



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

30 October 2015

ELAA celebrates volunteers – and calls on the State Government to adopt *The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State*

ELAA's 24th Annual General Meeting last night provided a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the work of volunteers across the early learning sector - and for the sector to again call on the Victorian Government to adopt *The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State*.

"On behalf of a united sector, ELAA released *The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State* on 9 October," said Mr Shane Lucas, CEO of ELAA.

"The principles are intended to guide the Government's Education State reform agenda for early childhood education over the next decade – and we were delighted that Victorian Minister for Families and Children, the Hon Jenny Mikakos, made explicit reference to the framework in her opening address.

"We have welcomed the Government's commitment to the Education State, and its acceptance of the research base that states the early years are the most critical to children's development."

Minister Mikakos addressed the ELAA AGM and announced an additional \$485,000 to assist services to transition to new educator-to-children ratios, which come into effect from 1 January 2016. These funds will include extra resources to assist with strategic and financial planning

"We welcome this new funding because we believe that in order to realise its Education State vision, the Government must act effectively and practically to ensure it is building on a solid and sustainable foundation," Mr Lucas said.

"For kindergarten services particularly, there are core funding issues that need to be addressed in the short term to ensure programs remain viable and affordable for families, especially low income households."

The annual McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Award was also announced at the AGM: the 2015 winner is Jaime Rae, a parent at Seaford Kindergarten.

Jaime has served on the Kindergarten Committee of Management for five years and has successfully led the service through a range of staffing and enrolment challenges, physical infrastructure projects, and its first National Quality Framework assessment.

"Parents like Jaime are the first and most important educators of their children, and their leadership and hours of unpaid work is critical to sustaining not-for-profit services across the early learning sector," Mr Lucas said.

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