

# Annual Report 2020



**Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.**

ECKA acknowledges Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands, water and resources of the countries that ECKA reside upon. We say thank you for sharing your connections and pay respects to their elders of the past, present and emerging. ECKA pays respect to the central place in education that Aboriginal cultural holds and says thank you.





# ORGANISATIONAL REPORT 2020

We are pleased to present this annual report to our members, parents, staff, partners and stakeholders.

Reflecting on 2020, we acknowledge the significant impact that COVID 19 had on the children who used our ECKA services, their families, our staff, and the wider community. It was a year that drew upon our adaptability as an organisation and the commitment of our staff to provide access to quality early learning. This level of commitment is shown in that all ECKA services remained open throughout 2020 for all children to attend.

To achieve our strategic priorities to strengthen partnerships and drive high levels of participation of children in our educational programs, we commenced the 2020 year with a staff professional development focus on engaging parents. We know that it is essential to develop secure respectful relationships and support parents in regards to their child's learning and development.

The emergence of COVID-19 in March required an immediate response and demonstrated ECKA's agility and capacity to respond to the needs of children and families through flexibility of employment arrangements for staff and redesign of services (e.g. support for remote learning at home), to ensure that children were able to access early education.

Recognizing how critical the relationships and communication with families was going to be we rolled out in late term one an online communication platform (Storypark). This allowed us to provide real-time communication with parent and carers as well as learning resources and activities (e.g. story time) to support learning at home.

We focused heavily on the wellbeing of our staff and developed working from home procedures to protect vulnerable staff, as well as providing curriculum days, backfill and additional staff to ease pressure and workloads during the year.



# ORGANISATIONAL REPORT 2020



ECKA continued throughout 2020 to deliver the Indigenous Preschool Advancement Strategy (IPAS) throughout funded community-based kindergartens in Western Victoria. IPAS is committed to 'Closing the Gap' and supports Kindergartens to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through the provision of resources, mentoring and coaching to Teachers in the kindergarten services.

Extensive planning occurred throughout the year to prepare for the introduction of the School Readiness Funding (SRF), to be received by ECKA in 2021. This funding which provides additional staff, as well as coaching and professional development for all staff, is designed to drive better outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children in our services.

Overall, our organisation coped very well in 2020, but continued support is needed as COVID-19 continues to have an impact on the wellbeing of some staff and families.

We thank all our ECKA staff in Services and in Administration for their commitment, flexibility, and support of one another. On behalf of the Board, I thank Jo Geurts, our CEO, and all ECKA Leadership for your work and adaptability in a demanding year.

Thanks to the members of the ECKA Board for their additional effort and contribution during 2020. The AGM is the final Board meeting for Sandy Facey who completes 9 years on the Board. Thanks to Sandy in particular for her work chairing and leading the inaugural Quality & Risk Committee (Board). Also, thanks to Lisa Pickering for her contribution in her 5 years on the Board.

Finally, to the parents and carers of children who attended our ECKA services we say thank you, for allowing us at ECKA to contribute to your child's learning and development.



# 2020 ECKA STAFF



<b>111</b>	Permanent & Contracted Teachers & Educators		
	<b>45</b> Bachelor	<b>51</b> Diploma	<b>15</b> Certificate III
<b>30</b>	Casual Staff		
<b>7</b>	Staff members supported to undertake Bachelor studies		
<b>1</b>	Teacher supported to undertake Masters.		
<b>2328</b>	Hours of professional development		
<b>7</b>	Staff supported to upgrade to a Diploma Qualification		
<b>2</b>	New graduate Teachers supported to commence in their first positions.		
<b>2</b>	Teacher supported to move from provisional to full teacher registration		

Just an all round fabulous experience so far, they are lovely, help my daughter with her education and socialisation, and [are a] genuinely lovely group of educators.  
– 2020 Parent

These ladies are an asset to ECKA and deserve one big pat on the back! They are their vibrant, happy, caring selves every time we drop our children off! They all take their jobs above and beyond so a Massive Well done...  
– 2020 Parent



# 2020 ECKA SNAPSHOT

## EDUCATION & CARE SESSIONS (per week)

131	4yo kindergarten
17	3yo kindergarten
16	3yo Activity Groups
5	Long Day Care
2	Occasional Care
3	After Kinder Care
36	Long Day Kindergarten



My son thoroughly enjoys attending ...Kindergarten ... He has built meaningful relationships with his educators and peers. He can recall with enthusiasm activities undertaken for the day and has been able to transfer skills learnt at Kinder into his home life. – 2020 Parent



## ENROLMENTS

	2018	2019	2020
4 year old funded program	895	870	943
No. of Early Start Kinder*	61	81	83
* Eligible 3yo children attending 4 yo program			
3 year old program	406	312	391
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1362</b>	<b>1263</b>	<b>1417</b>



# INDIGENOUS PRESCHOOL ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY (IPAS)



- In 2020, 52 kindergartens out of the 81 kindergartens in the IPAS project had Indigenous children enrolled.
- There was a total of 165 children funded by the IPAS project, of which 114 children attended the 4yo kinder program, 43 were Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) children and 8 children were in the 3yo kinder program.
- Attendance rate in 2020 averaged at 95% across the year. There was a drop off during the 1st COVID lockdown in March April, but numbers picked up quickly and remained high for the remainder of the year.



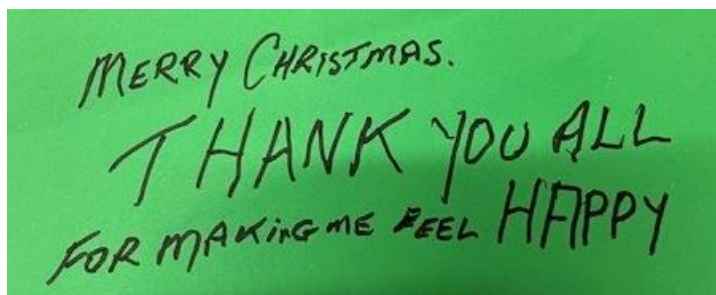
- All but a small handful of kindergartens provided children with learning from home opportunities during the lockdown in 2020 and IPAS supported this through provision of ideas, funding and encouragement.
- Parents were surveyed at the end of 2020 with 125 parents completing the survey of which 97.5% agreed that the kindergarten service had improved their child's language skills, social skills, confidence and learning outcomes.



# INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

Intergenerational programs are providing children and senior members of our community with unique opportunities to spend time together and share experiences. Families and Educators are embracing intergenerational learning programs throughout Ballarat and Districts.

A number of ECKA services engage with local aged care facilities as part of their program. Children learn from and connect with the older generation which has an impact on children's behaviours and attitudes towards older people and enhance the overall well-being of both young and old participants.



2020 Christmas card from Hailey House Resident to Midlands Kindergarten



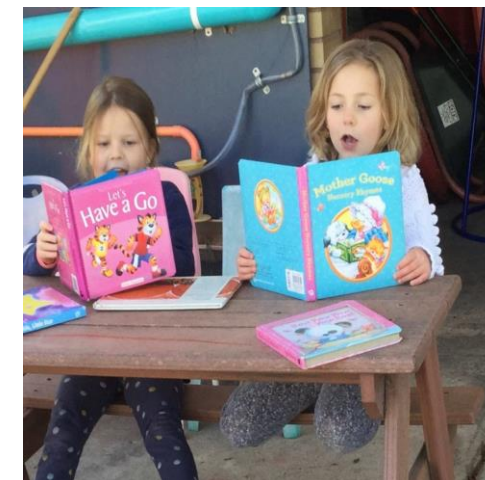


# INNOVATION SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

In 2020 ECKA continued to implement the intensive teaching model at Mt Pleasant Kindergarten and introduced the model into Rowan View Preschool in recognition of the high needs of children in both communities. Additional qualified staff members were employed and staff to child ratios were increased so that more staff were available to plan for and guide smaller groups of children in their learning. The program focused 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 & numeracy concepts.



Educators were provided with advice and support through ECKA Management and other external agencies to assist with the challenges the year presented.



Considering the mixed up year, we are blown away by the support, care and love given to [our son] by the teachers... [He] has developed from a shy boy to being confident and very ready for school. He loves his kinder days and feels very supported and cared for by his teachers. The feedback is incredible. We feel part of their day in so many ways.

– 2020 Parent



# BUSH KINDER PROGRAMS



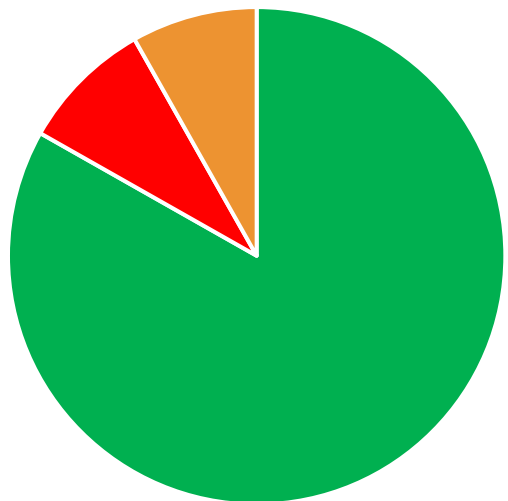
The Bush Kinder Program has continued throughout 2020, although covid impacted the number of sessions that could be held.

Children, families and staff have enjoyed the weekly visits to Pax Hill Scout Camp and Brown Hill Nature Reserve.



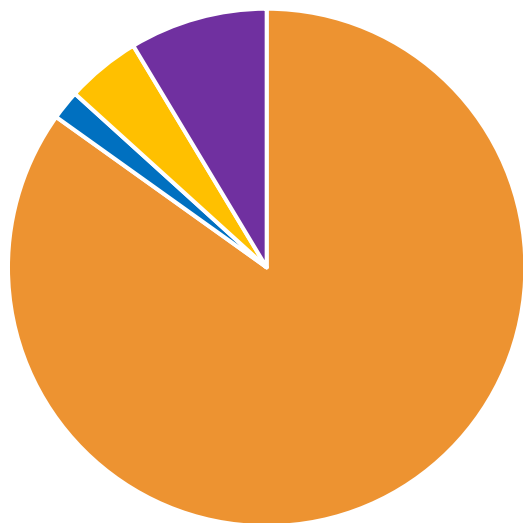


# 2020 FINANCES



## 2020 INCOME

- Government Funding 82.22%
- Parent Fees 8.52%
- Other Operating Income 8.08%
- Total Income: \$8,818,129



## 2020 EXPENSES

- Staff Expenses 82.99%
- Capital Works, Maintenance & Utilities 4.56%
- Kinder Operating Expenses 1.80%
- Other Operating Expenses 8.43%
- Total Expenditure: \$8,243,161

	2020	2019
Total Liabilities	\$2,894,331	\$2,436,940
Operating Surplus	\$574,968	-\$100,057
Total Income	\$8,818,129	\$8,238,641
Total Expenditure	\$8,243,161	\$8,338,698

Total liabilities of ECKA at the 31st of December 2020 are \$2,894,331, which is 39.13% of total assets, resulting in the association being in a good position to meet all of its current obligations.



# PARTNERSHIPS



## Our Community

We acknowledge the important work of all Parents and Friends Activity Groups and Committees in 2020 that were supported by ECKA staff to undertake their roles. Unfortunately due to the pandemic many parents and friends groups were unable to meet in person although some continued to meet via zoom. Their ability to contribute to fundraising was limited due to social distancing guidelines. The online Storypark platform enabled Parents to contribute to their child's education and provide insights and information about activities or aspects of their community which assisted us in building these vital connections.

## Local and State Government

Thank you to our key partners and funders. Our partnerships with local and state government are critical to ensure all eligible children are identified and supported to access early education services. We acknowledge the state governments additional funding in 2020 to support parent fees and support for ECKA to maintain safe and secure services as we continued to operate throughout the pandemic.

Additional collaboration includes central enrolment, M&CH services, planning for the introduction of funded kindergarten in 2021 & 2022 and the delivery of new buildings/alterations to existing buildings and other identified joint projects.



Department of  
Education & Training



# PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY



🌈 100% of parents agreed that their kindergarten was friendly and welcoming to family's friends and visitors.

🌈 98% of parents would recommend the service

🌈 99% of parents were satisfied with the quality of Education provided by the kindergarten.

🌈 88% of parents believe the child's views, interests and families were considered.

🌈 89% of parents were satisfied with the level of support they received for learning at home in 2020

This year has been one that requires flexibility and resilience. These challenges have highlighted the amazing adaptability of the team to assist in meeting the needs of all kids and families

– 2020 Parent





# PARENT FEEDBACK



The kinder has been wonderful for our child, the teachers are amazing and really care. The bush kinder program is also amazing

– 2020 Parent

My husband and I are very happy with the program we have had for our son, even through this pandemic we have had regular support and all positive communication with the staff. Storypark is an amazing addition to keeping parent involved too!

– 2020 Parent



Updates to play spaces in particular were amazing. Although we have missed majority of kinder year we have still felt connected to the group

– 2020 Parent

The team .... are amazing! They have gone above and beyond with our home learning, they've kept us updated with very regular posts on Storypark, provided packs and made phone calls to our daughter. We are so grateful to them for all their hard work!

– 2020 Parent

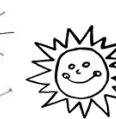




**BEAUFORT EARLY  
CHILDHOOD CENTRE**



**Black Hill  
Kindergarten**



*Mt Pleasant Kindergarten*  
826 Laurie St, Mt Pleasant  
Ph: 53 323 295 M: 0457 805 945  
E: [mt.pleasant.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au](mailto:mt.pleasant.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au)

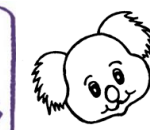
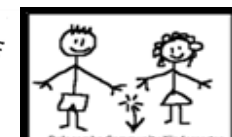


Bakery Hill Kindergarten  
Ballan & District Preschool  
Black Hill Kindergarten  
Ballarat Fidelity Club ELC  
Ballarat Fidelity Club Kindergarten  
Beaufort Early Childhood Centre  
Bonshaw Kindergarten  
Brown Hill Kindergarten  
Clunes and District Preschool  
Creswick and District Preschool  
Daylesford Preschool  
Delacombe Community Kindergarten  
Haddon Community Childcare  
Haddon Preschool Centre

## Our Services



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  
Soldiers Hill Kindergarten  
St Alipius Kindergarten  
Trentham Kindergarten  
Wallace & District Kindergarten  
Waubra Preschool  
Woody Yaloak Kindergarten



*Rowan View Pre School Centre*  
402 FOREST STREET, WENDOUREE, VIC. 3355 PHONE (03) 5339 6196



# OUR BOARD 2020



Board Strategic Planning Workshop, March 2021

Name	Board Member Since
Sandy Facey <i>(Chair of Quality &amp; Risk Committee)</i>	November 2012
Paul Ryan <i>(Board Chair)</i>	November 2013
Katherine Cape <i>(Deputy Chair)</i>	November 2015
Geoff Manton <i>(Chair of Finance &amp; Audit Committee)</i>	June 2016
Emily Sweet	December 2020
Emma Challands	December 2020
Sharon Fecteau	December 2020

Jo Geurts CEO (secretary)





This has been a very hard year for our educators! The usual program has been disrupted and the usual inclusion of families at the kinder has not happened due to COVID. However our kids don't know that, they feel safe and valued while at kinder and enjoy the new learning experience and social interaction that ...[Kindergarten] offers. I thank our educators for continuing to provide high quality experiences for our children.

Thank you.

**- 2020 Parent**

