



ectarc

EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION SERVICES & TRAINING

ANNUAL
REPORT

2022-23

Enriching futures together

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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.



Our Vision

Enriching Futures Together

Our Values

We value:

- Collaboration
- Respect
- Innovation
- Excellence
- Integrity

CEO and Chair *Report*

This year saw the end of an era. We would like to acknowledge and thank Jan Langtry for her outstanding 34 years' contribution to ECTARC. Jan commenced her role as an Early Childhood Teacher/Centre Director and became the CEO of ECTARC. During her time, Jan has developed an inclusive staff culture; supporting and nurturing the growth of many staff. She also grew the organisation to 11 early childhood education and care (ECEC) services across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas as well as a national Registered Training Organisation. Jan's leadership, commitment and passion has seen ECTARC grow and support children and families across our communities. Her legacy will continue to inspire us as we move forward. We thank Jan for her exceptional service and leadership, and wish her the very best as she retires and spends time with her family.

We welcome Anita Kumar, our new CEO. Anita's career in early childhood education and care spans over 20 years, including being the former CEO of Early Start at the University of Wollongong. We also welcomed Gabriella Daymond and Kerryn Stephens to our Board.

The past year has seen a focus on the early childhood education and care sector with many good policy commitments across all levels of government to improve wellbeing,

and shift life trajectories of children especially children growing up in regional and remote communities. At ECTARC, we are keen and committed to working in partnership with government, service providers, other key stakeholders and regional communities to make sure that children in our communities benefit through these initiatives.

The highlight of the year was our Training Services winning the 2022 NSW Large Training Provider of the Year award. It is great recognition of the work undertaken by the team, training early childhood educators in many regional and remote locations. ECTARC was also a finalist in the Illawarra Business Awards - Excellence in workplace culture.

This year saw us successfully launch the Business qualifications in ECEC. Our work in this space continues to contribute to the ECEC workforce sustainability strategy and a regional employment strategy.

Our education and care services continue to be well utilised and we continue to have long waitlists. This year saw us sell our property in Crown Street where we operated our Hospital Hill service. The extensive development in the area meant it was no longer feasible to operate a high-quality service. A special thanks to the Hospital Hill staff for their commitment, care and resilience in

Celebrating the past,
embracing change and
forging a future together
takes courage,
compassion, and
conviction.

supporting children, families and each other during this challenging period. Thanks also to the ECEC leadership team who provided support to all staff. We are committed to reinvesting the funds and will be working with government departments, councils and key stakeholders.

We thank our families, friends, key stakeholders, partners and funders who helped ensure that we deliver our vision. Thanks to Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven council for their support in delivering services in those communities. A special thanks to our Board who volunteered their time in helping shape the organisation. Last but not least, thanks to our incredible staff, who are committed, hardworking, passionate, and make a positive impact in the communities we serve.

Farewell and thankyou

Jan Langtry

Outgoing CEO

After 34 years of unwavering service, Jan Langtry made the decision to step away from leading ECTARC and move into retirement in April 2023, to spend time with family and friends and embark on global travel adventures.

Jan joined the organisation as a Centre Director in 1990 to open and lead ECTARC Alunga, and then took the position as Manager in 1992 for the then 4 ECTARC services. Today we have 11 high quality early childhood services spanning the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions, complemented by a nationally recognised and award-winning Registered Training Organisation, positioning ECTARC as a unique leading provider across the early education and care and training sectors.

It was Jan's vision and belief in our potential that pushed us to achieve more than we ever thought possible. As much as we joke about it, Jan's 'can do approach' mantra is the spirit we adopt to tackle any challenge. Jan's legacy is woven into the fabric of ECTARC, and her impact will continue to shape our future endeavours.

Jan freely shared her time, knowledge and expertise to many boards, committees and organisations, to be a strong advocate for the early childhood education and care, and training sectors. Jan was well known and respected in the early childhood community for her kindness, passion, dedication and well-rounded views to achieve best outcomes.

We take this opportunity to sincerely thank Jan for her strong leadership, commitment and organisational vision. There is no doubt that investment in culture, reputation and people have always been Jan's priority to ensure that young children, families, students and communities remain at the heart of our service delivery; nurturing potential for enriched futures.

Jan will be missed by the entire team but we send our warmest wishes for the exciting adventures that lie ahead for her.



Our work in numbers

Services

- 703 children attended early childhood education and care services
- 12.4% children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- 207 children's fees were reduced through the NSW Start Strong program
- 30 ECEC staff were supported to complete their qualifications



Training

- 1160 students commenced a formal qualification
- 9.4% trainees identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- 485 students completed an ECTARC qualification
- 94% completed students are employed and/or pursuing further education
- 91% students recommend ECTARC training services
- 88.5% our trainees were from employers that previously had a trainee with us



Workforce Capacity Building

- 1648 individuals undertook ECTARC professional learning programs across Australia

Our Community

- 8.8% staff turnover
- 53% staff have been employed for more than 5 years
- 88% staff have a formal qualification and 12% are in the process of completing their qualification

Staff wellbeing

In 2022, the organisation launched its Mental Health and Wellbeing Commitment Statement, in recognition that staff are our most valuable asset. We understand that staff wellbeing not only impacts individuals, but also the organisation, teams, children, families and students they work with. Our work in this space will be guided by this statement:

ECTARC's Mental Health and Wellbeing Commitment Statement

At ECTARC, we are committed to providing a mentally healthy workplace.

We do this by implementing actions that promote, protect and support all employees to achieve their best possible mental health and wellbeing.

We are committed to creating a positive work culture where everyone feels supported and valued.

The People@Work Survey was conducted in November 2022 (93.72% response rate) to identify, assess and manage risks to the psychological health of workers and volunteers within a workplace. The People@Work survey is a validated and evidence-based psychosocial risk assessment tool. No



areas of concern were highlighted. Emotional demand, which is work that impacts emotional wellbeing (e.g. working with children with trauma), was in the moderate range and will continue to be a priority area in our action plan. We will continue to implement strategies to support employees' emotional demand through initiatives such as training, debriefing, rostering and Wellbeing Champion meetings.

An inclusion and diversity survey was also conducted in June 2023. The purpose of the survey was to assist in developing one of ECTARC's values - embracing diversity - and to assist us to understand our current diversity profile and what we can do to be more inclusive. Work identified in this survey will be a focus in early 2024.

Mental health and wellbeing awareness days have been promoted within the

organisation, such as R U Ok? Day. We held four Wellbeing Champions meetings during the year, with topics covered including stress, burnout, mindset, praise and recognition. We welcomed a guest speaker from BeYou and organisational self care training from psychologist Rachel Bridge.

It was great recognition of ECTARC's commitment to wellbeing when we were showcased in the Department of Education, Early Childhood Directorate Quality and Compliance's Newsletter July 2023 edition's article 'Creating a mentally healthy workplace at ECTARC'.

The Employment Assistance Program (EAP) launched a Wellbeing Platform that is available to all ECTARC employees. The EAP now includes a digital Wellbeing Platform that is designed to help employees embrace wellbeing and improve their overall health.

Reconciliation

Since the launch of our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in May 2022, ECTARC has been on a remarkable journey toward fostering reconciliation and cultural awareness across our organisation. Guided by the passionate efforts of our RAP working group, our teams across the organisation have embraced the spirit of reconciliation. They have shown a genuine eagerness to learn more about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, aiming to apply these learnings to their daily work with young children, families and students, thereby contributing to a reconciled Australia.

At ECTARC, we actively recognise and celebrate important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events, including National Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day and NAIDOC week. We wholeheartedly support and participate in community events in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. In 2023, we had the privilege of auspicising the Wollongong Reconciliation Conference, highlighting our commitment to community-led initiatives to advance reconciliation.

As we embark on the next phase of our reconciliation journey, it's crucial to reflect on the achievements from our 2021-2022

Reflect RAP, which include actively promoting Reconciliation across ECTARC with our employees, children and students. The RAP working group members championed reconciliation in the ECTARC staff bulletin. Additionally, our education and care services have wholeheartedly engaged with Narragunnawali, five of which now have a Reconciliation Action Plan, with the other services under development. We collaborated with Aboriginal Elders, employees' families and community members to review the ECTARC Acknowledgment of Country. We've also developed ECTARC Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment guidelines to enhance employees' understanding of cultural protocols. ECTARC Training Services supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through initiatives like the Grow Your Own Aboriginal Traineeship program and the Gumaraa on Country Program.

During our initial RAP implementation, we encountered various challenges. These included clarifying responsibilities, staffing shortages and supporting community events on important cultural days. The COVID-19 pandemic and unfavourable weather conditions also posed obstacles in building stronger connections with local Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

This year we developed our Innovate RAP to commence November 2023. During the period between our Reflect RAP and the formulation of this Innovate RAP, ECTARC has consistently advanced on its reconciliation journey. We initiated a cultural learning program for our staff and commenced an audit of our inclusion and diversity policies and practices. Now, as we move forward with our Innovate RAP over the next two years, we recognise the solid foundations we have laid with our first RAP. Building upon these foundations, we are committed to prioritising our connection to the community, ongoing education for staff, children and students, and increased employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In this next phase of our reconciliation journey, we acknowledge that actions speak louder than words. Our commitment to reconciliation across ECTARC involves nurturing relationships and diligently working toward our goals. Together, we will continue to forge a path towards a more inclusive, culturally aware and reconciled Australia.



Education and Care *services*

A workforce shortage continues to be a challenge for our services and has required innovative solutions to ensure our quality programs for children are maintained. We expanded the 'Grow Your Own' workforce approach by increasing positions for new trainees to join our teams and complete the CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. We also provided opportunities for other staff to further their professional experience and learning by offering Diploma traineeships. An EC Coordinator provided additional support to our trainees through additional service visits and establishing a collaborative network through meetings and newsletters.

Our Leadership Program phase 2 was implemented with new Directors, Educational Leaders and up and coming leaders attending the 12-month 'Leading with Impact' program. This strengthened our capability to support, inspire, grow and motivate our teams.

The introduction of the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 was an opportunity for our Educational Leaders to come together, unpack the document, and critically reflect on our current curriculum for children. A resource is being developed to introduce V2.0 to their teams in 2024.

Our services continued their cultural journey and engaged with Narragunnawali, which facilitated Smith Street, Hospital Hill, Short Street and Wallaroo having their Reconciliation Action Plans endorsed and published. Funding provided from the NSW Department of Education supported the work with Noah's Inclusion Services to support Clipper Road, Sanctuary Point and The Basin in their work towards reconciliation.

ECTARC Keiraview proudly participated in Wollongong City Council's Nandhi (Look) and Ngara (Listen) project. It was a great opportunity to learn from Aboriginal Elders and the community about Country, and then design Aboriginal inspired flags that were then hung in Wollongong mall. Our partnership with Gumaraa continues to strengthen as they implement their Language, Art and Dance program at Alunga, Clipper Road, Wallaroo and Warilla. This engagement supports the understanding and use of Dharawal language and culture with children, families and educators.

Staff across our organisation attended the Illawarra-South Coast Reconciliation Conference, building knowledge and connection with local Aboriginal Elders and Community. Our Grow You Own Trainee Jasmin Wilson, a young Aboriginal woman, shared her journey on the Practitioner Panel. Jasmin's powerful presentation delivered



personal reflections, her need for courage, and inspiring opportunities for us all to consider in the future.

We engaged child psychologist, Rachel Bridge, to develop and deliver 'Supporting Children's Complexity in a Care Setting' to all our educators. The training expanded our knowledge of the Circle of Security (CoS) and explored the complex needs a child may face and how this impacts their development and mental health. The team learned effective strategies to support children's emotional development.

As occasional care services are now recognised in NSW under the National Quality Framework, Hospital Hill, Short Street and Warilla participated in their first Assessment and Rating visits against the NQS with amazing results. Clipper Road also received positive results from their Assessment and Rating visit. Congratulations to each team.

Funded *projects*

Communities for Children

The Department of Social Services through Communities for Children in Shellharbour funded two projects - Language Connections and Inclusive Engagement programs.

The Inclusive Engagements program brings together early childhood educators and early intervention professionals to support children and their families dealing with vulnerabilities or have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities and/or experiencing trauma. The project was delivered at the Warilla Education and Care Service. The team worked closely with the child and family practitioner who promotes the implementation of the Circle of Security program in the service and for families to use at home. We engaged Noah's Inclusion Service's occupational therapist and psychologist to mentor our staff to implement the 'Developmental, Individual differences, Relationships base model' (DIR) and promote the social/emotional development of children and sensory integration. Staff participated in additional training in trauma informed practice, sensory processing and emotional regulation. The project supported 60 clients - this included 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children,



8 children with a disability are undergoing assessment, and 4 children from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background.

The Language Connections program delivers the Abecedarian Approach Australia - 3a, an evidence-based program to upskill and mentor educational leaders and educators to enhance children's language development from birth to 3 years, which supports success with transitioning to school. The project has built a community of educators that are passionate about children's language and see the value in sharing their knowledge with families within their own community. This is

achieved through 3a Learning Games and encouraging families to borrow books and practice conversational reading. ECTARC Alunga and Tongarra Road Preschool and Early Learning service have a community street library at their services now, which are supported by Shellharbour Library. The support from the library includes book donations and has 'Bangu' the mascot for 'Paint the Town REaD' to encourage children to read. Over the course of the year 9 services, 41 educators and 125 children from birth to 3 years have engaged from the Shellharbour Local Government Area.

Training services

ECTARC Training Services significantly broadened its Scope of Registration during the reporting period. In July 2022, we introduced two new Business qualifications, expanding our course offerings. We achieved a milestone by becoming the first RTO in Australia to gain approval to offer the 10983NAT Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care, with Queensland becoming the first state to recognise this qualification as a traineeship. This was followed by the addition of the CHC50221 Diploma of School Age Education and Care in December 2022. Responding to the needs of our sector, we successfully added the CHCPR025 Identify and report children and young people unit of competency to scope to offer this as a standalone unit in March 2023.

In June 2023, the NSW Department of Education approved ECTARC Training Services to become an EVET provider. This allows us to deliver the CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care to HSC students across NSW.

The Deadly Connections Program in Bourke has gone from strength to strength with eight students commencing the program, and it has now expanded to 18 students. Two ECTARC trainers visit Bourke for five days in the school holidays to provide intensive face-to-face training and assessment. We are looking to continue and expand the program in 2024.

Workforce Development Projects

The Grow Your Own (GYO) project is a pilot program designed to support Aboriginal trainees to complete an education and care qualification with the support of a mentor, a \$3000 scholarship to buy IT/study equipment computers, and guaranteed employment for 18 months with their employer. The program is funded by the NSW Department of Education and began in 2022, and six out of the initial eight students are still actively participating. GYO students and over 60 educators from the participating services have undertaken Curijo's Cultural Learning training. Participants gave positive feedback as they learnt skills to be more culturally responsive and it provided a great networking opportunity to support each other.

ECTARC collaborated with Training Services Illawarra's Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) on their early childhood program, which entailed engaging with high school students from the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions who expressed an interest in pursuing careers in education and care. The initiative featured an industry engagement day, during which students received insights into careers and educational paths in the education and care sector. They actively took part in various activities and had the chance to engage in small group discussions with key professionals from the industry. These students are then considered for School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) with employers

across the region to undertake targeted work experience placements.

ECTARC participated in the Women in Careers days at Lake Illawarra High School, St Josephs High School and St Marys College. This was an opportunity for us to talk to students about working and studying in early childhood education and care.

ECTARC also participated in four Gumarra on Country Cultural Days over the past financial year. These days are held for Aboriginal high school students from across the Illawarra region to participate in cultural experiences and to also hear about jobs and study from various industry experts.

Webinars, Workshops & Resource Development

Four NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) accredited professional development (PD) webinars were approved this financial year, making a total of seven available. NESA PD training sessions (via face-to-face and webinar training) provide professional learning hours for NSW teachers maintaining teacher accreditation at the proficient level.

ECTARC also brought engaging face-to-face PD training to rural/regional areas, including Dubbo, Broken Hill, Canberra and the Illawarra region throughout the year. Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) contracted ECTARC to provide face-to-face PD training on healthy eating and physical activity, and these sessions ran for educators in Dubbo and Broken Hill.

This year the roll out of the new revised units, designed in an impressive interactive SCORM format from the CHC training package, commenced on Canvas. These assessment tools continue to be reviewed and validated based on internal and external feedback, with a strong emphasis on student needs to ensure student progression and the provision of high quality and compliant resources.

All funding contracts were renewed for NSW, QLD and ACT.



Staff recognition

Years of service

20
years

Cindy Duggan
Kelly Hobbs-Middleton
Tamara Gardiner

15
years

Amanda Mayberry
Emma Barrow
Jenna Young

Leanne Arthur-Worsop
Marta Golebiewski

10
years

Jessica Sims
Jodie Rusten
Kim Barnett

Melissa Miller
Rhiannon Irwin

Retirements
2022 - 2023

- Margaret Davies, Cook at ECTARC Sanctuary Point
- Kylie Pettit, Educator at ECTARC Short Street
- Marion Milnes, Educator at ECTARC Sanctuary Point
- Jan Langtry, CEO of ECTARC



Highlights

ECTARC Training Services

WINNER

NSW Large Training Provider of the Year

2022 NSW Training Awards



NSW
GOVERNMENT
NSW Training Awards 2022

LARGE TRAINING PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

ECTARC

2023 NSW Training Awards

Amy Motley

State Finalist & Western NSW Regional winner
NSW Trainee of the Year

Ciara Smith

State finalist & North Coast Region Winner
NSW Trainee of the Year

Tahliah Duck

State finalist & Illawarra South East Regional Winner
NSW Trainee of the Year

Georgia Boland

Finalist & Western NSW Regional Winner
NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year

Bella Leatham

Western NSW Regional Finalist
NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year

Yuki Adachi

Western NSW Regional Finalist
NSW Trainee of the Year

new Courses

Added to the
Scope of Registration

- 10983NAT Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care
- CHC50221 Diploma of School Age Education and Care
- Statement of Attainment in CHCPRT025 Identify and report children and young people at risk



ECTARC Hospital Hill

First Assessment and Rating visit, receiving a rating of Exceeding the NQS

ECTARC Short Street

First Assessment and Rating visit, receiving a rating of Exceeding the NQS



ECTARC Warilla

First Assessment and Rating visit, receiving a rating of Meeting the NQS

ECTARC Clipper Road

Rated as Meeting the NQS

ECTARC Hospital Hill, Short Street and Wallaroo

Reconciliation Action Plans were endorsed by Narragunnawali

Research Projects

We participated in three projects with the University of Wollongong:

- Early Years Toolbox Early Language, Literacy and Communication (EYT-ELLC) assessment
- Exploring the role and practice of Educational Leaders (EL)
- Strengthening educator-family connections through digital platform communication in Australian early childhood education settings

2023 Rural & Remote Forum

Cynthia Cuoco presented a communication and wellbeing workshop for conference delegates.



ECTARC Blazing Paddles team

Participated in the Shellharbour Dragon Boat Challenge.



Grow Your Own student Jasmin Wilson, from ECTARC Keiraview, presented at the 2023 Illawarra Reconciliation Conference. Jasmin shared her cultural journey and how important the program has been to her success.



- Introduction of a **50% discount** off the gap fee for our staff who have children attending an ECTARC ECEC Service.

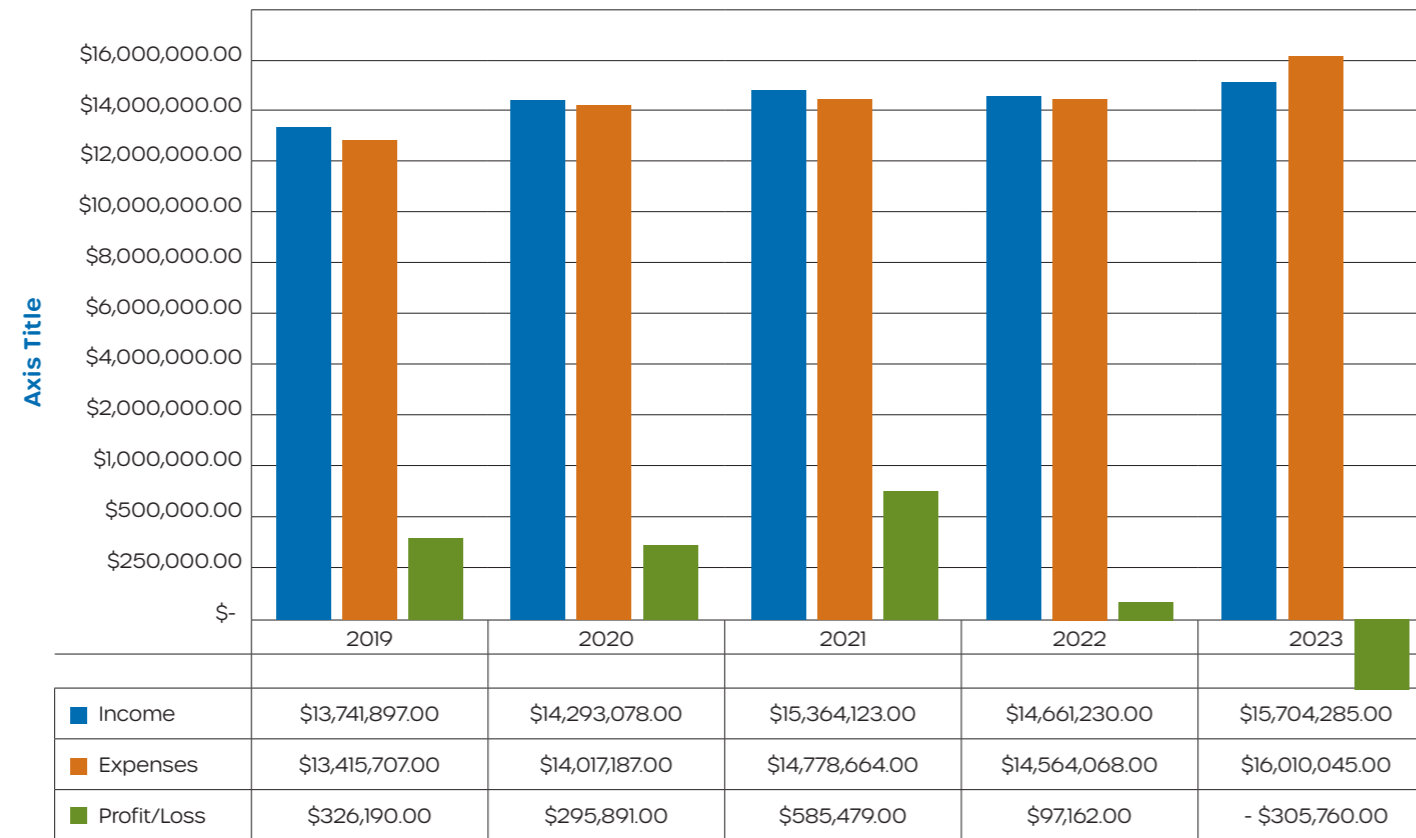
Financial report

We have had another successful year at ECTARC delivering our vision while being financially sustainable. Over the past 3 years, our annual growth has continued to be around 7%.

We operate 11 early childhood education and care services, including the service in Warilla which we manage on behalf of Illawarra Women's Health Centre. All our services are well utilised, averaging over 90% utilisation across the year. Our Training Services, which operates nationally, continues to grow both in depth and reach.

This financial year we have had a loss, which is mainly associated with the capital purchase and refurbishment of our head office in Port Kembla. We retain a healthy financial position and our aim is to reinvest in growing our existing and new services to address the needs and gaps in the community.

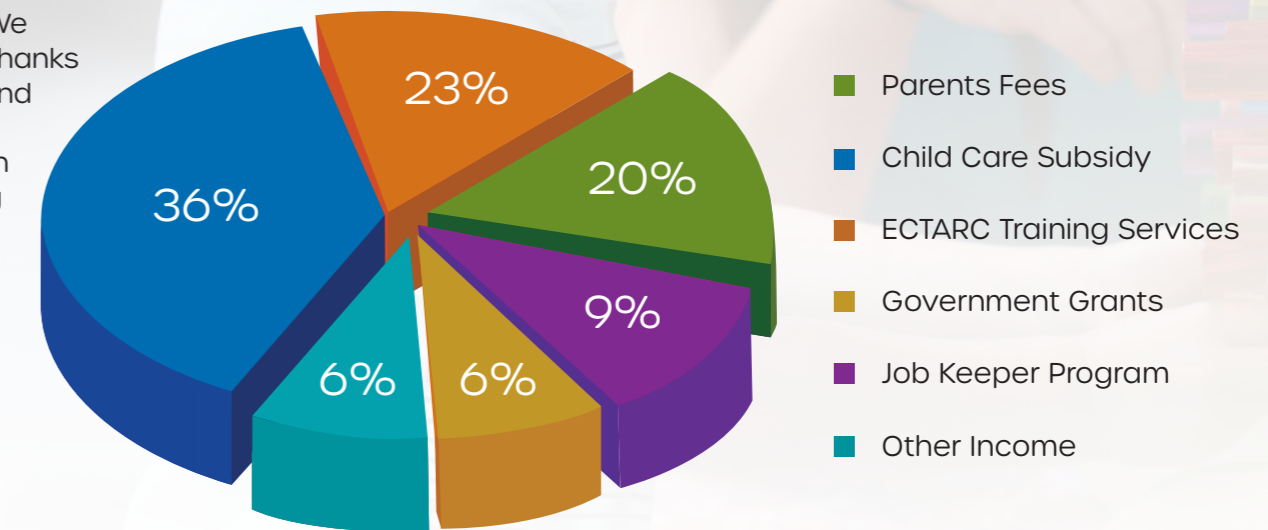
Income & Expenses from 2019 - 2023



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

The challenges of the pandemic continue to impact our services, both financially and through staff shortages. The Board is committed to supporting our families by extending the Commonwealth initiative to waive the gap fee for families impacted by COVID or changes to our operation (i.e. reduced hours of operation) due to staff illness from COVID. Utilisation across our services was also impacted by changing family work patterns and the continuation of fee-free preschool.

We would like to thank the various government departments, including NSW Department of Education, ACT Government – Economic Development, QLD Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training and Department of Education (Commonwealth). We would also like to extend our thanks to Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven councils for their support in providing us with an environment to support young children and families in their communities. We also thank Barnardos Australia, Curijo, Bourke and Districts Children Services and other sector partners who work collaboratively with us.



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 - since 2019

Kirsty has over 25 years of experience in human resources management and organisational learning and development. Her extensive corporate background spans the banking, financial services and IT services industries. Kirsty holds qualifications in business and human resources management and is recognised for her no nonsense leadership style. She specialises in human resources strategy, organisational design, change management, talent management, leadership development, organisational culture, values and process improvement.



Ashley Payne

Board Director - since 2021

Ashley Payne is a qualified Lawyer with almost 15 years' experience in government and non-government roles. Ashley has primarily focused her career in personal injury law and government sector work. Ashley has two children, one of whom continues to attend ECTARC services.



Gabriella Daymond

Board Director - since 2022

Gabby has over a decade experience assisting employers with complex HR and employment law, as well as commercial business matters across different industries Australia-wide and Canada-wide. With her two boys attending Short Street, Gabby has been serving as a parent Board Member for the last year.



Kerryn Stephens

Board Director - since 2023

With many years' experience in the government and not-for-profit sectors, including registered training providers, Kerryn currently works in change management where she applies her skills in marketing, communications and stakeholder engagement.



Leanne Griffiths

Board Director - since 2015

Leanne is an Executive Leader, with three decades of skill-building and experience. From leadership positions in business and technology to customer-facing and operational roles. Leanne has worked across a myriad of industries and collaborated with both Government and Corporate Clients. Leanne has been with ECTARC since 1994 as a parent & board member.



Lisa Miller

Board Director - since 2008

Lisa has two sons who attended ECTARC Smith Street, one is now at UOW and the other completing his HSC. Lisa began work as a marine ecologist working for NSW Fisheries, Marine Pollution Research and Sydney Water, and as an Oceanographer for the Department of Defence. She came out of the water as Environment Manager for Wollongong Council and later University of Wollongong. More recently she has worked in sustainability and renewable energy, working in the NSW Government as well as a local not-for-profit environmental organisation.



Rebecca Tuck

Board Director - since 2020

Rebecca joined the board in 2020 as a dedicated parent representative before transitioning to a community member. Her involvement started as a parent with twins at Short Street. With over two decades of experience in Office Management and Administration, Rebecca brings valuable organisational expertise to the board. She is also a small business owner in partnership with her husband.

Leadership *team*



Anita Kumar

Chief Executive Officer

Anita is a social entrepreneur and a passionate advocate for the rights of children and families, especially those dealing with complex life issues or living in vulnerable circumstances. She has a strong track record of forging impactful strategic partnerships across government, corporate, philanthropic, agency and sector organisations as a means of building a sustainable social enterprise. Anita was previously the CEO of Early Start at the University of Wollongong. She also sits on a number of Boards, committees, reference and task force groups.



Danco Stojkoski

Finance Manager

Danco Stojkoski is ECTARC's Finance Manager and started with the organisation in 1995. Danco is a fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants and oversees all finance related matters for both the Registered Training Organisation and Education and Care Services.



Leesa van Duin

Training Services Manager - Resources and Development

Leesa has worked at ECTARC for 27 years and started out as an Early Childhood Teacher at ECTARC Alunga. Leesa manages the TDO development and resource team, designing assessment tools and learning resources for students, in addition to the design and delivery of workshops and professional development for the sector.



Sarah Mezedi

Training Services Manager - Compliance and Quality Assurance

Sarah has worked at ECTARC for 27 years. Sarah's main focus is on ensuring compliance with the VET Quality Framework, state contracts and policy development, whilst working within the management team on day to day operations, and managing the administration team.



Kathryn Barker

Early Childhood Manager - Services

Kathryn serves as the leader for ECTARC's 11 Education and Care Services, bringing a wealth of experience as a manager, mentor, and advocate for early education and the well-being of educators. She is deeply committed to fostering strong partnerships with families, engaging with the community, and advancing reconciliation initiatives. Kathryn holds a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood) and boasts over 30 years of valuable experience in the early childhood sector.



Melissa Wicks

Early Childhood Manager - Operations

Melissa has over 30 years of experience in the early childhood education and care sector. She started as a teacher and director with ECTARC, transitioning to senior management 14 years ago, and this diverse background makes her a valuable asset when contributing to operational effectiveness and strategic growth. Melissa also serves as Company Secretary, supporting organisational governance.



Natalie Fernandes

Training Services Manager - Funded

Natalie has worked at ECTARC Training Services for 22 years, first as a Training and Development Officer and now in management. Natalie oversees all aspects of funded training in NSW, QLD and ACT, and works closely with government departments, employers and key stakeholders to ensure there is a focus on building a sustainable workforce for education and care. Natalie manages the team of TDO's working with students and also manages the operations of the QLD office.



Rachel Griffith

Marketing Manager

Rachel has been executing marketing strategies to promote ECTARC's products and services, increase brand awareness, and drive business growth for over the 22 years. Rachel brings marketing and sales experience in the university, tourism, FMCG and pharmaceutical industries to the role.



EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION SERVICES & TRAINING

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Enriching futures together