



EARLY LEARNING ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA – THE VOICE FOR PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

26 May 2016

National Conference to focus on role of early learning in building connected communities

Nearly 1000 delegates from Australia and overseas will attend the annual Early Childhood Education and Care Conference at Caulfield Racecourse on 27 and 28 May. The conference is hosted by Early Learning Association Australia, in partnership with Gowrie Victoria.

“The theme of this year’s Conference – *Together we grow: connecting communities* – emphasises the role early childhood education and care services play in their local communities,” said Mr Shane Lucas, CEO of ELAA.

“The relationships between children, educators and families help grow the social capital that is the foundation of connected and resilient communities.”

As the Conference is occurring in the lead-up to the Federal Election, ELAA is also using the forum to launch a national campaign to lock in Commonwealth Government funding for the provision of 15 hours of kindergarten (for forty weeks) for four year olds beyond December 2017.

“The diverse range of speakers at this year’s conference will provide a timely reminder of why the early years are so important,” Mr Lucas said.

“Quality early learning is the foundation of every child’s life-lasting educational, social and economic prospects - and it is vital to our future.

“So our message for the Coalition parties and for Labor is simple: support quality early learning and Keep Funding 15 Hours.”

Prominent speakers at the conference include:

- **Charlotta Oberg** - **Charlotta** works with professionals around the world to develop Cultural Intelligence in many different settings. Charlotta previously worked for the Swedish Government as a cultural diversity advisor and has also worked as an intercultural consultant to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.
- **Toby Kent** – **Toby** is Chief Resilience Officer with the City of Melbourne and has recently concluded the first metropolitan strategy for Melbourne developed by local government. Toby was formerly Head of Sustainable Development with ANZ Bank, and has had a diverse international career in sustainability and corporate citizenship.
- **Anthony Semann** – **Anthony** is a Director at Semann & Slattery. Anthony has a degree in education, a Masters in sociology, and is currently completing a PhD investigating the relationship between courage and leadership. Anthony has recently co-edited a special edition journal on cultural amnesia, loss and sexual identity.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training is a gold sponsor of the conference and supports accommodation costs of staff from rural and regional services.

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