ECA NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

CELA Director of Policy and Strategy Laura Stevens spoke about how the first ever national multi-employer bargaining process could be the key to delivering funded professional wages for early childhood educators and teachers and what it means for services.



**OCT 23: FAIR WORK COMMISSION**

Multi-employer bargaining negotiations commenced at the Fair Work Commission.



**NOV 23: FAIR WORK COMMISSION**

CELA CEO Michele Carnegie and CCC Executive Director Julie Price at the first multi-employer negotiation session attended by the Federal Government.



**NOV 23: PARLIAMENT HOUSE ADVOCACY**

CELA, CCC and UWU sat down with Ministers, MPs and Senators from across the country to talk about the urgent need to raise wages in the early education and care sector. CELA CEO Michele Carnegie spoke to media about the urgent need to solve early education workforce shortages through multi-employer bargaining.





**MAY 24: 2024 BUDGET**

CELA CEO Michele Carnegie spoke with Ministers, MPs and Senators on the urgent need to solve workforce shortages by funding professional wages for early educators and teachers.



**MAY 24: MEB TALKS**

Michele Carnegie and Julie Price met with Libby Coker MP and Lisa Chesters MP in Canberra to discuss solving ECEC workforce shortages in their communities.



# ADVOCACY IN PICTURES



## MAY 24: POST BUDGET BREAKFAST

Members of the sector gather together to celebrate the Budget announcement. It provided an important opportunity to celebrate what CELA has achieved so far, especially toward valuing the early childhood workforce.





**APR 24: MEB ADVOCACY**

This year has seen CELA's most intensive lobbying campaign to date. We held numerous engagements to support MEB negotiations and significant reform.



**MAR 24: GROWING ECEC IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**

Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula representatives met with the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Dr Anne Aly, to discuss how ECEC service can unlock the potential of regional communities, with the right support.



# Representation

## **CELA CEO Michele Carnegie raises the voices of our members by:**

- ▶ working with state and federal ministers to advocate for solutions that support the needs of community and small providers
- ▶ liaising regularly with senior officials to support CELA's advocacy to ministers
- ▶ reporting on important issues for the sector through our Amplify! and Broadside publications
- ▶ participating on federal and state advisory panels to represent the views of community and small providers
- ▶ providing influential and substantive submissions to major reviews such as the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care, the ACCC Child Care Inquiry, the development of the Early Years Strategy, and NSW IPART Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care Affordability, Accessibility and Consumer Choice

## **To deliver effective advocacy, we constantly seek feedback and information from our members by:**

- ▶ having conversations with them about urgent and emerging issues
- ▶ undertaking member surveys on issues that are important to them
- ▶ engaging with our member advisory group which represents the diversity of service types

- ▶ gathering insights from the learning and development program, attended by several thousand educators annually
- ▶ consulting with communities across Australia about their early education and care needs
- ▶ drawing on our collective CELA leadership expertise

## **It was another year of focus on policy and reform and CELA was at the forefront of advocating for the sector. CELA's active representation was led by CEO, Michele Carnegie:**

- ▶ Australian Government Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group
- ▶ NSW Government Early Childhood Education Advisory Group (ECAG)
- ▶ NSW Government Education Standards Authority's (NESA) Early Childhood Reference Group
- ▶ Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) National Workforce Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG)
- ▶ NSW Government Early Childhood Education Advisory Group (ECAG) Data Sub Committee
- ▶ NSW Government Early Childhood Education Advisory Group (ECAG) Preschool Reform Agreement subgroup
- ▶ Jobs and Skills Australia, Early Childhood Education and Care Capacity Study Steering Committee.



### Building effective government relationships:

- ▶ Intensive ongoing engagement with Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, her advisers and senior officials to shape major reforms on behalf of community and small providers
- ▶ Creating champions for community and small providers within Federal Parliament by highlighting member services stories from their communities
- ▶ Engagement with newly elected NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Prue Car to expand the early education workforce and increase families' access to preschool.

### Collaboration:

- ▶ CELA partnered with CCC on major submissions to the Productivity Commission, ACCC, Early Learning Years Strategy and National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy
- ▶ CELA and CCC are working together to negotiate a multi-employer agreement on behalf of long day care member services
- ▶ CELA CEO co-hosted a Federal Parliament advocacy day and press conference, in collaboration with CCC, ACA and United Workers Union to highlight the urgent need to fund professional wages for early educators and teachers
- ▶ CELA and CCC co-hosted a post-Budget breakfast attended by Early Childhood Education Minister the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, MPs Senators and sector leaders
- ▶ CELA joined the parenthood regional, rural and remote coalition joint statement for government action across six areas:
  1. Implement strong public management of the ECEC system in collaboration with State and Territory Governments
  2. Offer a range of supply-side subsidies for ECEC providers in rural and remote areas
  3. Invest in quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled integrated early years services in rural and remote areas
  4. Implement a regional, rural and remote national workforce strategy including culturally safe training for First Nations educators
  5. Improve family day care and in-home care provision
  6. Provide interim solutions

# Submissions



CELA contributed to advocacy and policy development in FY2024 through several formal written submissions to both federal and state government inquiries.

These include:

ANZSCO Consultation on occupation titles

Written and in-person submissions to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care—providing a response to the interim report

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Childcare Inquiry

IPART - Early Childhood Education and Care Affordability, Accessibility and Consumer Choice Inquiry

IPART - Early Childhood Education and Care – Independent Market Monitoring Review

Senate submissions: Select Senate Inquiry into the Cost of Living

Joint pre-Budget submission to Federal Government with Community Child Care Co-operative

+

In addition, CELA CEO Michele Carnegie represented issues impacting community and small providers at:

155

federal and state advisory group meetings and key inquiry consultations.





The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Childcare (ACCC) Inquiry final report was released in January 2024, with the final document reflecting CELA's significant contribution to government policy. The report explored current prices, costs and profits in the childcare market, drawing on significant input and data from providers, peak bodies and community organisations across Australia.



I highly recommend CELA to anyone seeking to ensure their services comply with current standards, particularly those who are short on time and need reliable, efficient guidance.”

CELA member

# Impact through consultancy



In FY2024 CELA completed 109 consultancies across Australia. These included long day care, family day care, community pre-schools, councils, large not-for-profit organisations, government agencies and small stand-alone providers across a broad range of areas:

- 

Concept designs for new services
- 

Building team leadership skills and mentoring
- 

Compliance and Quality
- 

Child Protection training
- 

Policy reviews
- 

Strategic planning
- 

Quality Practice
- 

Service Approval
- 

Building and supporting inclusive practice
- 

Development of forms and templates
- 

Providing solutions for ECEC undersupply



## Eyre Peninsula

A shortage of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services within the Eyre Peninsula impacts parents' capacity to work, children's development, and local industry's capacity to expand. This project's goal was to create a comprehensive business case to support regional development to secure government investment in ECEC in key locations within the Eyre Peninsula.

### Scope

The scope of this project included an in-depth analysis of 9 locations in the Eyre Peninsula to determine ECEC needs by analysing demographic, economic, population and geographic data. From this, service needs were identified and analysed to determine levels of government investment to build, and/or to operate services. A business case was compiled that provided a compelling case for investment.

### Approach

This project aligns with the South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), which recognises the importance of ECEC for all children in the 2 years before school and additional ECEC for the most vulnerable children.

- ▶ CELA integrated findings from: the Interim ACCC report, which found that access to ECEC operates in small local markets within close proximity (around 3km) from people's homes; existing data, such as Mitchell Institute's Deserts and Oases, to determine optimum levels of access; Census and other ABS data; as well as datasets on child vulnerability such as AEDC and data from the Royal Commission, to inform analysis combined with insights from Regional Development.
- ▶ CELA provided a demographic outline of the Eyre Peninsula and opportunities to support workforce development over the next 5 years in targeted locations.
- ▶ CELA analysed census and economic data to outline how children are faring across the Peninsula, and impact on education, health and future workforce participation.
- ▶ CELA reviewed demographic, economic and geographic analysis to provide an outline of chosen locations for investment, and projections of costs and benefits of investment including improvements in child development, workforce attraction, parental employment and economic growth.

### Outcomes

- ▶ CELA and RDA meet with Minister for Early Education and Youth, Ann Aly and Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories Kristy McBain at Parliament House to discuss solutions to regional areas accessing capital for the development of early education.
- ▶ Together we have raised awareness of how investment in early education results in economic security of regional areas. The study showed that a \$50m investment results in approx. \$45m annually in workforce participation.
- ▶ This has been a powerful tool in showing why there needs to be a dedicated capital fund for the development of early education services across Australia.



### Kimba District Council

CELA has worked with Kimba District Council since April 2023 to investigate the feasibility of providing early education and care services in Kimba, a small rural town located in the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. Following the feasibility study, CELA was engaged to conduct a community consultation study to report on the values and needs of the children and families of Kimba. We are now supporting Kimba to apply for the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP) grant.



### Mini Gems Children's Centre, Coober Pedy District Council

Mini Gems plays a critical role in supporting local families in Coober Pedy, South Australia, by providing quality ECEC and enabling families to participate in the workforce. The service also provides early intervention referral pathways to vulnerable children in the area. CELA provided a comprehensive service review of Mini Gems to assess its business model and provide a plan for the sustainable provision of quality ECEC.



### Warrumbungle Shire Council

CELA has worked with Warrumbungle Shire Council to provide support for the transition of a mobile service to a community preschool service. The scope of this project includes conducting a demographic analysis and funding optimisation, and a review to seek and identify funding opportunities that support operational sustainability and diverse community needs.

### Child Care Subsidy Application Project

CELA conducted an analysis of several childcare services in South Australia to prepare a new Child Care Subsidy submission. This required a CELA sector specialist work with the business unit manager of each service, and the respective governing council e.g. parent committee, helping them to understand their legal requirements. CELA prepared manuals and guides to achieve provider approval and the implementation of practical measures to achieve this.

### Ambrose

CELA delivered a director and educational leader training and mentoring program, whereby participants completed CELA's Leadership micro credential. A combination of face-to-face and online mentoring sessions were delivered as participants worked through the online training. These mentoring sessions assisted service leaders and educational leaders to deepen their understanding about leadership, what it means and how to be an effective leader.

### Rouse Hill

CELA undertook a feasibility study for a potential long day care service in a new hospital in Rouse Hill, Sydney. This project included demographic analysis, competitor analysis in the local area and along commuting routes, and benchmarking in a range of hospitals nationally to determine advice on the size of the service and recommended operational parameters.

### Austral

Austral Community Preschool is a stand-alone service located in the City of Liverpool, Sydney. CELA delivered a tailored mentoring program for the service director to provide training and support in the leadership component of Quality Area 7 through site visits, customised training and online support meetings.



### Community Management Committees

CELA has consistently delivered customised committee training for services across Australia. Committee members often change annually, leading to a constant need to rebuild knowledge for the upcoming year. CELA's training ensures that committee members understand the role of community management committees; the responsibilities of an approved provider and develop an understanding of basic governance principles; their legal responsibilities and legislative requirements of approved providers; compliance under the National Quality Framework.



### **New Approved Providers**

CELA provides ongoing support to services across Australia to navigate the complexities of provider approval and service management. Being an approved provider comes with significant responsibility and it is vital services understand the National Quality Framework and remain up to date with the law and regulations. Effective governance and leadership underpin the success of individual services and the collective impact on outcomes for children and families.



### **Service Policy**

New and existing services across Australia, including long day care, preschool, outside of school hours care and family day care settings have engaged CELA to review and develop service operational policies and procedures. CELA’s strong understanding of the regulatory landscape and effective service management ensures that timely review and development of policies and procedures is conducted, while maintaining a consistent tone of voice that reflects individual context and approach to practice.

### **Compliance and Quality Support**

CELA worked with individual services in the lower Hunter region and Sydney metropolitan areas to provide long-term compliance and quality support. Our specialists conducted regular audits on service practice against the National Quality Framework, identified service needs and planned roadmaps for tailored quality improvement support. A process of continuous evaluation was adopted through regular site visits and online meetings to provide ongoing coaching.

### **Governance and Leadership: Effective management systems**

CELA provided a tailored consultancy in Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership, specifically Element 7.1.2 Management Systems and Element 7.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities. The consultancy was delivered through a blend of online support meetings and a site visit to gain familiarity with the organisational culture and practices. It supported the leadership team to build effective and streamlined management systems, clarify staff roles and responsibilities, and ensure effective reporting mechanisms were in place for the approved provider and nominated supervisor.



## PARTNERSHIP

### Engaging families in early education research project

CELA is working with UNSW to build and host 5 professional learning courses on an online learning management system (LMS) as part of the Engaging Families in Early Education project. The professional learning courses are a result of research conducted and compiled by the Engaging Families in Early Education research team. The professional learning courses will enable capacity building and pedagogical innovation to support educators' engagement with families and children who experience financial adversity and find services hard to use.

#### Approach

The scope of this project includes the filming, designing and building of 5 online, self-paced evidence-based professional learning courses hosted on a learning management system. Each course is expected to take 2.5-3 hours of study and includes reading material, video content, activities and supporting resources.

#### Outcomes

- ▶ CELA partnered with universities to deliver important, evidence based professional learning opportunities that align to prioritised government policy.
- ▶ We built capacity in the sector to enable teachers and educators to effectively engage with families for the benefit of children.
- ▶ Valuable training was made available through CELA's vast national network, in a way that is accessible and affordable.





# Progressive and flexible training program



## 59 TRAINING TOPICS

CELA training courses bring together sector expertise with evidence-based research to help educators and professionals learn in more engaging and meaningful ways. We speak with educators and sector professionals every day, so we understand the many constraints that impede participation in training and development. CELA has designed a range of flexible training options to suit the demanding schedules faced by educators due to workloads and workforce shortages.

From micro-credentials to self-paced programs, 100% online to webinars and onsite learning, we are focused on expanding (and normalising) accessible and engaging flexible learning.



## 299 CUSTOMISED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

CELA provided customised training opportunities to individual services and large organisations, using a blend of online and on-site approaches. CELA's professional learning was delivered across Australia to approved providers and organisations operating in all areas of early education and care.



## 9,400+ EDUCATORS

educators attended a CELA training session in FY2024



**27**

### **APST-ALIGNED COURSES**

CELA is the largest provider of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)-aligned courses for the sector, with 27 courses on topics including program and practice to governance matters, numeracy and literacy in the early years, and health and safety training. Courses offer practical guidance on topical issues such as connecting with, and understanding, the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0, and Acknowledging and Celebrating First Nations Australia.



### **APPROVED PROVIDER AND GOVERNANCE LEARNING PROGRAM**

We continue to offer flexible online learning for our Approved Provider and Governance learning program for services operating in NSW. This comprehensive program contains years of CELA governance training expertise condensed into a streamlined program.

The 4 workshops, 25 tutorials and a knowledge library of resources are hosted via a dedicated online portal.



### **NEW IN 2024**

CELA expanded its rich, progressive, and stimulating learning opportunities.

- ▶ Launched Identify and Report Children and Young People at Risk (CHCPRT025) face to face and as a webinar series, which covers legal and reporting requirements for the early childhood sector.
- ▶ Launched the Management Committee Training Portal, designed to address the unique challenges faced by management committees.
- ▶ We continue to offer new topics that meet critical professional learning gaps. This includes the research-informed program 'A Framework for Understanding and Responding to Behaviours that Challenge', developed and delivered by Professor Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett.
- ▶ Via our strategic plan, we are reviewing the way we deliver professional learning opportunities. This reinforces our commitment to continuous quality improvement, ensuring our programs remain responsive to evolving industry standards.

SUPPORTED

**1,800+**  
**MEMBERS**

who employ more than  
27,000 educators across Australia.

## MEMBERSHIP

CELA supported over 1800 members employing more than 27,000 educators across Australia.

Our team of industry experts provided phone and email support five days a week throughout the working year.

In a new initiative, members receive a selection of curated resources and articles every fortnight.



**9,400+**  
EDUCATORS TRAINED

**59**  
TOPICS COVERED

## RTO

Over 400 people completed our highly regarded accredited child protection courses; CHCPRT001 Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk and CHCPRT025 Identify and Report Children and Young People at Risk. The courses were accessible in 3 flexible delivery modes: self-paced, calendar webinar and in-service (face to face and webinar). This included customised RTO training opportunities to individual services and organisations.

Over 700 people enrolled in the new unit of competency CHCPRT025 Identify and Report Children and Young People at Risk either via online self-paced course, a webinar session or by booking an in-service session. We provided RTO training opportunities to individual services and large organisations, with a blend of online and onsite approaches for CHCPRT025.

**700+**  
**PEOPLE**  
**ENROLLED**

in the new unit of competency  
CHCPRT025 Identify and Report  
Children and Young People at Risk  
either via online self-paced course,  
a webinar session or by booking an  
in-service session.



This was a fantastic session...  
I'm feeling inspired and ready to start my learning journey in critical reflection so, a huge thank you! The facilitator was wonderful—she was clear, engaging and very knowledgeable and her examples were easy to follow.”

CELA member

# Recognised by government as sector experts



## NSW Education Risk Literacy

The NSW Department of Education engaged Community Early Learning Australia to develop and facilitate two risk literacy workshops for education and care service leaders in NSW. One workshop was facilitated in Sydney and the second, in Coffs Harbour. Service types included Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care, Long Day Care and Preschool.

### Scope

The workshop covered three topics:

- ▶ Foundational principles of risk management including understanding different types of risk, developing a risk management framework, and implementing and reviewing a risk management plan.
- ▶ Risk management regulatory requirements for education and care services including demonstrating how risk management best practice enables services to meet specific risk management requirements set out in the National Law and Regulations.
- ▶ A cyclical approach to risk management including principles for a holistic risk management framework responsive to risk-informed regulatory requirements.

### Approach

CELA facilitated the workshop with an audience of ECEC service leaders including approved providers and nominated supervisors. A targeted approach was used to first invite services rated as working towards the National Quality Standard in Standard 7.1: Governance.

One workshop was delivered at the Department of Education in Parramatta, Sydney. A second was held in Coffs Harbour. At both workshops, participant responses indicated that many were unfamiliar with key terminology including risk management framework, risk management process and risk treatment. Facilitators adapted the training to meet the participants. A toolkit, including a Padlet, was provided as a resource for participants to workshop the risk management process and record their reflections.

### Outcomes

The workshop resulted in participants:

- ▶ Understanding risk management in an operational sense where service users are vulnerable
- ▶ Understanding risk controls/safeguards and risk culture
- ▶ Understanding how risk management best practice enables education and care services to meet regulatory requirements
- ▶ Learning how to develop and implement a cyclical all-of-organisation risk management framework responsive to risk-informed regulatory requirements.
- ▶ Utilising the language, principles, practices and tools of risk management in their service setting.



**CELA was flexible and adaptable in its approach – the focus always remained on getting the program content right and taking the time to ensure engagement with [the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] community was deep and meaningful.”**

Emma Sculthorpe, Director, Early Childhood Policy, ACT Education Directorate.

## ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culturally Inclusive and Responsive Early Childhood Practice

CELA has worked with the ACT Department of Education since July 2023 to design and deliver a training package that aims to improve and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural inclusion and responsive practices. The package aligns with the National Qualification Framework, National Quality Standards and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) 2.0.

### Scope

The scope of this project includes the design and development of a comprehensive training and development program for all ACT ECEC service providers to enhance their cultural competency and culturally appropriate engagement of First Nations families and children. Each online training module consists of 10 tutorials with video content, activities, supporting resources, an online library and webinar events.

The key learning areas are:

1. A starting point: connecting with your ‘why’
2. Understanding the ancestral knowledges shared through history and culture
3. Building relationships and connections with First Nations communities
4. The practice – the ‘how’ – strengthening culturally responsive practices

### Approach

- ▶ CELA’s Cultural Advisor has contributed to all aspects of the project, to ensure design and implementation was established with optimal cultural competency.
- ▶ Together with the ACT Government, CELA engaged an Aboriginal Expert Panel, which provided advice and support in resource development to ensure all perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are considered. The goal to achieve a genuine engagement, trust and authenticity continues to progress well and we anticipate it will leave a legacy in the content of the program delivered and professional relationships that we have built.
- ▶ Sessions are facilitated to ensure all resources developed are culturally competent, requiring high level skills in applying the advice and learnings from the Expert Panel to the development of content and resources in a way that truly honours their contribution.
- ▶ The project team has adopted a high level of adaptability and flexibility to meet the needs of the Aboriginal Expert Panel and key stakeholders including time invested to build trust and an authentic relationship.

### Outcomes

- ▶ The project has encapsulated an authentic engagement driven by our key stakeholders, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors, that reflects the cultural competency that this project aims to impact - ECEC service providers in ACT.
- ▶ We have created a well-researched and culturally sensitive online suite of 40 tutorials and corresponding resources with the local Aboriginal community. This includes a resource library of over 100 curated resources and tools as part of the online program. Resources can be accessed by all services in the ACT.
- ▶ This has been built in consultation with the local Aboriginal community to ensure it reflects local voices and their intentions throughout.
- ▶ Effective engagement with the Expert Panel ensures the content of the program reflects local Ngunawal culture and meets the community’s needs now and into the future, particularly around cultural safety and integrity.
- ▶ The program is delivered in an engaging, multi-modal way that supports all learners to delve into their understandings and move forward with new insights.



“CELA’s strong understanding of the needs and capacity of the sector meant that the materials developed for this program [Play Based Learning and Intentionality] are well designed, fit for purpose and meaningful.”

Emma Sculthorpe, Director, Early Childhood Policy, ACT Education Directorate.

## ACT Play Based Learning and Intentionality

This program is a core pillar of the ACT Government’s Early Childhood Strategy. CELA’s objective was to offer a holistic training sequence of relevant, flexible, targeted learning modules designed to identify educators’ needs and support their practice of implementing play-based learning and intentionality.

### Scope

The program was designed to build the confidence of educators, specifically the skills of intentional teaching. It was aligned with the National Quality Standards, Quality Areas 1 and 7.

The key guiding principles underpinning the program were:

- ▶ Supporting educators at their point of need
- ▶ Being inclusive of all qualification levels and service types
- ▶ Ensuring relevance to the context of ACT ECEC and OSHC, inclusive and accessible
- ▶ Creating opportunities for peer collaboration
- ▶ Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

### Approach

- ▶ CELA developed a series of training and education modules to support services and help families achieve successful transitions for children entering preschool. This included an engaging and authentic 8-minute education video filmed on site at a service.
- ▶ The course content was carefully sequenced, informed by theory and research, applying adult learning theories and references, relevant regulations and frameworks.
- ▶ An ongoing and progressive evaluation strategy was built into every part of the program to enable collection of data in real time and to provide information about the value and impact.
- ▶ CELA brought together academics, practice specialists and early education specialists to develop evidence-based content that will inspire and develop the practice of hundreds of educators and teachers across the ACT.
- ▶ We built a platform with a wide range of engagement tools to engage participants throughout their learning journey.
- ▶ We maintained a clear focus on delivering what the ACT Government needs to bring their vision to life, providing open and regular communication.

### Outcomes

CELA has now created a series of professional learning materials for that address:

- ▶ Importance of play-based learning
- ▶ Facilitation skills for effective facilitation
- ▶ Training educators to deliver the program content
- ▶ The program is delivered in an engaging, multi-modal way to support all learners. Use of the LSW supports individuals to progress through the program at their own pace.
- ▶ The supporting guides and resources developed ensure that learning is practical and transferrable in the workplace.





# Publications

## AMPLIFY!

CELA's blog, Amplify! has cemented its reputation as the go-to source for discussion about early education and care sector topics. Our e-newsletter is distributed to over 20,000 ECEC sector professionals each week and includes sector news, advocacy, interviews and opinions by sector experts and educator reflections. Amplify! articles collectively received over 184,250 unique page views.

During 2024, we received many comments from readers indicating how valuable the newsletter is to informing and inspiring quality practice in the sector.

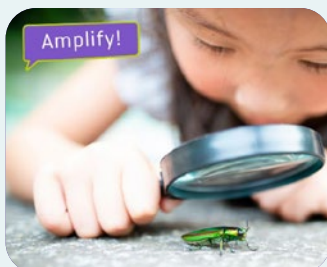
Our team is dedicated to delivering timely news and information designed to help our sector navigate the changes and challenges they face while continuing to inspire quality practice. We focus on turning complex information into articles that are easy to navigate.

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### OUR SIX MOST WIDELY READ 2023-2024 ARTICLES WERE:



[Federal funding for ECEC pay increases announced](#)



[Spotlight on the EYLF V2.0: What are the changes?](#)



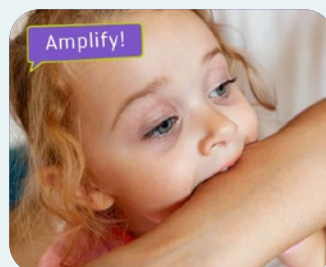
[Safe sleep and rest regulations: Are you ready for the changes?](#)



[The importance of introducing Indigenous languages into schools and early education spaces](#)



[Using strengths based language to discuss behaviour](#)



[Strategies for addressing biting in early education services](#)



What readers have said about some of our recent articles:

“This was a fantastic, and extremely helpful article. One of the most helpful and practical that I’ve ever read, so thank you so much. I am planning to have a fire pit with the children in my FDC service to mark the week. I aim to discuss the importance of fire to Aboriginal culture and help to create a sense of appreciation for fire.”

Val H

“Finally, an article that ‘gets it’. One to share with your teams and families and then make sure you’re available to carry on the conversation.”

Lavinia J

“This was a beautiful article to read, I loved the mention of using different sites for children to explore and how you promote risky play. The benefits of children being able to measure risks and decide whether their play is safe is an amazing process to watch - especially in multi age where they begin to show care for those younger than them!”

Rikki W

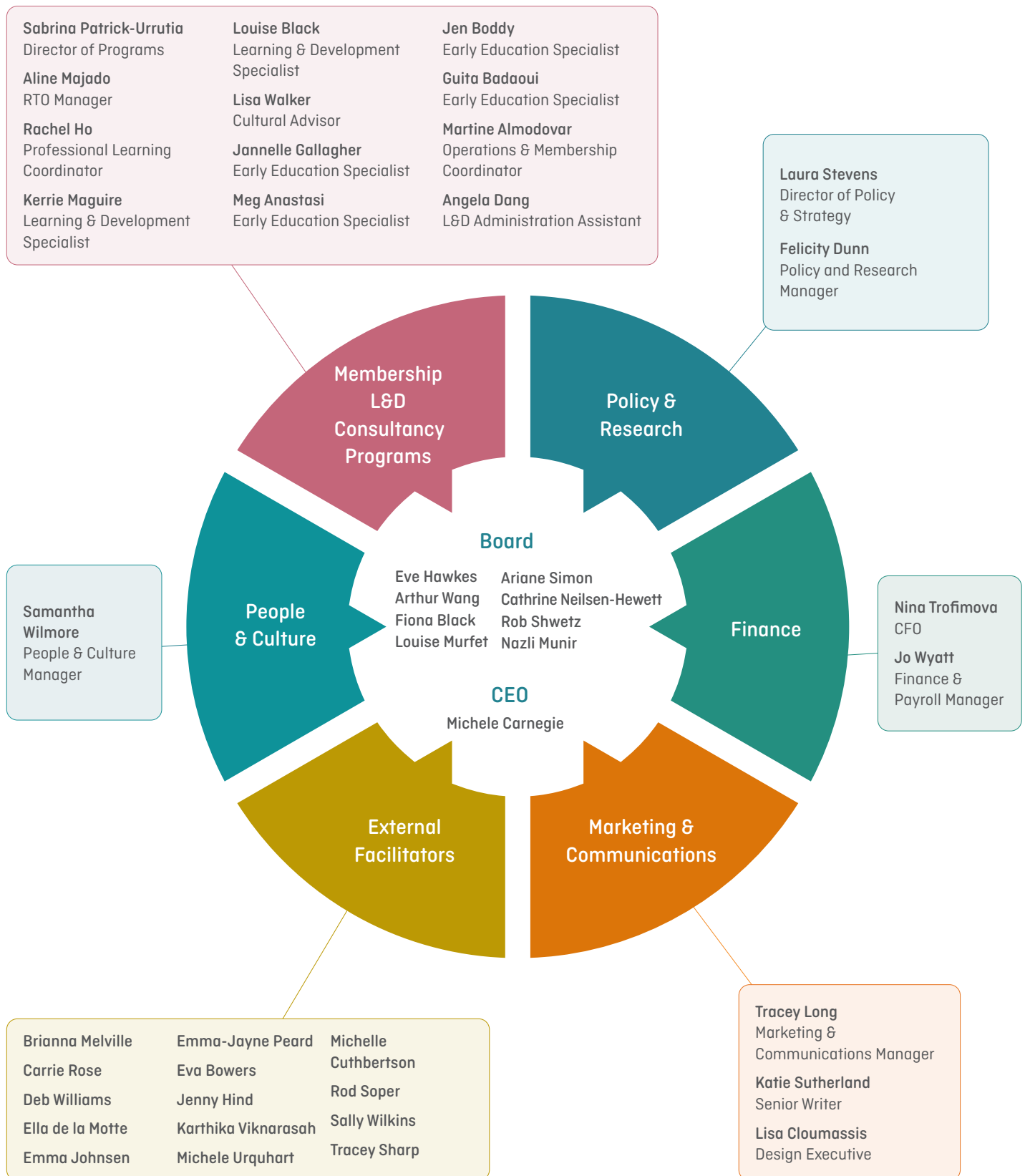
## RATTLER

For 37 years, Rattler has been one of the most respected early education journals in Australia. During 2023-2024 we released two digital editions and one printed compendium to members and subscribers.

Each edition provides an in-depth look into the operations and achievements of one of our members, a summary of sector-related research, and many inspiring articles covering program, practice and regulations, with a focus on quality.



# Our team





# Our board



CELA thanks the Board for its ongoing confidence, trust and support during the year. The CELA Board is comprised of 8 members, each with extensive credentials in our sector and related fields. Their combined experience spans early childhood education and care, management, advocacy, academia, research, leadership and marketing.

## EVE HAWKES

### CHAIR

Eve's vast experience within early childhood education and care supports her work on the CELA board and gives her valuable insight into the day-to-day issues faced by early childhood educators across the sector. She is committed to implementing exemplary board governance and is a strong advocate, meeting regularly with local and state ministers about the issues that face the sector.

Eve is experienced in a wide range of service delivery models including early intervention itinerant support, long day care, community-based preschools and campus-based care. Director at Engadine Preschool Kindergarten since 1994, she is also a founding member of the Sutherland Shire Preschool Alliance. Her leadership roles, including her current role as Chair since 2023 and board director since June 2022, demonstrate her ability to drive change and make a significant impact.

## ROB SHWETZ

### DEPUTY CHAIR

Rob has over 25 years of experience in marketing communications, sustainability management, and creative leadership, and a proven track record of delivering results that align with the values and vision of purpose-driven organisations. His mission is to champion positive systemic change and provide a voice for those who are not empowered to speak for themselves. A trained B Consultant, he is a former partner and strategist at The Growth Activists, which activates courageous organisations for a sustainable future. He is Deputy Chair and board member of Results Australia, a non-partisan international aid and development organisation funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and board member of Shaun Parker and Company. He has completed the AICD Company Directors course; Governance for Social Impact through the Centre of Social Impact; and GRI Standards. He holds an MBA from the Berlin School of Creative Leadership, Steinbeis University.

## ARTHUR WANG

### TREASURER (Commenced 1 July 2024)

Arthur brings over a decade of experience in management consulting and financial advisory, working with clients across private, public and NFP sectors on business strategy, transformation, financial and risk management. He is also a strong advocate for youth and education, committed to fostering growth and excellence in the early learning sector, and has led numerous pro-bono engagements and fundraising initiatives for community organisations.

A member of the AICD, Arthur previously served as a Board Observer for Good Return and was the National Coordinator of Australia's largest financial literacy competition, reaching over 300 schools and 10,000 students. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Laws degree from UNSW and has represented Australia as a delegate to international forums, including the OECD in France, the Stanford Summit in the USA, and the Peace Conference of Youth in Japan.

## NAZLI MUNIR

### COMPANY SECRETARY AND GOVERNANCE

### MANAGER (Commenced 21 August 2024)

Nazli has more than 30 years of experience in senior policy roles in the New South Wales Government specialising in social policy, child protection and intergovernmental relations. Leaving the public service, Nazli worked as a consultant to government, the not-for-profit sector and private sector conducting policy reviews, drafting submissions and policy papers and developing resources and organisational policies.

More recently she held the position of Company Secretary and Director Governance with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. Nazli is a graduate of the AICD.



## **FIONA BLACK**

### **ELECTED DIRECTOR**

Fiona has worked in a variety of roles within council ECEC environments, including Cert III and diploma positions, teacher roles, and ultimately, that of director. Commencing her career in private and community-based long day care services, she now holds the position of Director at Koala Child Care Centre at Sutherland Hospital, where she is an educational leader and is directly involved with children aged birth to 6 years.

She is passionately committed to building a sustainable and fulfilling career centred on the holistic development of children in ECEC. In her dual role as a director and an early childhood professional, she focuses on fostering children's self-awareness, promoting their growth, and establishing meaningful bonds with families to create a lasting impact. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood.

## **LOUISE MURFET**

### **ELECTED DIRECTOR**

Louise's career as an early childhood educator and director spans more than four decades. Her first role was as Assistant Director and room leader in a long day care centre. In 1992, Louise became Director of Jacaranda Preschool in Caringbah NSW, a role she held until her retirement in 2023. Louise is a founding member of the Sutherland Shire Preschool Alliance and sits on the board of Children's Services Community Management. She has also served as the President of the Community Administered Preschool Association and as Convenor of the Sutherland Directors Group.

Louise holds a Diploma of Teaching, Bachelor of Education, Advanced Diploma in Community Sector Management, and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In 2022, Louise received the NSW Government Community Service Award in recognition of her passion in advocating for children, families and the ECEC sector.

## **CATHRINE NEILSEN-HEWETT (PHD)**

### **APPOINTED DIRECTOR**

Professor Cathrine Nielsen-Hewett is the Academic Director of The Early Years at the University of Wollongong; is a member of the National Early Childhood Development Council; and a member of the Preschool Outcomes Measure expert advisor group.

Cathrine works in cross-disciplinary teams and conducts translational work with community and industry partners to support high-quality early childhood education and care practice that enhances outcomes for children. She has co-led seven large-scale early childhood pedagogical studies valued at more than \$15 million, across three Australian states, in over 600 early childhood educational services, and with more than 4000 children.

Cathrine brings particular expertise in pedagogical reform, and her work on children's behaviour, self-regulation, child assessment and early childhood pedagogy has impacted educational practice, programs and policy both in Australia and internationally.

## **ARIANE SIMON**

### **ELECTED DIRECTOR**

Ariane is the Director of St Stephen's Preschool, Normanhurst, where she has held roles as a teaching and non-teaching director. Ariane first became a director at the age of 20. She has worked both as a director and as a teacher at Charles Sturt University as well as at numerous TAFE campuses in New South Wales.

She is a strong advocate for the ECEC sector, leveraging her position on the Independent Education Union, Early Childhood Council to ensure early childhood teachers are supported by advocating for better conditions and pay parity.

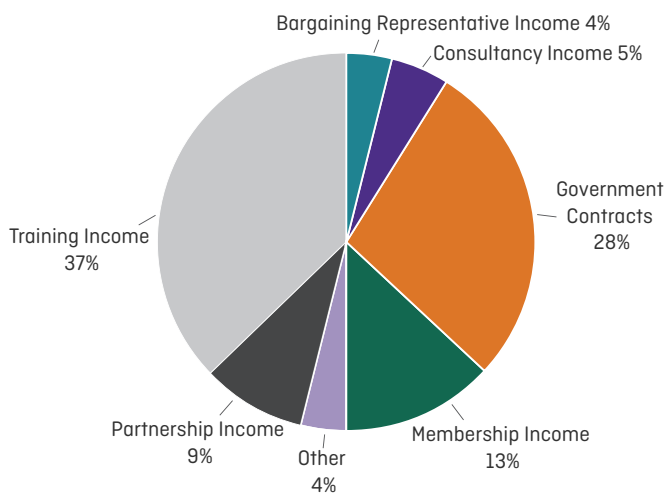
# Treasurer's report

Dear Members,

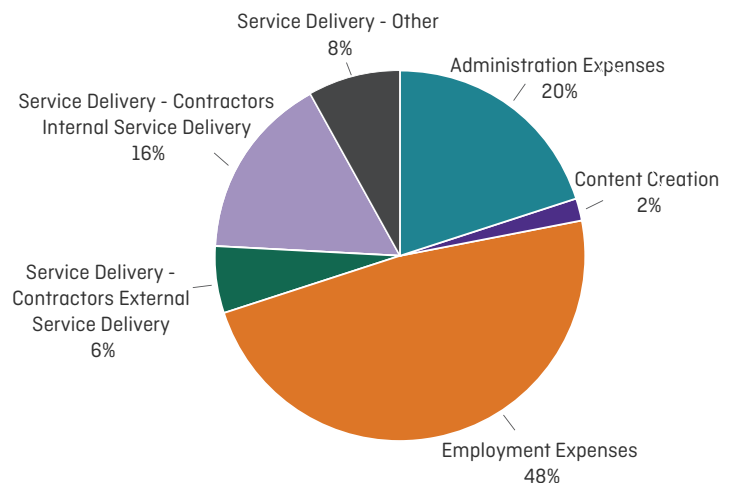
It is an honour to present my first Treasurer's Report for CELA. I am delighted to report that our organisation continues to grow sustainably, delivering impactful services while maintaining a healthy financial position. This success reflects the shared commitment of CELA's management, staff, and community to excellence in early learning.

## Financial highlights

Consolidated Income Profile:



Consolidated Expenses Profile:



- ▶ **Achieving a Surplus:** CELA closed FY24 with a \$15,766 surplus, reflecting sound financial management and operational efficiency.
- ▶ **Growing Revenue:** Total revenue grew by 19%, from \$2.6m to \$3.1m, largely driven by a \$235k increase in government consultancy work. The new Federal Industrial Relations legislation allowed CELA to serve as a bargaining representative in EBA negotiations, unlocking an exciting new income stream for our members. Moving forward, we are expanding this service by partnering with CCC Victoria to extend representation across two states, amplifying our reach and impact.
- ▶ **Responsible Investment in Services:** Expenditure increased by 22%, from \$2.5m to \$3m, as we strategically invested in service delivery and capacity building. Administrative expenses were stable at 20% of total costs, in line with NFP benchmarks.
- ▶ **Strengthening Cash Reserves:** CELA's cash reserves increased to \$1.6m, providing strong financial security. Additionally, the FY23 surplus boosted our total equity to \$851k.

This financial progress would not have been possible without the dedication of CELA's CEO, staff, members, and partners. Thank you all for your commitment to advancing early learning excellence. Together, we are building a sustainable and impactful future.

Thank you,

**Arthur Wang**  
Treasurer



# Audited statements

Important notice: Information used in the summary financial statements is extracted from the full financial report of Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) for the year ended 30 June 2024. The full report provides more details on the financial performance and position of CELA, including a description of the accounting policies adopted by CELA, explanatory notes and the independent auditor's report. The full report is available separately on request from CELA.

## Financial Performance

	2023/2024	2022/2023
<b>Income</b>		
Training Income	\$1,124,950	\$1,033,880
Consultancy - Government Contracts	\$851,314	\$615,513
Consultancy - non-Government Contracts	\$138,553	\$96,100
Membership Income	\$400,529	\$395,371
Partnership Income	\$288,531	\$309,140
Bargaining Representative Income	\$123,780	
Other Income	\$137,253	\$124,496
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$3,064,910</b>	<b>\$2,574,501</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employment Costs	\$1,475,994	\$1,270,777
Service Delivery	\$934,763	\$723,729
Administration Expenses	\$582,358	\$461,702
Content Creation	\$56,030	\$46,027
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,049,144</b>	<b>\$2,502,234</b>
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$15,766</b>	<b>\$72,267</b>

## Financial Position

	30/06/24	30/06/23
Total Assets	\$2,196,873	\$1,579,851
Total Liabilities	\$1,345,936	\$744,680
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$850,937</b>	<b>\$835,171</b>



### IMPACT INVESTMENT

Advocating for the issues that impact our sector is at the core of everything we do. From groundbreaking pay increases through to securing the sustainable operation of community managed services, the cost of advocacy in the 2024 financial year was over \$350,000.

# Partnership

CELA is proud to have partners with a common focus on caring for our members and the wider community. We thank Guild Insurance for their continued support in making a difference to the future of Australia's early education sector. With their help, we can provide invaluable sector support for our members.

This year, Guild Insurance continued to support their customers by placing them with an expert who understands the issues and cares about finding the right solution. We applaud their many years of care and commitment working with the early education and care sector.







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LEARNING AUSTRALIA

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