

THRIVE: INSPIRING SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

When: 15 May 2024, 9am-4pm followed by networking event 4pm-5.30pm

Where: Melbourne Connect - 700 Swanston street, Carlton

TIME	CONFERENCE PROGRAM	SPEAKERS
9.00 AM	Welcome to Country	
9.10 AM	Importance of inclusive practice Speaker: Matt Connell - General Manager People & Culture, Cultura Matt will discuss important topics that we as a sector need to understand, such as cultural awareness, cultural humility, intercultural communication, cultural bias and lack of cultural acceptance. Understanding the importance of cultural sensitivity in the workplace and fostering meaningful relationships to ensure a positive experience for all.	
9.45 AM	Improving outcomes through effective use of evidence Speaker: Dr Zid Mancenido - Senior Manager, Research and Evaluation of the Australian Education Research Organisation Greater use of research and evidence provides the opportunity for positive change across Early Childhood - for service leaders, teachers, educators and policymakers. This session will provide an opportunity to explore evidence-based resources recently published by the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) related to family engagement, belonging and connectedness and discuss how best to support sustainable improvements in practice. By the end of the session, participants will have been introduced to AERO and had the opportunity to reflect and discuss on the importance of fostering effective use of evidence, so that children can achieve their best possible outcomes.	
10.45 AM	Morning Tea	

TIME

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SPEAKERS

11.15 AM

Government perspectives

Moderator: Andrew Cameron - CEO, ELAA

Speakers: Bronwen FitzGerald - Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood Education, Victorian Department of Education

Rhonda Livingstone - National Education Leader and General Manager, Leadership, Quality and Regulatory Support, ACECQA

Greg Norton - Executive Director, Quality Assessment and Regulation Division, Victorian Department of Education

In this panel we are joined by representatives from the Victorian Department of Education and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), and participants will be able to post questions about the National Quality Framework and Victorian ECEC policies.



12.00 PM

Lunch

1.00 PM

Growing and retaining a workforce panel through a broadened lens

Moderator: Sage Michaels - Director Strategy, ELAA

Speakers: Susan Anderson - CEO, Gowrie Victoria

Stephanie Simopoulos - Team Leader, Anzuk Education

During this workforce panel, we will showcase varied perspectives and provide interesting and reflective insights into continued exploration of workforce challenges and solutions.



2.00 PM

Best Start, Best Life: How do we prepare?

Moderator: Leanne Rodriguez - BSBL Reform & Engagement Advisor, ELAA

Speaker: Mandy Baxter - Director Children's Services, Meli

During this panel session, we will hear from our members on how they have successfully implemented 15 hours of a funded 3 year old kindergarten program, how they are preparing for the Pre-Prep rollout implementation and any potential barriers they are facing.



2.45 PM

Afternoon Tea

TIME

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SPEAKERS

3.15 PM

Exceeding National Quality Standards

Moderator: Stacey Fox - Board member, ELAA

The Exceeding National Quality Standards panel will showcase ELAA members rated 'Exceeding' or 'Excellent' under the National Quality Standards. Our panellists will present on the work they are doing to achieve this rating and share how their methods can assist other service providers working towards a higher rating.



3.45 PM

Closing Remarks: Thank you from ELAA's CEO, Andrew Cameron

4.00 PM

Networking Event

5.30 PM

Close

OUR SELECTED SPEAKERS



Susan Anderson

Susan Anderson has been the CEO of Gowrie Victoria since 2020. She is a strong advocate for greater recognition of early childhood professionals and is passionate about fostering inclusive learning environments where everyone is able to thrive. Prior to joining Gowrie Victoria Susan was the Deputy CEO of Beyond Blue. Susan has degrees in education and psychology, along with an MBA and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Gowrie Victoria and ELAA are current partners, working together to strengthen the workplace skills, capabilities, and career pathways of early childhood educators.



Mandy Baxter

Mandy is a dynamic sector Leader with 20 years' experience as a Senior Manager/Executive in a range of settings including early childhood learning, early intervention, youth services and disability. Mandy's professional and personal acumen is to work towards enabling systems to afford children every opportunity towards full participation in all aspects of life, early learning being a critical pillar in creating pathways for lifelong learning. Mandy firmly believes this creates equitable and inclusive communities for all children, their families, and their natural networks.

Mandy is the Director of Children's Services at Meli. The Division holds responsibility for the delivery of 30 Kindergartens across the Barwon region (the largest Early Years Management organisation in the region), alongside the Early Childhood Approach (NDIS) and Early Years. In her spare time, you will find Mandy enjoying the sun with her husband Simon, daughter Scarlett and their two dogs, Dash & Hotdog. Mandy lives and works on Wadawurrung Country.

OUR SELECTED SPEAKERS



Andrew Cameron

Andrew is ELAA's CEO. Andrew brings broad knowledge and experience in the not-for-profit sector and extensive executive leadership experience. Andrew's most recent position was CEO at Youth Enterprises Australia, an NFP that enables disengaged young people to successfully transition from school to work. Prior to this Andrew has held CEO, General Manager and Director roles across the Commonwealth public service, a representative organisation associated with the University of Melbourne and a youth development and outdoor recreation service provider.



Matt Connell

Matt is the General Manager People & Culture of Cultura and the Victorian State President and Board Director for the Australian HR Institute (AHRI). After completing a degree in Management (majoring in HR), Matt has worked in Community Services/Not-For-Profits, Local Government, Travel, and Hospitality in various head of HR roles. During this time, he has started HR/OD and People & Culture functions in medium to large organisations leading highly engaged teams to manage complex IR/ER issues in challenging industries and environments.

An experienced speaker and presenter, Matt is passionate about developing constructive leadership capabilities in others so they may better empower, engage and enhance performance in their own team members. Matt has been a Councillor of AHRI in Victoria since 2015 and was nominated by his peers as Victorian State President role since the start of 2019. As a certified HR practitioner Matt is a passionate advocate for the industry in this volunteer role.



Stacey Fox

Stacey is ELAA's board member. Stacey has significant experience in research and policy development, and has worked within and across government, universities and the not-for-profit sector. Stacey is a strategic thinker adept at applying evidence to policy and practice and grappling with complex challenges. She has worked on a range of public policy issues including early childhood education; integrated service delivery; maternal and child health; system design for prevention and early intervention; family support program design; the development and embedding of outcomes frameworks; and systems change.



Rhonda Livingstone

Rhonda is the National Education Leader and General Manager of ACECQA's Leadership, Quality and Regulatory Support Group. Rhonda brings a wealth of experience to this role, having worked in preschools, long day care centres and as an assessor, developer and deliverer of programs and services for both government and non-government organisations.

OUR SELECTED SPEAKERS



Dr Zid Mancenido

Dr Zid Mancenido is the Senior Manager, Research and Evaluation of the Australian Education Research Organisation where he leads a team of practitioners, researchers, and policy analysts to generate high-quality evidence, make high-quality evidence accessible, and enhance the use of evidence across Early Childhood Education and Care services and schools across Australia. Having started his career as a teacher, he has experience across research, policy, and practice in Australia, Singapore, the Philippines, and the USA. He holds a PhD in Education Policy and Programme Evaluation from Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he is also appointed as a Lecturer on Education teaching courses in education policy and teacher education.



Sage Michaels

Sage has over 10 years of experience working in strategy, projects, business development, member and stakeholder engagement roles. She is a values-driven leader and transformation specialist with extensive experience delivering digital and service transition projects.

Sage leads ELAA's Strategy and Projects teams, ensuring ELAA remains sustainable whilst delivering quality and valued solutions. Sage builds effective relationships with multiple stakeholders including ELAA members, government departments, contractors, and commercial partners.



Leanne Rodriguez

Recently joining ELAA as the Best Start - Best Life Reform and Engagement Advisor, Leanne brings over 20 years of experience in Early Childhood Education and Care settings, as well as a recent focus on youth mental health. Throughout her career, Leanne has held diverse roles encompassing leadership, management, teaching, and educational leadership across various settings including long day care, sessional kindergarten, profit, not-for-profit, stand-alone, and EYM settings. Leanne is a passionate advocate for quality education for all children in the two years prior to school, as well as for educator wellbeing and mental health.

Additionally, Leanne is trained in trauma-informed practices and embraces relational pedagogy, emphasising the importance of building meaningful relationships and connections in early childhood education and care settings. Leanne also serves as a child safety and quality advisor, contributing her expertise to ensure the highest standards of safety and quality in early childhood programs.

OUR PARTNERS



AB PHILLIPS –
insurance specialists



ANZUK EDUCATION –
Early Childhood Education and Care
sector workforce recruitment services



BUNNINGS TRADE –
hardware, landscaping, and
infrastructure improvement supplies



ENROL NOW –
digital enrolment management
platform providers



HESTA –
superannuation fund and advice



OFFICEWORKS –
business equipment, technology,
office, and art supplies

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact memberships@elaa.org.au or call 03 9489 3500

www.elaa.org.au



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