

OUR VISION: Every child has the opportunity to explore and realise their potential through access and engagement in quality early education.

OUR MISSION: To deliver leading early childhood educational programs that supports every child and their family and encourages a life-long love of learning.

Annual Report 2018

Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.
Established 2003 ecka.org.au

OUR VALUES: Children, Community, Excellence, Leadership, Collaboration, Diversity



ECKA acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land on which our services are located and pay respect to Elders past and present.

OUR AIM

Is to deliver high-quality, accessible and sustainable community-based early childhood education & care in all of our services. This is achieved by leading improvements in service delivery & educational outcomes for all children.



Access & Partnership	Quality & Workforce	Sustainability & Innovation
We ensure equitable access for all children, encourage community participation and support families to contribute to their child's early years experience	We achieve the highest standards and deliver the best services to our community	We are responsive and flexible with the capacity to meet future challenges and change.

ORGANISATIONAL REPORT

2018 was an exciting and rewarding year with the implementation of the first stages of ECKA's three-year strategic plan. In response to the needs of children and families within our communities we introduced a number of new evidence-based service delivery models, including long day kindergarten programs, which were well received by parents who have found the shorter sessions impossible to access. This service model was in addition to the delivery of after kinder care and occasional care services that are designed to meet the needs of families at a number of our services.

We invested heavily in the development of our workforce to strengthen leadership and build the skills and knowledge of our staff to achieve our aim to deliver high quality education and care programs in all of our services. Staff were provided with many opportunities to come together through professional learning days, Educational Leaders forums and Communities of Practice meetings, all of which strongly reflect our strategic direction.

We continued to foster strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with families, communities and local and state governments, with all of our strategies focused on equitable access for all children, sustained engagement of families and improving outcomes for children to ensure they are given the best possible start to their lifetime of learning.

We responded to change and reform in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector and benefited from representation on a number of government advisory and reference groups, as well as participating in networks which included Early Years Managers from both rural and urban settings. These networks allowed us opportunities to jointly inform government policy development and provide feedback on the impact of policy and reforms on our services. Recent collaborative pieces of work provided government with a clear picture of sustainability issues currently facing Early Years Managers, as well as joint submissions leading up to government elections and budgets.

We look forward to further strengthening our strategies in 2019 to realise our vision that every child has the opportunity to explore and realise their potential through access and engagement in quality early education.

Jo Geurts (CEO) Paul Ryan (Board Chair)

On behalf of the Board of Management, ECKA—Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.



EVIDENCE

- ◆ Research demonstrates that parental engagement in ECEC services enhances children’s achievements and adaption
- ◆ Likewise, if the connection between schools and communities is strong, it is easier for children to develop the skills they need to be successful—socially, emotionally, physically and academically

(Early Years Management Policy Framework DET 2016)



I’ve been really happy with the kinder and its feedback on my child, he loves going there and likes to sing all the songs he learns.

2018 Parent Bakery Hill Kindergarten

The kinder listen to the parents and work well with them to help their child achieve all their hopes and dreams.....

2018 Parent Ballarat North Kindergarten

There are educators that have stood out and are shining lights who I would highly recommend.

2018 Parent Haddon ECES

I have had three children at this kinder and find the education level and their care for their students is very impressive I would recommend this kinder to any mother or father.

2018 Parent Delacombe Community Kindergarten

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our services deliver a wide range of programs that reflect the diversity of our communities. Our curriculum is developed based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). [See below](#)

A number of our educational programs are inspired by high-quality early childhood evidence-based programs developed outside of Australia, such as Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Circle of Security, Sunshine Circles, Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study and Australia's E4Kids study. Programs have a strong emphasis on themes important to their individual communities, such as imbedding cultural perspectives and history and involvement in local initiative and events. Programs are responsive to the interests and development needs of the children, including intensive and remedial programs in a number of our services designed to support our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The vision and purpose of the VEYLDF is to guide early childhood professionals in a collective effort with families toward the achievement of the nationally agreed Early Years Learning Outcomes (Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009) where children:

- have a strong sense of identity
- are connected with and contribute to their world
- have a strong sense of wellbeing
- are confident and involved learners
- are effective communicators.

The VEYLDF guides our early childhood professionals to work together with families in support of their children, embracing and responding to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Victorian community and diverse approaches to child rearing.

The carers at the kindergarten are amazing and extremely inviting and friendly our child's progress over the year has been amazing & in no small part thanks to lady's at the kindergarten.

2018 Parent Creswick & District Preschool



INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

Intergenerational programs are providing children and senior members of our community with unique opportunities to spend time together and share experiences.

Midlands Kindergarten comments: Three years ago, a partnership was forged between Midlands Kinder and Hailey House Nursing home. This has helped to bridge the gap between children and the senior members of our community. We call our weekly visits CIRCLE day. CIRCLE stands for Celebrating Intergenerational Relationships Creating Learning for Everyone. Our partnership has fostered a strong enduring relationship that has built confidence and a stronger sense of self identity in our children. The program has supported children to cope with change, build on empathy and compassion and have a deeper understanding of the cycle of life.

Hepburn Kindergarten comments: Hepburn Kindergarten Intergenerational Project continued for its second year in 2018. Our group of 13 children visited the elderly residents at the Daylesford Hospital once a month. In the first few visits we saw shy, unsure, timid children but they blossomed into confident, caring and sharing members of our community happy to connect personally with an elderly person. We constantly received many positive comments from Elderly Care Workers, family visitors and parents who could see how beneficial this project was to everyone involved.



INTENSIVE TEACHING PROGRAM

In 2018 ECKA implemented a new collaborative teaching model at Mt Pleasant Kindergarten in recognition of the high needs of children in their community. Additional Bachelor qualified staff members were employed to plan for and guide children in their learning, with a focus on identifying and assisting children who required additional support, assisting children to develop the skills needed to regulate their own emotions, as well as introducing essential literacy and numeracy concepts.

In introducing literacy and numeracy concepts to the children, families were invited to be involved. Two games nights were held at the service with approximately 60 people in attendance at each session. These sessions were designed to provide parents/carers with ideas and resources to take home and they were encouraged to use the games at home with their children to assist in imbedding the numeracy and literacy concepts in their children's daily experiences.



2018 ECKA SNAP SHOT

Enrolment in our programs in 2018 have remained strong	2016	2017	2018
4 year old funded program	895	902	895
No of Early Start Kinder* <small>* Eligible 3yo children attending 4 yo program</small>	39	49	61
3 year old program	456	453	406
TOTAL	1390	1404	1362

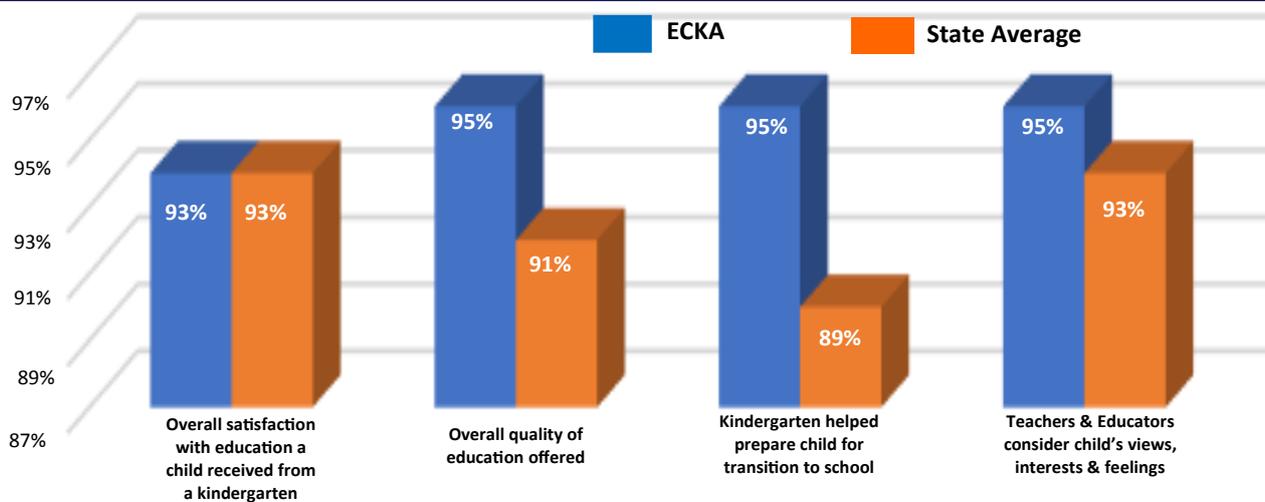
2018 Staff

- 110 Permanent & Contracted Teachers & Educators
 - 45 Bachelor • 51 Diploma • 14 Certificate III
- 30 Casual Staff
- 5 Staff members supported to undertake Bachelor studies
- 1 Teacher supported to undertake Masters.
- 2539 Hours of professional development
- 2 Staff supported to upgrade to a Diploma qualification
- 4 New graduate Teachers supported to commence in their first positions.
- 1 Teacher supported to move from provisional to full teacher registration

2018 Education and Care Programs

- 24 4yo kindergarten programs
- 15 3yo kindergarten programs
- 8 3yo Activity Groups
- 1 Long Day care Program
- 3 Occasional Care Programs
- 2 After Kinder Care Programs
- 6 Long Day Kinder Programs

Parent Survey — % of Respondents who indicated Strongly Agree / Agree



Partnerships—Parents

Our partnership with parents continues to strengthen. All parent groups/committees are supported by the ECKA staff to undertake their role in a way that allows them to participate in their child's year/s at kinder in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Local and State Government

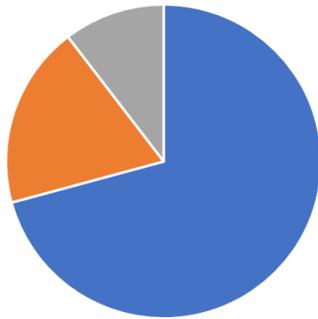
Partnerships with local and state government are critical to ensure all eligible children are identified and supported to access early education services. Collaboration includes central enrolment, M&CH services, planning and delivery of new buildings/alterations to existing buildings, municipal early years plans and other identified join projects.



2018 FINANCES

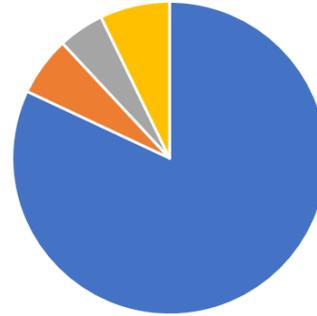
Total liabilities of ECKA at the end of 31st December 2018 are \$2,292,582 which is 37.68% of total assets, resulting in the association being in a good position to meet all of its current obligations. As at 31st December 2017 total liabilities were 1,991,175 being 37.36% of total assets. Operating surplus for the year was \$392,367 (4.9%) in comparison to the previous year operating surplus of \$335,593 (4.8%)

2018 INCOME



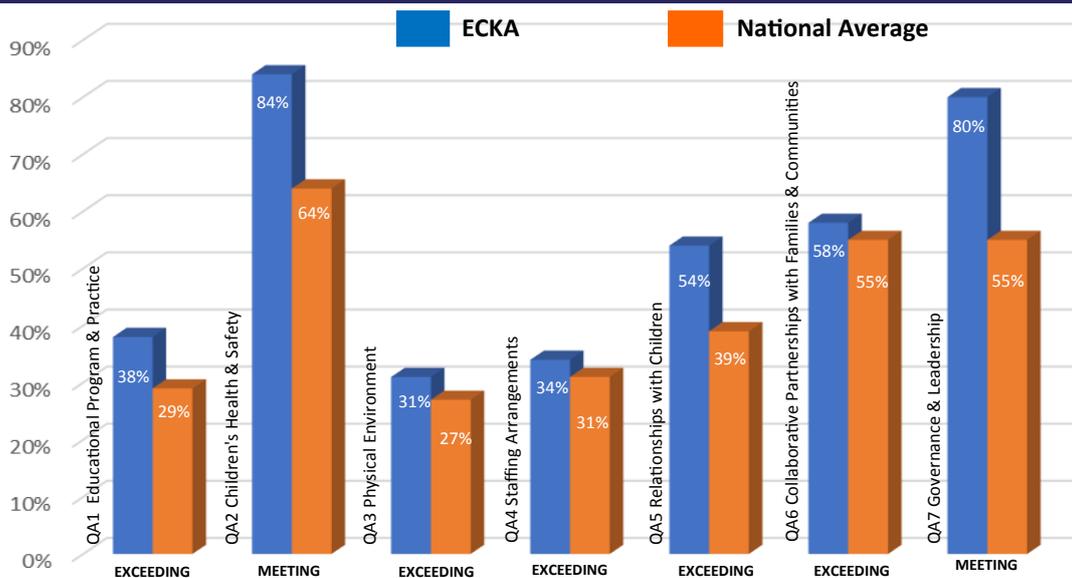
■ Government Funding 70.78%
■ Parent Fees 18.83%
■ Other Operating Income 10.39%
Total Income: \$7,991,811.21

2018 EXPENSES



■ Total Staff Expenses 82.01%
■ Kinder Operating Expenses 6.10%
■ Capital Works, Maintenance & Utilities 4.72%
■ Other Operating Expenses 7.17%
Total Expenditure \$7,599,442.31

National Quality Standards – Assessment & Rating



Successful Grant Applications in 2018: \$125,024.36

Funding Organisation	\$ Received	Funded Projects
DET IT	\$9,308.00	For new computers and IT equipment.
DET Inclusive	\$26,555.36	To purchase equipment for children with special needs.
DET Minor Infrastructure	\$73,490.00	For equipment purchases and ground improvements.
Ballarat Foundation	\$10,000.00	To purchase new climbing equipment at Fidelity Club Kindergarten.
Catherine King Stronger Communities Programme	\$3,971.00	To install an air-conditioner, storage shed and construct new entry steps at Bakery Hill Kindergarten.
Landcare	\$1,000.00	To construct a native garden at Waubra.
ACCONIA	\$700	To install a water tank at Waubra.

BUSH KINDER PROGRAMS

This program has complimented our indoor/outdoor program and provided children with further uninterrupted times outdoors in this unstructured natural setting. (2018 Kindergarten Staff)



Benefits:

- ◇ Improvement in all the children's gross motor skills and confidence. Many children who do not use the climbing equipment at kinder are balancing on logs, jumping off stumps and climbing.
- ◇ Improved interpersonal skills and contribution to team work.
- ◇ Learning about creatures of the bush.
- ◇ Taking risks and testing their limits.
- ◇ Engaging with and resourcing their learning.
- ◇ Building an awareness of the impact we have on our environment.
- ◇ Increase in confidence, motivation and concentration.
- ◇ Increase their maths and engineering skills and awareness. From using words such as high-low, long-short, heavy-light, big-small to counting, sorting and patterns, the children have engaged in this learning easily at bush kinder.

I believe that this outdoor play experience is really valuable in building long term resilience. Great to have time away from structured play & to make their own fun. **2018 Parent Ballarat Nth Kindergarten**

The kids were absolutely fascinated by the nature and I witnessed some of the best imaginary play I have ever seen. From finding bugs to building houses for snakes and fairies, the program allowed children to engage with nature and it was beautiful. I have noticed a substantial increase in my twins creativity when it comes to free play, especially when we are outside. Their knowledge about nature has also grown and every weekend they now ask if we can go exploring. I cannot speak highly enough of the program.

2018 Parent Phoenix Kindergarten

Our daughter has a really enjoyed spending time with her friends and learning about koalas, snakes, bugs etc. I think bush kinder is great and the children love it!

2018 Parent Ballarat Nth Kindergarten

Bush Kinder is an asset to the Brown Hill Kindergarten. The staff continue to provide this amazing opportunity for the children rain, hail or shine. They are the reason the Bush Kinder Program works so well and they should be congratulated on this!

2018 Parent Brown Hill Kindergarten

The bush kinder space allowed the children to exercise, it allowed them the freedom to explore within the safety of boundaries and it allowed them to use their imaginations to build, create and explore.... the Bush Kinder Program is a positive way in which to stimulate little minds without the confines of four walls.

2018 Parent Brown Hill Kindergarten



There has been much excitement in our house over the years about the Bush Kinder program. The children love adventuring out to the Bush Kinder site each week and exploring..... It is such a wonderful program and we are so grateful that our children have had the opportunity to take part.

2018 Parent Brown Hill Kindergarten

COMMUNITY EVENTS

ECKA has a strong commitment to supporting the communities in which our services are located. Kindergartens have a long history of involvement in local community events, which includes volunteering to undertake a range of activities and taking up opportunities for fundraising to support their local service or other local causes.

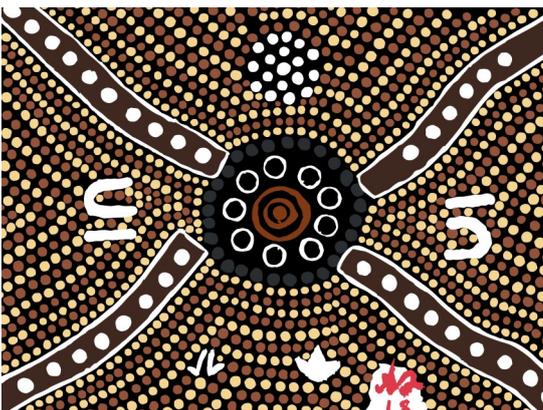


ECKA and local services supported the: Begonia Festival, Trentham Spud-fest, Clunes Book Town, Wallace Mothers Day Luncheon, Clunes Agricultural Show, Daylesford Agricultural Show, Preschool promotion events, Biggest Playgroup, Community Hubs, Local Playgroups and collaborated with school events

INDIGENOUS PRESCHOOL ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY (IPAS)

ECKA was funded again in 2018 by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to provide support to 81 funded kindergarten services in the Central Highlands, Grampians and Wimmera regions. Funds were distributed to each of the services with Indigenous children enrolled to support enrolment of both 3 and 4yo children, promote and support high levels of attendance, enhance progress towards school readiness and support the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives and history in the preschool programs. The program has been in existence since 2009 and has intensive performance reporting requirements, which has enabled ECKA to collect a significant amount of data for government.

- ◆ 81 Kindergarten Programs supported across Grampians Region.
- ◆ 99 4yo Aboriginal children attending funded kindergarten program.
- ◆ 64 3yo Early Start in funded Program.
- ◆ 14 3yo in 3yo kinder.
- ◆ 95.6% average attendance rate of all Aboriginal children.
- ◆ 137 staff members undertook professional development to enhance their skills.
- ◆ 92% of children achieved literacy and numeracy skills appropriate for school entry.



OUR BOARD

ECKA's Board Members are a group of dedicated volunteers with a broad range of skills and experience. The Board's expertise ensures that ECKA continues to meet all of its obligations and delivers the best outcomes for children and families in our communities.

Name	Board Member since
Sandy Facey	November 2012
Paul Ryan (Chair)	November 2013
Katherine Cape (Deputy Chair)	November 2015
Lisa (West) Pickering	November 2015
Geoff Manton (Chair of Finance & Risk Committee)	November 2016
Chris Hannah	November 2016
Skye Petre	April 2018
Joanne Geurts (CEO) (Secretary)	

Our Services

Bakery Hill Kindergarten
 Ballarat North Kindergarten
 Ballarat Fidelity Club ELC
 Ballarat Fidelity Club
 Beaufort Early Childhood Centre —
 Including Kindergarten
 Bonshaw
 Brown Hill Kindergarten
 Clunes and District Preschool
 Creswick and District Preschool
 Daylesford Preschool
 Delacombe Community Kindergarten
 Haddon Community Childcare
 Haddon Preschool Centre
 Hepburn Kindergarten
 Iris Ramsay Kindergarten
 Linda Brown Preschool
 Midlands Kindergarten
 Mt Clear Community Kindergarten
 Mt Pleasant Kindergarten
 Phoenix Kindergarten
 Rowan View Preschool
 Sebastopol South Kindergarten
 Trentham Kindergarten
 Wallace & District Kindergarten
 Waubra Preschool
 Woody Yaloak Kindergarten



OUR KINDERGARTENS—PARENT COMMENTS



This has been the first year as a mother sending my children to kinder and the staff have been brilliant....

2018 Parent Hepburn Kindergarten

Wallace was a wonderful kinder. We have had the best experience and are sad the year is almost over.

2018 Parent Wallace & District Kindergarten

...I love the rural & down to earth nature of the kinder, and their flexibility to accommodate children's interests, preferences & the incorporation of books & toys children like to bring from home.

2018 Parent Waubra Kindergarten

...My son always loves going to kinder and the one time that he had a problem they called me shortly after to let me know he had settled and was happy. I love this kinder & will happily recommend to all.

2018 Parent Woody Yaloak Kindergarten

The teachers in 4yr kinder are fantastic!

2018 Parent Bonshaw Kindergarten

Phoenix Kinder is a wonderful kinder. The staff are wonderful, and very welcoming to my entire family! My child has learnt so much and absolutely loves going to kinder. **2018 Parent Phoenix Kindergarten**

Incredibly well run kinder, flexible and compassionate but disciplined approach. A happy place for kids and parents alike thanks to the teachers efforts, attitude and experience.

2018 Parent Trentham Kindergarten

My husband and I are so grateful to mt clear kinder. The kindness, inclusion and communication had been second to none. **2018 Parent Mt Clear Community Kindergarten**

It's a fantastic Kindergarten
2018 Parent Iris Ramsay Kindergarten

I can't thank the staff enough for their level of care and attention to my child's own personal needs. The staff are amazing and I'm grateful both my children have begun their education through Linda Brown.

2018 Parent Linda Brown Preschool

Best kinder teachers they were absolutely fantastic with my child highly recommended them.

2018 Parent Sebastopol Sth Kindergarten

Exceptional teachers/carers for pre school aged children, They create a warm, safe and fun environment to maximise each child's potential. We couldn't be happier.

2018 Parent Daylesford Preschool

Beautiful kinder with beautiful caring staff.

2018 Parent Mt Pleasant Kindergarten





Thank you for all your work this year. Our child is prepared for school and has been supported to follow his own learning goals throughout the year. He has been encouraged to follow his interests and supported to learn new things. Thank you.

2018 Parent Midlands Kindergarten

Rowan View is an excellent kinder. My child has had a great year. Fabulous teachers who are caring and know every need for my child. I would absolutely recommend this kinder to every family.

2018 Parent Rowan View Kindergarten

Educators have provided my child with an outstanding program, both educationally and socially..... A fabulous beginning to my child's journey of learning.

2018 Parent Clunes & District Preschool

I will be forever indebted to these amazing teachers who provide individualised & responsive care to each & every one of the children. We truly have been blessed going to Fidelity.

2018 Parent Fidelity Kindergarten