

AGM Report 2021/2022



Enriching futures together



Acknowledgement

ECTARC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to the children and young people who are the leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge the important role of the First Nations people of Australia, in the education and care of all children and people in this Country that we live in and share. At ECTARC we acknowledge the past and stand for a reconciled future.







Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| The Organisation | 5 |
| The Board | 6 |
| CEO Report | 7 |
| Our People | 10 |
| Finance Report | 12 |
| Highlights | 15 |
| ECTARC Values in Practice - Collaboration | 16 |
| ECTARC Values in Practice - Respect | 20 |
| ECTARC Values in Practice - Innovation | 25 |
| ECTARC Values in Practice - Excellence | 30 |
| ECTARC Values in Practice - Integrity | 35 |

Vision

ECTARC has a vision of enriching the futures of the children, families, students and communities we work in.

Values

- Collaboration
- Respect
- Innovation
- Excellence
- Integrity

Strategic Objectives

- Our People and Communities
- Excellence in Service Delivery
- A Strong, Sustainable Organisation



The Organisation

ECTARC is the business name of Illawarra Area Child Care Ltd, a not for profit community owned organisation. The company was established in May 1984 and incorporated in 1985. In 2020, the organisation was rebranded to bring our early childhood education and training services operations under one business name to be known as ECTARC.

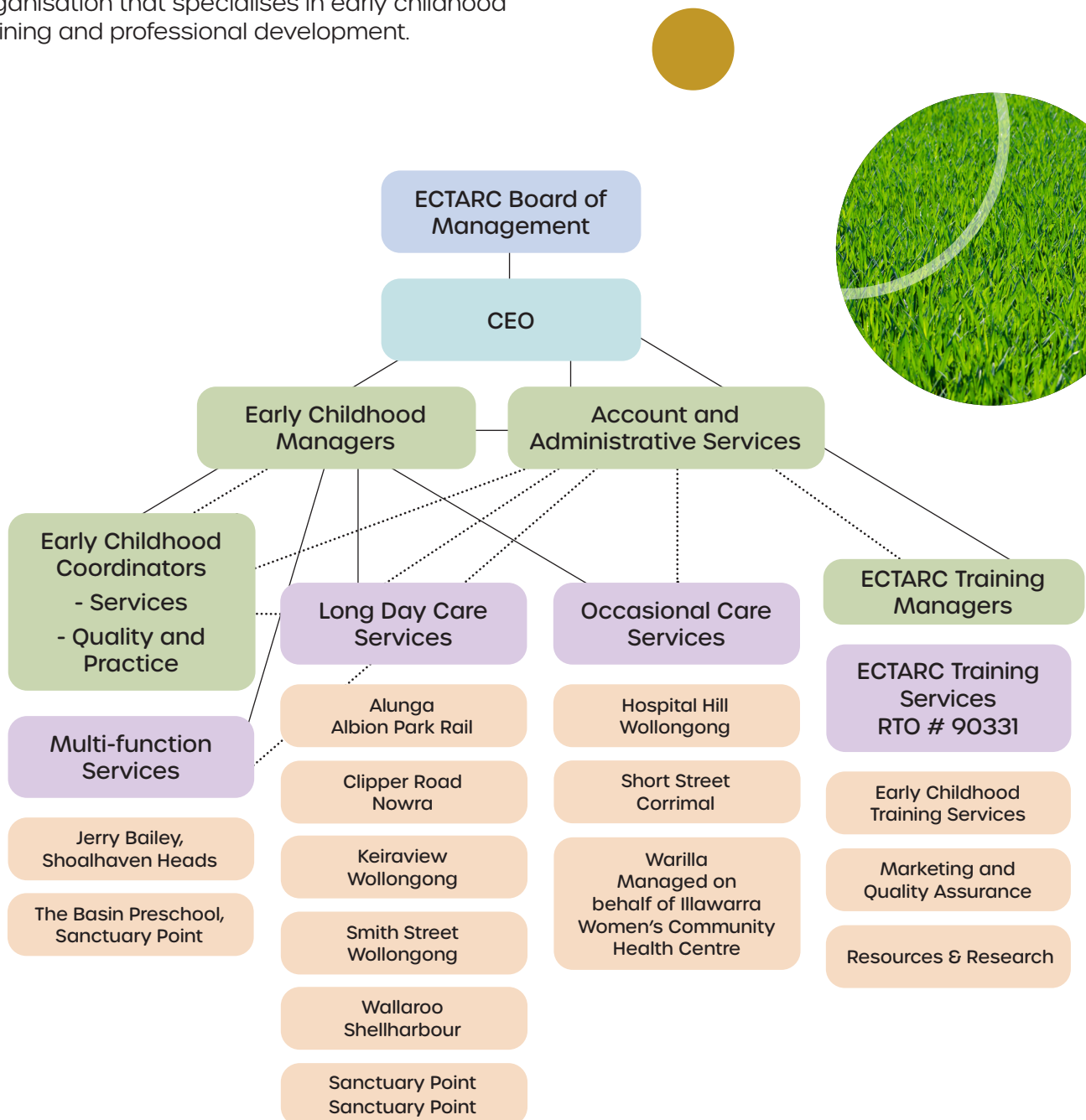
ECTARC manages six long day care services, three occasional care services and two multi-function services in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

ECTARC also manages, a Registered Training Organisation that specialises in early childhood training and professional development.

The Board provides management services to the Warilla Occasional Care Centre on behalf of the Illawarra Women’s Health Centre, who is the Approved Provider for this service.

ECTARC provides support, training, information and advice to its services, employees and families.

A key objective of ECTARC is to work collaboratively with associated organisations to provide excellence in early childhood and training services.

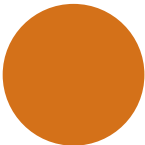


The Board

The Board comprises of parents from ECTARC’s early childhood services and Board Members nominated from the community, who have an interest/expertise in the provision and development of early childhood education and care and training.

Being a member of the Board provides parents and guardians with a unique opportunity to have a significant influence on the direction of the service their child attends and the organisation as a whole. Board members are elected annually.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Kirsty Shee | Board Chair Community |
| Lisa Miller | Committee Member Community |
| Leanne Griffiths | Committee Member Community |
| Jasmina Micevski | Committee Member Community |
| Rebecca Tuck | Committee Member Short Street |
| Mark Zanotti | Committee Member Keiraview |
| Ashley Payne | Committee Member Smith Street |





CEO and Chair Report

I am delighted to share with you our 2021/22 Annual Report. At ECTARC what's best for young children is the bottom line in everything we do. For 35 years we have provided high quality early childhood education and care and training for children, families, and students. Reflecting on the past 12 months, I realised just how much we have continued to achieve despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic including the refurbishment of the head office and training premises which were completed in November. The new environment is modern, spacious and designed to meet our needs, providing state of the art facilities for meetings and training purposes for both ECTARC and our community networks.

The onset of new variants of COVID-19 from July 2021 to January 2022 significantly impacted on attendance levels in services. Once again, we adapted our business as we navigated the emerging challenges and I am proud to say we continued to deliver high-quality early childhood education and care for 400 children per day and high-quality training programs to 1200+ students.

Navigating the trials and uncertainties of the last year, our incredible people rose to the challenge supporting our children, families, students and each other through lockdowns, floods, and staffing shortages due to illness. The pandemic has really highlighted the critical importance of the education and care sector and its workforce and our impact on the economy – we recognise the support packages provided by the government to assist us with reduced attendance during COVID-19 so we could remain viable for families that needed to

“

As a not-for-profit organisation, ECTARC reinvests its funds to strengthen and grow the organisation to better serve the needs of children, families, and students. While COVID-19 impacted on some of our strategic initiatives such as refurbishment and upgrades for some of our services, the quality of education and care provided to our children and students remained high. This year ECTARC supported families by investing \$268,000 to waive the cost of family gap fees when they were required to isolate.

”

work.

We have every reason to feel proud as early childhood and VET professionals, in trying circumstances we have continued working to support children and families and engaged in effective advocacy and professional development to support quality improvement. We were thrilled to be named a Finalist in the NSW State Training Awards in the Large Training Provider of the Year Category and have a



Trainer recognised at the Regional Training Awards along with several ECTARC students.

In recognition of the critical shortage of qualified educators across Australia, the government is currently offering fee free training for those wishing to enter or upskill in the sector. As a leading RTO, ECTARC Training Services offer high quality training and a pipeline to increase the number of educators with the appropriate skills and qualifications. To facilitate this, we work closely with government, peak organisations and employers to deliver innovative training solutions to meet their training needs - one of the many reasons we have been selected as 1 of only 32 Smart & Skilled High Performing Providers in NSW.

In 2023, we are expanding our training delivery with the introduction of two new Business qualifications that we are contextualising for the education and care sector. These qualifications are ideal for Service Directors, senior administrative assistants, or administration trainees.

Attracting and retaining quality, skilled staff continues to be a major challenge due to the current staffing shortage across the sector. In the next 12 months we will implement our new Workforce Development Plan to take charge of our situation locally and deliver clear strategies to ensure we have the knowledge, skills and capabilities we require in the future. This will be

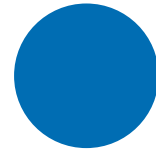
complemented by a new, planned marketing strategy to raise brand awareness across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions.

A continuing goal in our Strategic Plan is to invest in the innovation and performance of our people. We are an organisation that always aims to build capacity and we are committed to investing, supporting, and retaining our workforce. As well as recruiting new talent we take a 'grow your own' approach across all qualification levels to maintain and strengthen our workforce and address the current critical skills shortage in the sector. This includes career pathways across the organisation, developing internal capacity for leadership and increasing the knowledge and capacity of employees through professional learning and networking opportunities internally and externally.

The new strategic plan communicates our vision, goals, values and core business strategies to our teams and is strengthened by our business plan to maintain focus. This year all teams unpacked our core values to create shared meaning and develop behaviour statements that employees feel part of - strengthening their sense of belonging, investment and pride in the organisation.

A positive work culture starts at the top. Our leadership approach fosters teamwork and honest communication, our leaders are responsive and demonstrate a positive 'can do' approach across all aspects of their work. ECTARC leaders completed a 12 month Executive Leadership Program in June and results of how this has strengthened capability and capacity to support, inspire and motivate our teams is evident throughout this report.

Having a positive, mentally healthy workplace culture is something we take great pride in. This is reinforced by our annual People @ Work Survey, 86.5% of staff responded to the survey in November and proudly, 94% of scores across Job Demands and Job Resources were in the low range, validating how our performance compared to other workplaces, shows best practice when assessed against the Australian Worker Benchmark. This demonstrates our



“

At ECTARC we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people across the organisation and communities we work with. This year with input from our teams we developed the ECTARC Child Safe Organisation Commitment Statement which will guide our practice to ensure children's voices are heard and a child safe culture that is everyone's responsibility. ”

strategies to foster a positive mentally healthy workplace and positive work culture are succeeding – our employees are supported, engaged and motivated.

We continue to develop and refine strategies to improve our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The ECTARC Reflect, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in February and proudly launched in May. Having a RAP supports our vision of enriching futures together and enables us to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and children, to participate in early childhood education and training to achieve their best educational outcomes.

Following participation in the NSW Regulatory Authority Sector Development Program, ECTARC Occasional Care Services are poised to undertake Assessment & Rating against the

National Quality Standards for the first time – an opportunity to showcase their unique services and the important work they do.

New systems were introduced to improve efficiency and streamline workflow between educators, service directors, families and management and a review of the organisation's financial systems, policies and processes is underway.

We acknowledge and thank our amazing ECTARC families, thank you for the trust you have placed in us to care for your children in uncertain times and for your support and appreciation of our work.

Many thanks to our voluntary Board of Directors – you bring a wealth of experience, a breadth of knowledge and provide thoughtful guidance for the organisation.

We also thank the leadership team across the organisation for their exceptional knowledge and unwavering support, the role you play actively supporting, encouraging and guiding our teams in uncertain times is paramount.

Finally, ECTARC would not be anything without our talented staff, to each one of you an enormous thank you, you are the very core of ECTARC and the largest contributor to our success. The role you play in the lives of our children, families and students is invaluable. Thank you for your passion, your joy, and your energy. Once again, you have stepped up and pushed onward and kept the wellbeing of the children and students at the forefront of everything you do, demonstrating flexibility, willingness, and great commitment to your profession, it is an honour to work alongside you each day.

We look forward to the next 12 months, building on our achievements, strengthening our practice and driving our business forward to enrich futures together for children, families, students, our people and the communities we work in.

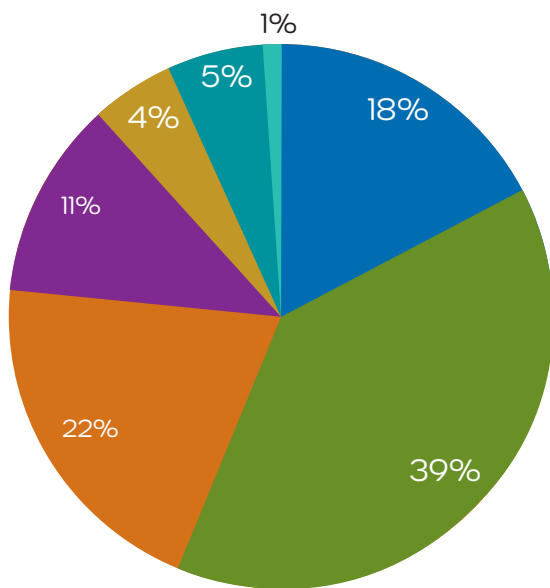
Our People

Our people tell us ECTARC is an employer of choice, this is confirmed by a low staff turnover - 52% of staff have been with us for 10 plus years. Respectful relationships underpinned by a mentoring culture, well-resourced workplaces focused on wellbeing and a commitment to building the capacity of our people, results in professional growth and personal enrichment.

“

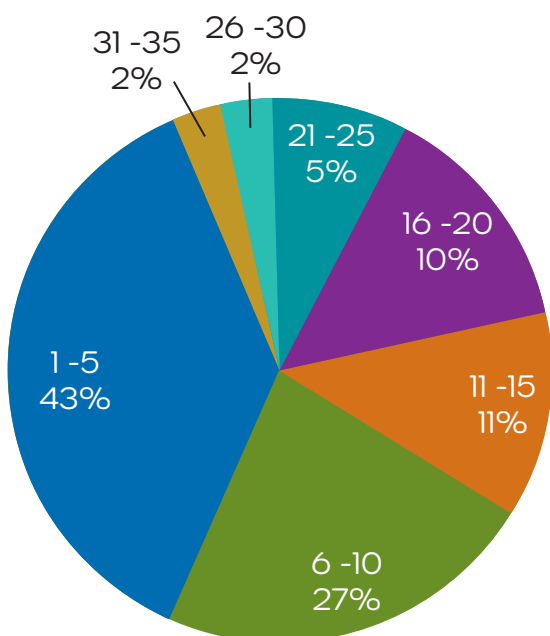
To our 238 ECTARC employees thank you for your passion, your joy and your energy. Once again, this year, you have stepped up and pushed onward and kept the wellbeing of the children and students at the forefront of everything you do.”

ECTARC Services Employee Qualifications



- Early Childhood Teacher
- Diploma Early Childhood Education & Care
- Certificate III Childhood Education & Care
- Early Childhood Trainee
- Cook
- Administration
- Projects

Years of Service



Years of Service

Retired

Genelle Todd
Deborah Unwin

35 years

Louise Whittaker

25 years

Sarah Mezedi
Clare Murray
Kylie Pettit
Leesa van Duin

20 years

Caterina Sacco
Melissa Ward
Karen West-Wilson
Sally Collier
Kathy Weston

15 years

Elizabeth Waite
Manori Indraratna

10 years

Shannon Hill
Amber Tierney
Caitlin Rout
Donna Guest



In Memoriam Kristina Lisica

A beautiful friend and colleague, always willing to share her knowledge with others.

Kristina started work at ECTARC in 1998, initially as a Diploma trained educator and then as the Director of ECTARC Short Street. Kristina was very passionate about Occasional Care and how important it was that there was a different service type available that provided flexibility to meet the care needs of all families. Kristina represented OCCA at peak meetings, proudly advocating for OC services across Australia.

Kristina led sustainability in the organisation. She had a real connection with the environment and wanted to share this with everyone. Kristina was our go to person on how to grow and look after plants, worm farms, native bees, bokashi bins and how to cook delicious food from the garden. This led to the service being published in the Burke's Backyard magazine and then host a visit from educators across Australia at the 2018 ECA Conference, held in NSW. Kristina was always right at home pottering with the children in the outdoor yard and community garden at Short Street.



Financial Performance 2021-2022

Results

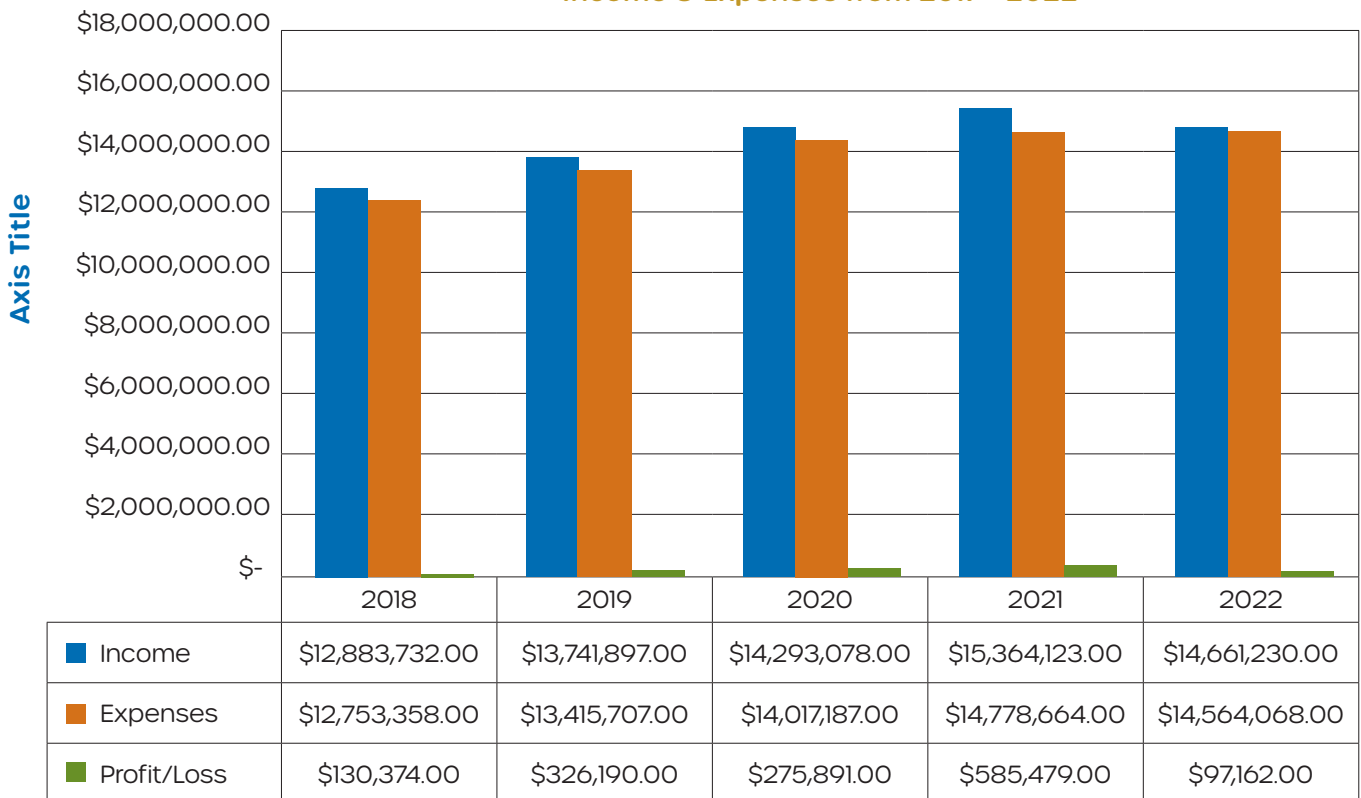
Illawarra Area Child Care Ltd T/A as ECTARC is a financially strong and secure organisation based on the following strengths:

- For the last three years annual growth is approximately 5.00%.
- All services are financially viable.
- Strong financial practices and systems.
- Responsive decision making based on sound financial information across all areas of work.
- Diverse revenue supports future development.

Strategies

- Budgets are developed that meet the needs of the service and support best outcomes for children, staff and the organisation.
- Financial reports are provided to management, services and the Board for monthly review.
- Each service is supported to meet optimum budget outcomes, including a surplus for future growth.
- Streamlined internal control systems and spreadsheets.
- Increased student direct debits for tuition fees.
- Reduction in unpaid invoices.
- Nearly 90% of parent fees are one week in advance.
- Implement a cloud-based payroll system with HR component.

Income & Expenses from 2017 - 2022

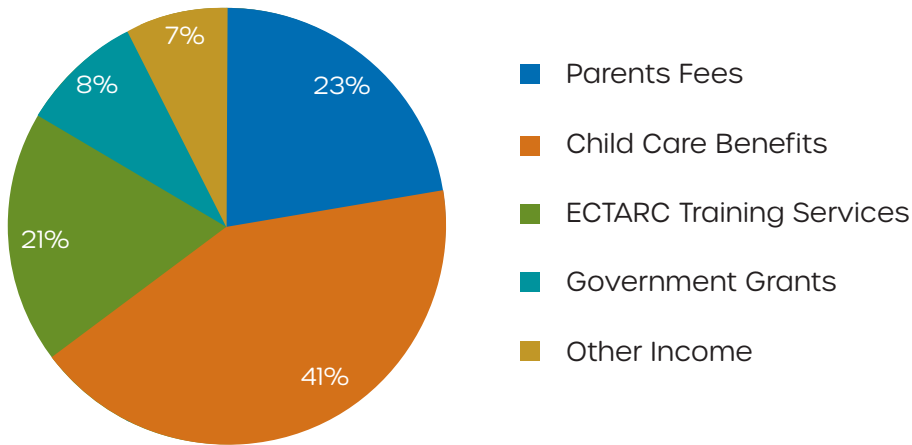


The above graph shows steady growth in income over the past five years and the profit for each year.

Finance Report

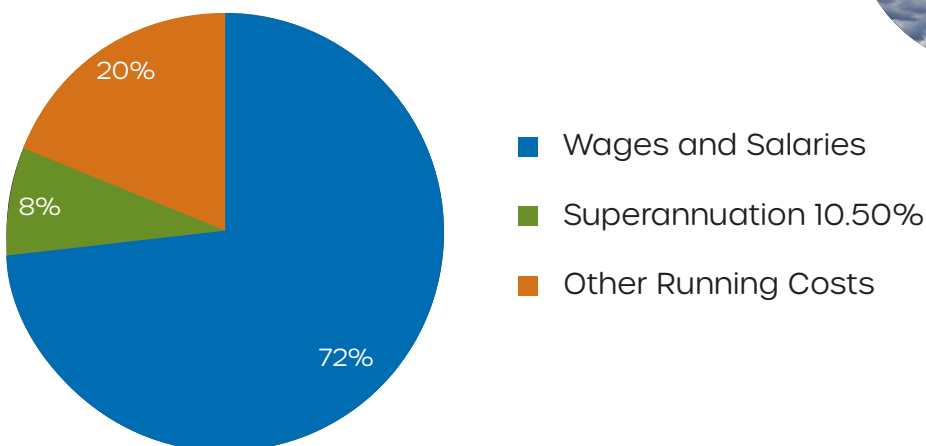
The growth of net assets is imperative to cover staff entitlements and support cash flow.

Income 2021 - 2022



The percentages above show combined parent fees, childcare benefits and government grants provide almost 72% of the total income. Approximately 99% of payments are made by electronic transfers such as direct debit, net banking, Eftpos or Bpay. The percentage of ECTARC activities is 21% and only 7% is income from other organisation activities including interest earned from term deposits.

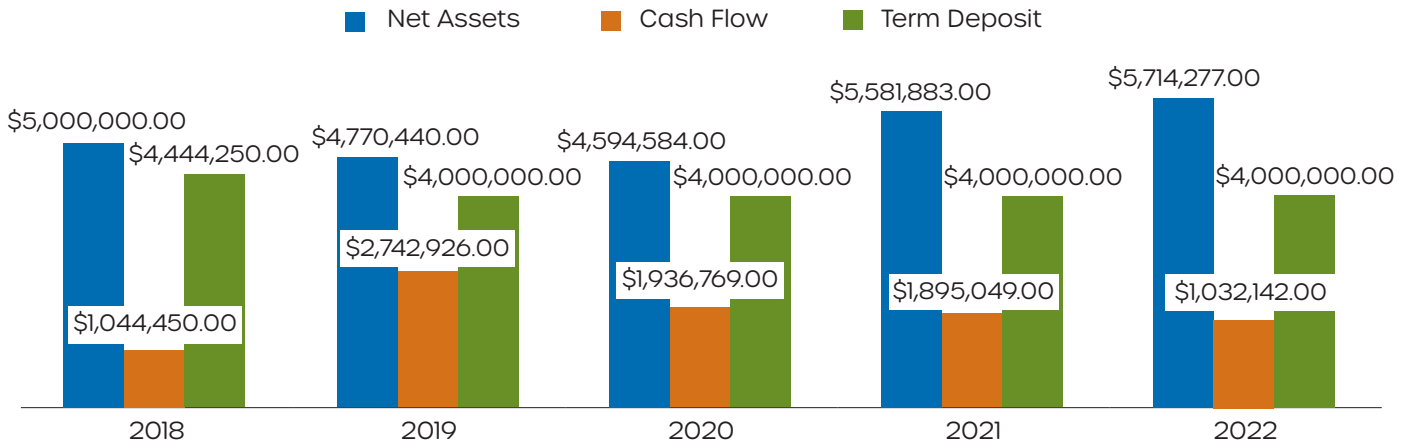
Expenses 2021 - 2022



The chart above shows the major expense for the organisation, 80% relates to staffing costs. As we work through the year the Board have approved to distribute the income as follows:

- Net assets - Other financial assets of \$4,000,000.00 in term deposits, were reinvested and are required for staff entitlements.
- The amount of \$395,000.00 was spent on equipment purchase and building and yard maintenance and \$840,000.00 for building refurbishment. The COVID-Family Gap Fee Waiver totalled \$268,000.00.

IACC LTD - Finances



Going Forward

The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standards and we are proud of the timely presentation of monthly financial statements to the Board of Directors, CEO and management.

The dedicated team in the Finance Department have established a strong team environment and provide staff training opportunities. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with parents, students, staff and our community partners.

Goals

- Build organisational capacity to maximise revenue growth
- Maintain efficiency of current cloud-based accounting systems
- Provide ongoing responsive and effective support to management and services
- Retain clients through customer service and relationship building
- Ensure financial sustainability within all ECTARC services

I would like to thank our auditors Shepherd Miller for their professionalism and ongoing support.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors, our CEO Jan Langtry and all the staff for their contribution which makes our organisation so successful.

Danco Stojkoski (FIPA)

19th October 2022



Highlights from 2021/22

ECTARC - Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia

ECTARC Smith Street's second Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Narragunnawali

ECTARC Directors Nicole Thompson and Tamara Gardiner presented at the 2021 Global Learning Festival

ECTARC Teachers Enterprise Agreement 2022-2025 approved by Fair Work

Families warmly welcomed back into ECTARC EC services in May 2022 when COVID restrictions eased

The Certificate III & Certificate IV in Business Administration added to Scope of Registration

ECTARC leaders completed a 12-month Executive Leadership Program



NSW Regional Training Awards Illawarra & Southeast

Tegan Nicholson

Winner School - Based Trainee of the Year

Michelle Hayley

Highly Commended VET Trainer of the Year

NSW Regional Training Award Finalists

- o Krystal Candy Riverina Training Awards Trainee of the Year
- o Lily Keen Western Sydney Training Awards Trainee of the Year
- o Jade Miller-Young Illawarra South East Region Trainee of the Year
- o Tegan Nicholson Illawarra South East Region School Based Trainee of the Year
- o Michelle Hayley Illawarra South East Region VET Trainer of the Year



ECTARC Training Services
Finalist Large Training Provider of the Year
NSW State Training Awards 2022

Our Values in Practice - Collaboration

“

Our relationships are respectful, positive and supportive, built on trust to promote open, honest communication. We work cooperatively with our teams and stakeholders, sharing professional knowledge and skills to build capacity and achieve our goals and vision.”

Strengthening practice through collaborating with others

We are an organisation that excels at collaboration both internally and externally. The ECTARC Bulletin profiles an employee weekly and shares other employee celebrations and achievements to foster connections across the organisation. Annual events foster a sense of belonging and working together such as the ECTARC steps challenge and raising funds for various charities.

Our system of network meetings brings together 'Champions' from all services to collaborate across every area of our work. This distributes information across the organisation, creates alignment, transparency and promotes communication and inquiry - fostering ideas, innovation, ownership and strengthens practice and business development. We are proud that our staff are so committed to sharing their knowledge, expertise and skills with each other - investing in their future and a positive work culture.

We partner with a broad range of community/government agencies to deliver programs for children, families, students and communities, which build capacity and enrich future outcomes - this promotes community engagement and fosters a sense of pride in the organisation and our achievements.



ECTARC Training Services have strong relationships with stakeholders to identify local and regional issues, we then work with relevant parties to design and deliver customised programs to address these issues. We work closely with Training Services NSW and the Department of Education to respond to needs in our sector. We designed and are delivering an Aboriginal Traineeship Program in partnership with Illawarra Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation and Training Services NSW which supports services across the Illawarra and Wingecarribee to engage and maintain ongoing employment of Aboriginal trainees. These initiatives contribute to the prosperity and capacity of communities in NSW.

ECTARC Training Services leading the Trainer and Assessor Network

ECTARC Training Services continue to facilitate the South Coast Trainer and Assessor Network. The network was recognised by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as an example of good practice and became a case study in a research project they were undertaking. We participated in a number of consultations throughout the year including the consultation process for both the Qualification and VET Quality Reforms and were also involved in the CS&H ITAB assessors network and the Children's Services Advisory Group.



Children’s love of literacy at ECTARC Keiraview

National Simultaneous Storytime is an event that is celebrated by services around Australia and we went all out to contribute to this event!

The lead up was intensive as we unpacked the themes of the chosen story “Give me some space”. The children participated in learning experiences that explored space, the planets, engineering and rocket ships. Our families were also keen to share their knowledge with us and Bright Spark, the Paint the Gong REAd mascot, visited the service to help us read the story on the day. We also shared our experiences with ECTARC Hospital Hill through a collaborative floorbook.



The event sparked so much learning, collaboration and engagement, the culmination of the event was a reading and dress up day.

It was a wonderful reflection on how books can bring communities together and are such an amazing source of inspiration and learning opportunities.

Enriching Language Together – An ECTARC Project

Funded by Communities for Children Shellharbour, we successfully supported educators from ECTARC Alunga, ECTARC Wallaroo, Warilla Education and Care, Illawarra Academy Warilla and Noogaleek Children’s Centre to implement an enriched language program for children birth-3 years.

The Enriching Language Together Project has developed educators’ skills and provided strategies to build knowledge, increase enriched interactions, focus on intentional teaching, become attuned to children and model language to positively impact learning and development in a play-based environment.

Through the project, services set up a lending library for families where books can be borrowed to read at home. Educators have tip sheets for families to take home which encourage conversational reading with their children, building the knowledge and understanding of families to support and improve their children’s language and communication skills at home.





Reconnection with families at ECTARC Wallaroo

After the devastation of COVID-19 and the easing of restrictions we have been able to reconnect with the families and the community. At ECTARC Wallaroo we have welcomed new and existing families back into the service. Our families have embraced being able to spend time with their children on arrival and participate in conversations with educators.



Families have shown their interest in participating in their children's learning and development by utilising the new digital programming app - Storypark. We have been receiving photos and information from families such as holidays, special events and have been able to connect the home and learning environment.

We re-opened the family library and the children have been busy decorating their own library bags and using these to borrow books to take home and share with the families. We have extended this interest to the outside community and have visited Shellharbour City library for Kidsfest and have planned regular outings for the children to borrow their own books from the library.



Respectful collaborations at ECTARC Short Street

We celebrate and share recognised national events that connect us all. Our celebrations are used to bring us together and to create a sense of belonging.

Among the dates celebrated through the year, a few stood out including, Plastic free July, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Book Week and Harmony Day. Diversity and partnerships are all around us, through our identity, our interactions, culture and beliefs just to name a few. Children begin to make sense of their world through significant occasions.

During Harmony day, families were invited to share their culture with us, we went on a trip around the world using food that involved recipes along with cooking and tasting activities. We had discussions about other countries and how other children live that are different to us. Giving the children to an opportunity to reflect on their identity and their beliefs, enhancing inclusion, learning and well-being.



These events allow children to develop and practice different abilities such as communication skills, participation, becoming a confident involved learner, fostering curiosity and providing opportunities for educators to connect with children assisting with their development. Through all of this, we are supporting children in their learning, whilst working with their families and our community to allow for children's questioning and discoveries about the world they live in.



Commitment to Reconciliation at ECTARC Hospital Hill

Our RAP team have been working collaboratively with Julie Street-Smith from the local AECG to develop our very first RAP. Julie offers consultation on authentic practices for educators to incorporate into the environment and program. The team identified the need for the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to be displayed outside at the front of the service. This demonstrates pride and respect for the culture, histories and contributions of Australia's first people.



Part of the Shoalhaven Heads



Community ECTARC Jerry Bailey

We have strong relationships with our community. Our children were excited to be involved with the planter box displays at the newly established pump track in the Shoalhaven Heads community garden. We painted our hands to make handprints on the planter box. Many families visit the track and the children are proud to see their contributions, bringing a great sense of belonging to where they live.



Our Values in Practice - Respect

“

We embrace a rich team culture of positive relationships where colleagues respect and value each other and those we work with. We celebrate diversity and value the contributions of all people to our work. We show kindness, empathy and demonstrate a positive attitude to support a safe and inclusive organisation.”

ECTARC's first Reconciliation Action Plan is launched

At ECTARC we are proud of the work we have undertaken and the progress we have made since the launch of our inaugural RAP in May 2022. Guided by the work of the RAP working group we have seen our teams across the organisation embrace the spirit of reconciliation. They are eager to learn and understand more about the histories and cultures of our First Nations People and to apply these learnings to their everyday work with young children, families and students to contribute to a reconciled Australia.



“

Awareness and support for our RAP is high across ECTARC. When surveyed 96% of the respondents indicated that they knew of the ECTARC RAP and had engaged with the RAP supported by their Manager, ECTARC RAP Working Group members and other ECTARC communications.

”

In a short space of time, we have progressed several key deliverables from the RAP as we had been fortunate enough to lay the groundwork in late 2021, including a review of our Acknowledgement. We have been challenged by the impacts of the pandemic, particularly in relation to strengthening our relationships within local Aboriginal communities. At times, it has not been easy to come together due to restrictions, illness, and workforce shortages.

Across ECTARC, employees and the Board have actively acknowledged and celebrated Aboriginal days of significance including National Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day and NAIDOC. We have pledged our support and actively participated in community events in both the Illawarra and Shoalhaven where we have provided children's activities for the community.

As we prepare to take the next steps in our Reconciliation journey, it is timely to reflect on what we have achieved in our inaugural Reflect RAP.

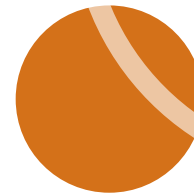
Key Achievements:

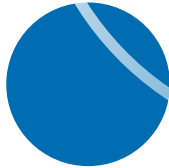
- We actively promoted Reconciliation across ECTARC with our employees', children and students
- Reconciliation was championed in the ECTARC staff bulletin by the RAP working group members
- Our education and care services have engaged with Narragunnawali, with all services working on the development of a RAP
- We collaborated with employees, families, Aboriginal Elders and community members to review the ECTARC Acknowledgment of Country
- We developed the ECTARC Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement guidelines, to strengthen our employees understanding of the importance and use of these cultural protocols
- ECTARC Training Services supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Grow Your Own Aboriginal Traineeship program and the Gumarra On Country Program
- We conducted a cultural learning survey to establish the learning needs of our staff to guide the development of a cultural learning program.



Reconciliation Action Working Group Members

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Jan Langtry | ECTARC Chief Executive Officer |
| Melissa Wicks | Early Childhood Manager Operations |
| Kathryn Barker | Early Childhood Manager Services |
| Leanne Griffiths | ECTARC Board |
| Tina McGhie | Curijo |
| Emily Collings | ECTARC Alunga |
| Deborah Unwin | ECTARC Clipper Road |
| Shannon McIvor | ECTARC Smith Street |
| Nicole Thompson | ECTARC Sanctuary Point |
| Donna Bartley | ECTARC Training Services NSW |
| Caterina Sacco | ECTARC Training Services NSW |
| Jenna Young | ECTARC Wallaroo |
| Jasmin Wilson | ECTARC Warilla |
| Kim Rooding | ECTARC Training services QLD |





Fostering Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Our focus is promoting a positive mentally healthy workplace. We check in on each other to ensure ECTARC is a place where people feel good about coming to work, feel safe, encouraged and supported. To support a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing our Wellbeing Coordinator implements the 'Heads Up' mental health strategies, facilitates the ECTARC Wellbeing Champions Network, provides related articles and links for the weekly ECTARC Bulletin and implements the annual People @ Work survey.

In our education and care services the role our staff play in our children's lives is so vital, and the dedication they bring every day to ensure every child feels nurtured and included is inspiring. In our training services our staff keep the student at the very heart of what we do and their support for them is paramount.



Embedding a Child Safe Culture

This year with input from our teams we developed the ECTARC Child Safe Organisation Commitment Statement. This will guide our practice to ensure children's voices are heard and acknowledge that a child safe culture is everyone's responsibility.

ECTARC Child Safe Organisation Commitment Statement

At ECTARC we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people across the organisation and communities we work with. We promote a child safe culture where keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility. We provide safe, child friendly environments where all children and young people are respected, heard and their rights and safety prioritised.

We are committed to implementing the Child Safe Standards and to making our organisation safer for children. We know that this requires strong leadership and sustained, collective effort and action across the organisation.



Caring for Country at ECTARC Jerry Bailey

At ECTARC Jerry Bailey we look for ways to show respect for the environment and are committed to role modeling and encouraging this with the children daily. We continued to implement our "Care for Country Team" and have conversations with the children about why it is important to care for our country. Each day, children have the opportunity to choose their role, using their initiative to focus on caring for the environment and showing respect for our land.



Our Care for Country team includes our "Nature Warrior", who is encouraged to care for the outdoor environment, watering plants, making sure there is no rubbish left outside and learning and being respectful to plants and any animals that may be present. We have had a friendly blue tongue lizard, that the children named 'Lizzy' and a possum who spends time in our possum box, named 'Sprinkles'.

Our "Recycling Ranger" monitors the use of the colour-coded buckets during mealtimes to ensure waste is being disposed of correctly and accordingly. This is a great way to introduce children to the importance of the recycling system. The children get very excited to wave to the bin trucks and watch them empty our bins when they drive past the service on Wednesday mornings.



Other roles include; "Energy Saver" assisting with turning off lights and appliances to preserve energy. "The Water Warrior" ensuring taps are turned off to avoid wasting water and "The Working Together Champion" encourages children to take on a leadership role of packing away, caring for the physical environment and taking ownership over the presentation of our service. Lastly is our "Sun Protector Champion" they ensure we are wearing hats and sunscreen to protect ourselves from the sun.



Stronger together at ECTARC Sanctuary Point

The 2022 storms had a devastating effect on our service. We have experienced many storms and flooding, but we can say this was the worst we have seen.

In rain jackets and gum boots our team came together filling sandbags and positioning them around the service. However, we could not hold back the water and our service was inundated with flood water. In the clean-up, we are like an interlocking puzzle. With towels under our arms, muscles to sweep the water out of the building, we jumped into action, working together to put the pieces of our service back in the right place and yes, it all come together in the end.



We were thankful to our families and community who offered a lot of support including encouraging phone calls and physical assistance.



Inclusion at ECTARC Smith Street

We have families and educators from many cultures and have an opportunity to learn and share these cultures with the children.

Monica our cook, enlightened the children with information about the Moon Festival that occurs in September. A tradition in Vietnam is to make lanterns and eat moon cakes. Families also brought in moon cakes for the children to share.

The children say hello to educators and friends in the different languages represented in the service including Mandarin, Norwegian, Estonian and Dharawal.

We celebrated NAIDOC week with pride. Focusing on "Healing Country", children and educators established an edible reconciliation garden in the preschool yard. The children discussed bush tucker and planted, dug and designed their new space. The children have agreed that this garden is their responsibility to maintain. The garden is in the shape of a snake and contains local bush tucker.

This project took a whole year to complete, the children added the final touches in 2022, with a decorative edge made with their handprints.



Embedding Aboriginal culture at ECTARC The Basin

Incorporating Aboriginal culture is part of our everyday program including sitting in a yarning circle, acknowledging our Aboriginal children and educators, saying an acknowledgement each day, learning about the Aboriginal flag, its colours and their meanings, using local Dhurga language such as our room names, Gari (snake), Bilima (turtle) and engaging in Aboriginal art, craft, stories and songs such as singing Heads, Shoulders Knees and toes in Dhurga.

Each year we have been adding to our knowledge of Aboriginal culture and building on our local Dhurga language.

We now use the words Mother (Minga), Father (Baaba) animals such as black cockatoo (Wayalad), bird (Budjaan), kangaroo (Buru), kookaburra (Guganyul), dog (Mirigaan) in our everyday language with children.





Our Values in Practice - Innovation



“

We have the courage to grow and make change - to be the difference. We are forward thinking, see potential and use a can-do approach to ensure our people and organisation continue to thrive and flourish.

”

Targeting workforce skills

development at ECTARC Training Services

In March 2022, ECTARC successfully ran a Pre-employment Program in partnership with Training Services, Big Fat Smile and Illawarra YES. The program had a completion rate of 90% and had successful employment outcomes for many of the students.

ECTARC applied to ASQA to have three new qualifications added to our scope this year that we will launch across 22/23. ECTARC is currently the only RTO to have the new accredited course, 10983NAT Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care on Scope and following consultation with the sector, two qualifications from the BSB Business Training Package are being tailored to meet the administration needs of the education and care workforce.

Inaugural Global Learning Festival November 2021

This online event was facilitated by a consortium comprised of Wollongong City Council (NSW), Wyndham City Council (VIC) and ECTARC. During the 2-hour program early childhood professionals including Teachers from ECTARC Sanctuary Point and ECTARC Hospital Hill presented their stories of hope and resilience to educators across Australia. The result was inspiring and the feedback so positive there will be another event held later in 2022.

Rising to the challenge at ECTARC Training Services

The development team has had an extremely busy year with the roll out of the new Training Package for CHC qualifications. An amazing collaborative effort saw the development team design assessment tools and learning resources for 28 early childhood units and 16 outside school hours care units to meet the requirements of the new training package. It is highly unusual for an RTO to develop their own learning and assessment materials, this massive achievement would not have been possible without the help and support of the whole ECTARC team. In true ECTARC fashion everyone shared their knowledge and skills to contribute to the discussion, validation, design and build of these resources to ensure our students continue to access the most current, relevant and valid tools for learning.



Keeping Connected at ECTARC Alunga



When faced with the challenge of keeping families, children and community connected through the pandemic, educators demonstrated their commitment to partnerships by using technology to share learning and help families feel included and valued.

We invited families to join us for our daily language experiences via Zoom, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing at home learning opportunities. Elena from Sing and Grow also joined us online supporting children's self-expression and self-regulation through music and movement.



Christmas was an important celebration this year – enjoying a traditional lunch, dress ups, music and craft opportunities to lift the spirits of the children, families and educators. Whilst we may not have been able to visit friends or loved ones during the holidays, photos from home of Christmas lights and trees from families fostered conversations of how we celebrate, and what can bring us together.



Flow Curriculum at ECTARC Clipper Road



This year we have been working towards bringing a flow between the Early Learning and Preschool environments outdoors. The Munjong children were showing a continued interest in joining their bigger peers in the Ipminger space, the children would shake the fence, call out and point.

We started opening the gate when the children were communicating their interest. The educators and teachers were building the children's agency by listening to their voices and providing opportunities for building their holistic development. The older children have been observed to regulate by engaging with the younger children and have been mindful of the younger ones in their space. By opening up the gate, all children have flourished, there is lots of conversations happening and children are feeling a sense of belonging by being with their family and close peers.



A Community Garden at ECTARC Hospital Hill



We were delighted to receive a Woolworths Junior Landcare Grant to establish our very own community garden. The garden will provide opportunities for children to learn about and engage in sustainable practices and healthy food choices.

We hope the community garden will provide families with fresh produce to take home and for educators to use in cooking experiences with the children.





Friends of ECTARC Keiraview

We look for ways to connect with our families and encourage learning and engagement with our children in innovative ways. The introduction of our friends Giggle, Screech and Cheeky into the service has opened opportunities to connect in deep and meaningful ways. The birds are part of our "Kids on Country" program which reflects our journey of connecting to Country and Reconciliation helping us reflect on ways we can honour and learn from Aboriginal practices and principles.

Our families are encouraged to spend time in our beautiful local environment and share their experiences with our Educators and their peers. The program is aimed at creating a deeper respect and relationship with our land and we hope that these experiences inspire children and families to explore these concepts. This program also reflects our philosophy that children are active and involved learners who can be advocates for caring for our land and sharing their knowledge with others.



Outdoor Education at ECTARC Smith Steet

Our focus has been reviewing our outdoor spaces to promote children's play and learning. This also contributed to supporting risk minimisation practices during COVID-19. Our outdoor space reflected the indoor environment including block and construction play, reading areas, puzzles, playdough and arts and crafts.



This was an opportunity to introduce loose parts play. Loose parts encourage creativity problem solving, cooperation, collaboration, sharing, turn taking, imagination and initiative. The educators support the children's decision making and guide them with responsible risk taking. The children have created pirate ships, cubby houses, shops, buses and any number of social spaces to play, sing, talk, yarn and have picnics. Many of the components of our loose parts area are sourced from reused and recycled items.



Gumarra On Country Program Training Services

In June 2022, ECTARC commenced participation in the Gumarra On Country Program. This program is designed for Illawarra students in years 9 – 12. ECTARC was invited as an industry expert to provide information to students about opportunities in training and employment in EC and OSHC. There will be 5 on country days over 2022. It has been wonderful to include students from the ECTARC Grow Your Own program in the experience.



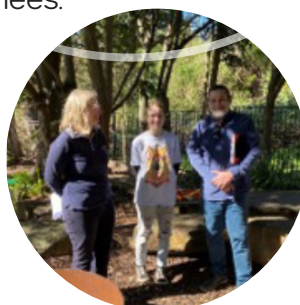
Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In early 2022 the Grow Your Own – Aboriginal Traineeship Program commenced. The program commenced with 8 trainees, 6 Certificate III level and 2 Diploma level in the Illawarra and Wingecarribee regions. The project supported by The Department of Education, IWAAC and ECTARC, seeks to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood educators.

Donna Bartley is the project facilitator for ECTARC and mentors the trainees throughout their studies. Through mentoring, we can see the trainees grow in confidence with their studies and practices within their services. An important part of the project is coming together and being part of their own community and sharing the journey of their studies and culture.



Our network meetings are reflective of Aboriginal culture and we have ensured the trainees are supported within their culture with Aboriginal mentors - Tina McGee from Curjio and Brendon Fitzgerald the Training & Employment Mentor - Barranggirra Illawarra South East and Western Region. Tina and Brendon join our meetings to share culture, building on their relationships with the trainees.





Supporting Trainees in ECTARC Services

The ECTARC workforce strategy includes a grow your own approach to increasing staffing requirements throughout our services. To address the sector wide workforce shortage, we have increased the numbers of trainees completing their Certificate III and Diploma qualifications in each service.

To support the successful completion of trainees within our services we have introduced a program led by an ECTARC Early Childhood Coordinator to nurture, coach and mentor trainees throughout their traineeship.

In collaboration with current trainees there was a review of recruitment and orientation processes to ensure a positive start to the trainees employment with ECTARC. This includes an introductory letter to all educators when a new trainee commences and provides tips on how to further support and welcome new trainees.

Support from ECTARC management is maintained via service visits and trainee network meetings which occur three times a year. At these meetings trainees come together to discuss and reflect on topics relevant to new educators commencing their career in Early Childhood Education. The ECTARC Trainee Connect e-newsletter goes out regularly to the trainees and follows the interests of the trainees or extends information discussed at network meetings such as ECTARC values, study advice, Child Safe Standards, relationships with children and the Circle of Security.

In the last 12 months we had a number of trainees successfully complete their Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and are now employed at ECTARC to complete their Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care.



Our Values in Practice - Excellence



“

We are recognised leaders, committed to an inspired and thriving professional workforce. We draw on our expertise, knowledge and commitment to exceptional education and best practice to enrich opportunities for lifelong learning.

”

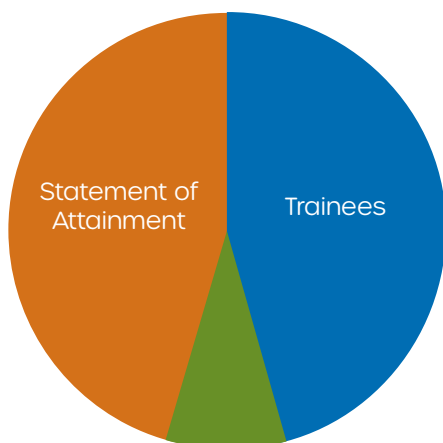


Excellence in training delivery at ECTARC Training Services

This year was a true reflection of the hard work and commitment that we see every day at ECTARC Training Services. Traineeship numbers continued to grow rapidly despite the current workforce issues. Re-registration with ASQA was due in November 2021 and we gained an additional 7 years registration until 2028 without an audit demonstrating the quality of our training systems and delivery. State funding contracts with NSW, ACT and QLD governments were all renewed without issue in the last 12 months. This year also saw the revision of the CHC Training Package, where three of our qualifications became superseded and one, the CHC40113 Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care was noted to be deleted in December 2022. Work on developing all of the required documents, information and resources became a major focus so that we could apply to have these new qualifications added to our Scope of Registration, including the development of a transition and teach out plan for all of our students. ECTARC commenced the roll out of the new qualifications in early 2022.

In May ECTARC was announced as a finalist in the NSW Training Awards Large Provider of the Year category. The NSW State Training Awards recognise excellence in the delivery of Vocational Education and Training.

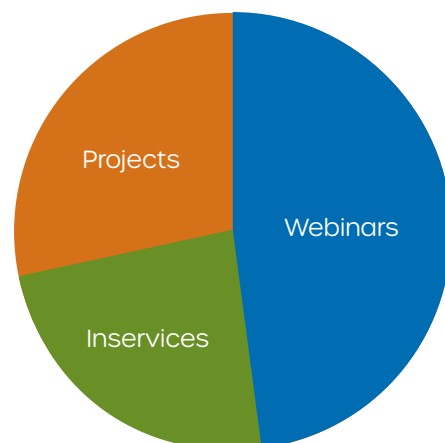
804 students completed a qualification with ECTARC



Distance Students

- Trainees
- Statement of Attainment
- Distant Students

150 training sessions presented to 1,452 participants



- Webinars
- Projects
- Inservices

Excellence in Training Development

ECTARC has a skilled development team who have created innovative and dynamic learning resources for our students to complement our assessment tools. These learning resources are designed specifically for our students with real life scenarios and meaningful practical tasks to reinforce knowledge and encourage in-depth reflection. The resources are engaging, relevant and reflect best practice in early education and care. We engage in external review of our assessment materials to ensure a high-quality compliant product for our students and employers and to strengthen our capability as high performing provider.

Currently we are enhancing the training experience for students through the instructional design of new online courses, this will include using industry specialists to provide case studies to discuss and unpack practice for students. In addition, we are currently developing new learning resources for the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management and the Certificate III and IV in Business which will be contextualised for the early childhood sector.

We have been successful in our application to NESAs to deliver accredited training for teachers in the topic of Reframing Challenging Behaviour to Support Children's Learning. We will continue to extend on this important recognition of teacher training through the submission of other training topics (webinar and face to face) that will help support teachers' professional development and accreditation in the education and care sector.

Highlights from the VET Student Outcomes Report

of Graduates at ECTARC

94% were employed or enrolled in further study after training

97.5% were satisfied with the overall quality of their training

93.1% would recommend their training provider

97% found the training relevant to their current job



ECTARC Educational Leaders Network

Our Educational Leaders are instrumental in leading the curriculum throughout our services. To support this role an Early Childhood Coordinator facilitates the quarterly Educational Leader Network Meetings and provides mentoring and resourcing. In 2022, in collaboration with the Educational Leaders we have begun to implement a focused program to engage and support them to develop their understanding of leadership and leading others. Themes include:

- Leading Yourself - Professional practice, understanding your role as a leader, communicating with influence, understanding self and courageous decision making
- Leading Professionals - Leading the way, developing and growing the team, mentoring & coaching, setting goals, professional collaboration, planning, organising, delegating and identifying strengths
- Leading Practice - critical reflection to inform continuous improvement, influence practice, create change and facilitate professional discussions.

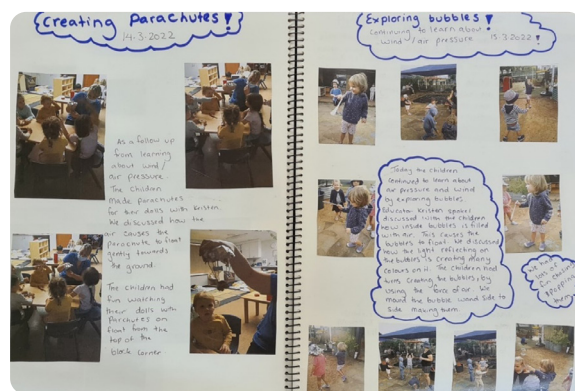


At Educational Leader meetings we will be:

- Devising an Educational Leader toolkit
- Reviewing the Educational Leader orientation process
- Focussing on Transition to School

We value play at ECTARC Alunga

Educators are passionate about the value of play to drive the early learning program. Our relationships with children allow us to gather rich information about their curiosities and interests and build upon their learning in ways that are unique to them. A big interest in the weather sparked lots of conversation about wind and rain and led to a frenzy of exciting science experiments with balloons, straws, hair dryers and bubbles over the months that followed. These learning experiences were documented in our floorbooks, communicating to children that we value their learning, their ideas and their voices.



Growing our professional knowledge at ECTARC Clipper Road



We continually strive to shine and seek opportunities to build our knowledge and skills. Director Chantell and Family and Community Practitioner Anabel, attended the ACF International Childhood Trauma Conference in Melbourne. The information and knowledge gained from listening to neuroscientists, physicians, physiologists, doctors and teachers was spectacular. Chantell and Anabel have been sharing their newfound knowledge with the team and it has provided the opportunity for growth. The team have relished the information provided and continue to embed a curriculum that is responsive to all children by building secure and trusting relationships.

Stories of Hope -

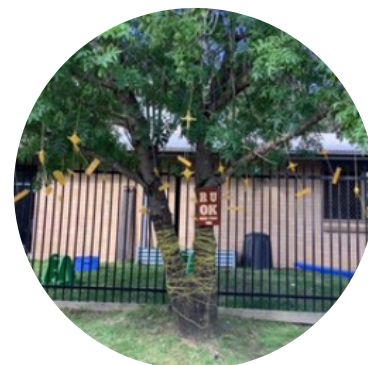
Global Learning Festival at ECTARC Sanctuary Point



We had the honour to be involved in the Global Learning Festival. We were very proud to talk about our RUOK Community Tree located just outside the service on the footpath that leads to the local shops.

The RUOK Community Tree is decorated by the children with cards, diamond mandalas and some questions about what makes them happy. Families were also encouraged to contribute to the tree.

It has been wonderful to see our community members from primary school age up to our valued older residents stopping and reading the things the children have said. The smiles on the children's faces have been priceless. We had a community member share a photo on our community facebook page and had many comments from families in person and via email saying it was such a thoughtful act and just what the community needed.



"I wanted to pass on my appreciation of the RUOK tree. I think finding a way to connect with the broader community like that is a great idea, and one which will hopefully brighten people's day"

Munch & Move program

encourages healthy eating at ECTARC The Basin



Our children bring their own lunch boxes to preschool each day and we have noticed that some of the children find eating fruit and vegetables challenging, so educators have been encouraging and teaching children about healthy eating through Budburra's story. Educators read the story every day as they know that repeating a story to children at this age builds their concentration, self-regulation skills and comprehension of the story. Each day as the children listen to the story, they eat their lunch and discuss who has the same fruits in their lunch box as in the story.

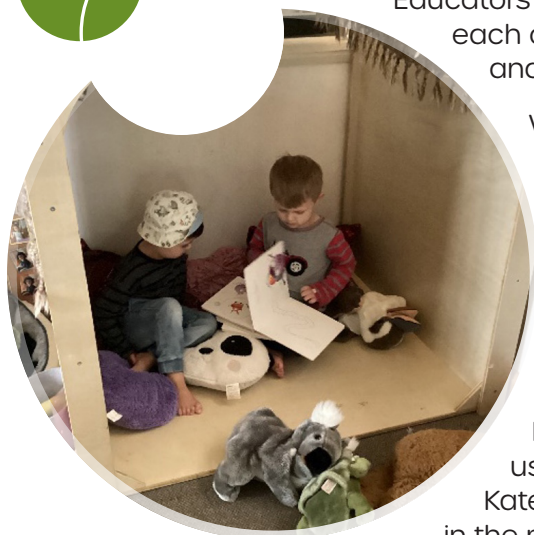
Educators have been encouraging children to try new foods, for example as the children learnt about the different fruits in Budburra's garden, they use that fruit in cooking. They used one of the fruits that belongs to the yellow group and made it into banana muffins! This stimulated the children's idea of different STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) concepts particularly Science and Maths.



The children have also been planting watermelon and avocado seeds in the vegetable garden and they made fruit salad and were encouraged to try a new fruit. Children and educators role model trying new foods in a social situation has inspired our children to try new foods that they wouldn't normally try and builds on their health.

Fostering children's positive social and emotional development

at ECTARC Short Street



Educators at ECTARC Short Street believe that respecting ourselves and each other is vital towards building a sense of Belonging, Being and Becoming.

We continued to reflect on attachment theory across team meetings during the year, with all educators reflecting on their role of 'being with' children and supporting children's social and emotional well-being. Educators agreed on a committed approach to engage in and model respectful relationships.

In the Preschool room, the inclusion of the "PALS" Program with children using puppet friends Jack, Kate and Anna, assisted in the modelling of respectful relationships as well as developing

greater understanding about the importance of caring for others and recognising emotions. Further discussions with children led towards shared outcomes as we worked together to find solutions to better deal with difficult feelings or challenging circumstances.

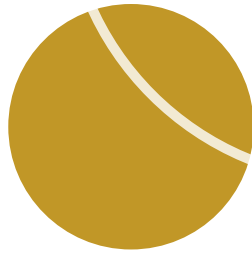


Embedding Circle of Security at ECTARC Warilla

Our philosophy and everyday interactions and practice is underpinned by attachment and the implementation of the Circle of Security. Educators have extended knowledge and skills about how the Circle of Security supports individual children and share this knowledge with families providing consistency between home and the service.

Sharing this information strengthens our ongoing collaboration with families, fostering trust and openness, enabling educators to have proactive conversations about children's learning, development and individual needs.





Our Values in Practice - Integrity



We have the courage to act with integrity. We behave ethically, honestly, and transparently. We are accountable for our actions and welcome feedback to drive continuous improvement and strengthen practice.



Introducing new systems to support continuous improvement

At ECTARC we drive continuous improvement. We have embraced technology and introduced several new online platforms across the organisation to strengthen our practice, promote accountability and streamline our work.

StoryPark was introduced in May 2022 as a replacement platform for services to document children's learning and share this information with families. We have seen an increase in parent feedback and engagement with educators about their child's learning and educators collaborating with each other via the platform. The IPlace compliance management portal was introduced for education and care services to support regulatory compliance including health & safety requirements and a new ECTARC Learning Portal was introduced May 2022. Hosted by GO1 the portal offers access to professional development and customised onboarding for all employees, enhancing their skills, knowledge and understanding to better equip them for their role at ECTARC.

Promoting ethical practice, honesty and accountability

Our leadership approach fosters teamwork and honest communication, our leaders are responsive and demonstrate a positive 'can do' approach across all aspects of their work. Leaders and aspiring leaders are engaged in programs to enhance skills that strengthen leadership and positive outcomes for all our employees. In June our leaders completed a 12-month Executive Leadership Program to enhance leadership capabilities across ECTARC. The *ECTARC Focus Conservation Program* is driven by the employee, this fosters empowerment over their direction and aspirations and provides a solid foundation for honest and transparent communication creating a positive workplace culture.





Positive Partnerships approach at ECTARC Warilla

The Positive Partnership Project is funded by Communities for Children Shellharbour and delivered in collaboration with Noah's Shoalhaven. Mentoring from the Family Practitioner, Occupational Therapist and Psychologist has supported educators to strengthen their confidence in conversations with families to advocate for the early intervention needs of each child and support families through the process.



ECTARC Training Services awarded NSW High Performing Provider

This year ECTARC was recognised by the NSW Department of Education as one of only 32 Smart and Skilled High Performing Providers. The High Performing Provider classification is granted to training organisations who scored in the top range in a recent performance-based assessment. Organisations had to demonstrate best practice that aligns to the NSW Quality Framework and maximises the student experience. This is fantastic recognition of the high quality training services provided by ECTARC to students and employers as well as compliance against the Smart and Skilled contractual guidelines.





EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION SERVICES & TRAINING

NSW Head Office

210 Shellharbour Road,
Port Kembla NSW 2502
t. 02 4223 1100
e. info@ectarc.com.au

QLD Office

10/3460 Pacific Highway,
Springwood QLD 4127
t. 07 3290 2966
e. QLDinfo@ectarc.com.au

Enriching futures together

Illawarra Area Child Care Ltd trading as ECTARC

www.ectarc.com.au