



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

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7 PM, THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER, 2016

27 October 2016

Early Learning Association Australia celebrates 25 years of supporting children and families

ELAA's 25th Annual General Meeting is a celebration of past, present and future as early learning service providers and parents reflect on 25 years of the Association's operation.

"ELAA – formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria – has been supporting children, families and service providers since 1991," said Mr Shane Lucas, CEO of ELAA.

"Our organisation has grown and changed as the early learning sector itself has evolved.

"As governments and the wider community have increasingly realised that the early years are the most critical time in children's development, ELAA has been a vocal advocate for reform to ensure that quality early learning programs are supported by professional management structures.

"We helped develop and have welcomed the Victorian Government's new Early Years Management Framework, which sets the agenda for the future of early learning program delivery in this State.

"At the Federal level, we have been a strong supporter of the National Quality Framework which drives quality in early childhood education and care across the country."

The meeting will be addressed by both Victorian Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, and the Principal Commissioner for Children and Youth, Liana Buchanan.

"To have speakers of the calibre and seniority of Minister Mikakos and Commissioner Buchanan is a testament to the value the government places on the early years sector – and to the importance of ELAA members as enablers of quality early learning in Victoria," Mr Lucas said.

As always, the ELAA AGM will also see the announcement of the winner of the annual McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Award: the 2016 winner is Elissa Simmons, long-time President of Glenroy West Kindergarten.

"Elissa's achievements – working with educators, families and the community at Glenroy West – is a great example of the dedication of volunteers and parents across our sector," Mr Lucas said.

"In 2013, Glenroy West Kindergarten was forced to relocate and the service could easily have gone under. But Elissa led a process of community consultation, lobbying and fundraising that saw the service build a new facility at a new location – truly, a Phoenix rising from the ashes.

"Parents like Elissa are not only the first and most important educators of children, their leadership and commitment remains critical to sustaining the independent, not-for-profit sector that is the foundation of our sector, and of our organisation."

Media contact: Shane Lucas, CEO, ELAA 0417 308 751 or 03 9489 3500