



EARLY  
LEARNING  
ASSOCIATION  
AUSTRALIA

2025  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

At ELAA, we recognise that First Nations peoples have cared for children, shared knowledge, and nurtured learning on these lands for generations. We honour this enduring connection to Country, culture, and community, and are committed to embedding these understandings within our practices.

# CHAIR AND CEO REPORT



On behalf of the Board and Executive team, we are pleased to present the ELAA Annual Report for 2024–2025.

This year has been one of both consolidation and transformation for ELAA. As the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector continues to evolve, we have strengthened our position as a trusted partner to our members, delivering practical support, expert guidance, and responsive advocacy when it matters most.

## A YEAR OF STRONG MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

With 580 members operating 1,330 services representing approximately 77,000 children and 59,000 families, ELAA's reach across Australia's ECEC sector remains strong. Our retention rates reflect the deep value members place on our services, from advisory support and training to policy resources and sector representation. This continued trust drives everything we do.

## SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The successful completion of the Skilling an Adaptable Early Childhood and Care Workforce (SAEW) Project marked a significant milestone, with more than 1,100 participants completing 2,300 e-learning modules.

Throughout the year, we also maintained our commitment to industrial fairness and appropriate workforce conditions. Bargaining for the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) 2024/25 continued, with important discussions progressing on teacher leadership, workload management, and salary progression.

## INNOVATION AND IMPACT

The ELAA team has also been working with services on new and existing projects, from supporting Committee of Management (CoM) kindergartens through Catalyst to celebrating our Road Safety Education (RSE) program's 14th year of operation. Through these projects, we have delivered exceptional support to a wide range of services and organisations. Resources that matter.

We continued to enhance PolicyWorks, our comprehensive catalogue offering policy and procedure guidance. More than 25 policy templates were updated and two were introduced to reflect sector reforms such as Free Kinder, Pre-Prep, and the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Over the year, the demand for this resource remained high, demonstrating its value as a trusted tool that supports compliance and strengthens governance across the sector.

## NEW LEADERSHIP

It was a year of change for ELAA internally. We farewelled our interim CEO Tim Watts and welcomed our new CEO, Dr Karina Davis who commenced in May 2025. With significant experience in the early learning sector as a kindergarten teacher, academic, and advocate, Dr Davis brings a wealth of expertise and passion to the organisation and has already made a significant impact in a short period of time.

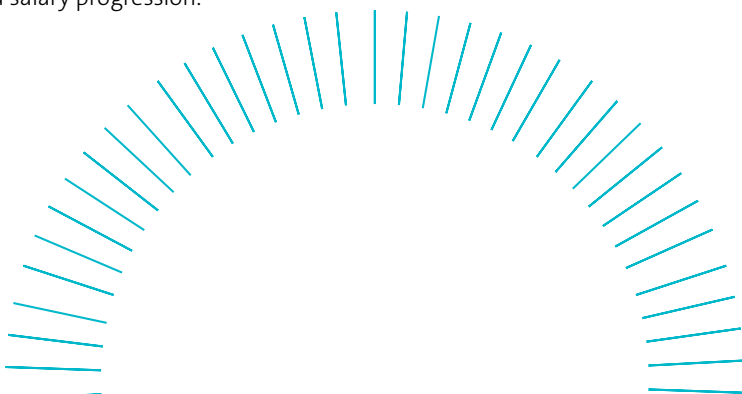
## LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward, ELAA is well-positioned to support the sector through ongoing change. We are deepening our impact, refining our services, and ensuring our members have access to the expertise, resources, and advocacy they need to deliver exceptional early learning experiences.

We thank our dedicated staff, Board Directors and members for their partnership and commitment. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient ECEC sector for Australia's children and families.

**Dr Karina Davis**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Aileen Ashford**  
Chair



# MEMBERSHIP

The 2024–2025 financial year marked another period of strong engagement from a diverse and evolving membership base.

With 580 members providing 1,330 services and working with approximately 77,000 children, and 59,000 families, ELAA continued to provide trusted advice and practical support to help services navigate a changing ECEC environment.

Retention and new member engagement remained strong, reflecting the value members place on ELAA’s advocacy, expertise, and tailored support.

## FY25 MEMBERS BY CATEGORY

Community	428
Council	33
School	82
Associate	30
Supporter	7
Total	580

# VECTEA 2024



Negotiations for the VECTEA 2024/25 commenced in June 2024 and continued throughout the year, remaining active as of 30 June 2025. Discussions have focused on teacher leadership, workload management, and teacher salary progression.

This round of bargaining takes place at a pivotal time, with the Victorian Government’s Free Kinder policy continuing to roll out across the state. Under this ambitious reform, full government investment is required and ELAA’s advocacy has centred on ensuring sustainable funding models for the VECTEA that recognise the actual cost of delivering quality early childhood education and care.

To support members during this period, ELAA continued to provide advisory

support, practical resources, and information sessions. We also hold regular VECTEA consultative group meetings with both Early Years Management (EYM) and Committee of Management CoM) members to ensure diverse member perspectives are represented in negotiations.

ELAA remains committed to ensuring that teachers and educators are fairly compensated for the essential work they do, and that the historical undervaluing of their contribution is addressed.

# MEMBER SOLUTIONS

## SUMMARY

In 2024–2025, our Member Solutions team continued to play a pivotal role in supporting our members across the ECEC sector. We maintained a strong focus on enhancing operational efficiency and staff management, ensuring that our members were well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the sector.

In addition to these core priorities, the team delivered tailored guidance, practical resources, and responsive support to help services navigate regulatory changes, workforce challenges, and day-to-day operational needs. By fostering strong connections with our members and understanding their unique contexts, the team ensured that we remain a trusted partner in building resilient and high-quality early learning environments.

## ADVISORY SERVICE

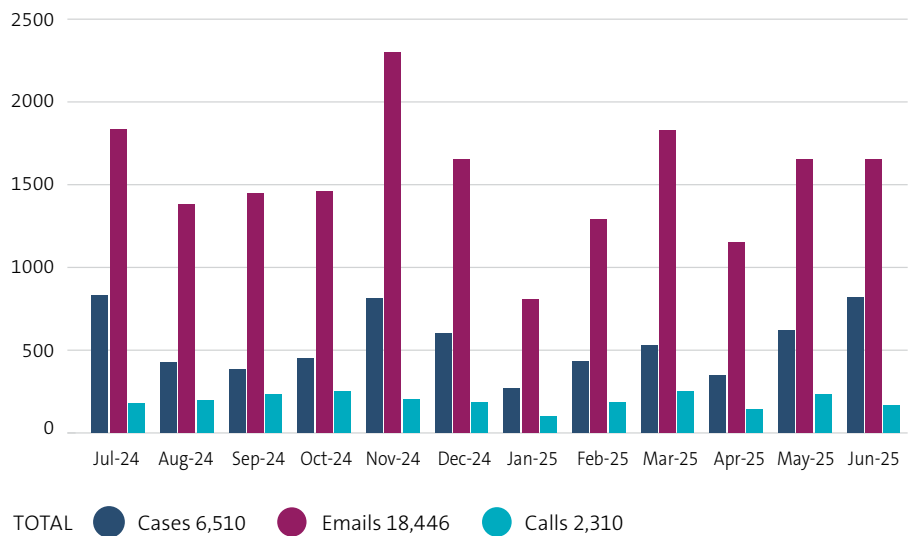
Our Member Solutions advisors continued to provide tailored phone and email support across key areas including governance (52%) and industrial relations/human resources (38%).

Over the past year, the team successfully managed 6,510 cases, delivering timely, practical, and expert guidance to help services navigate an evolving ECEC landscape with confidence.

*“They get back to us promptly and organise a meeting if required. There is a wealth of information available to us on the website and most can be easily adapted for our service.”*

Member (2025)

FY25 NUMBER OF CASES, CALLS, EMAILS



# MEMBER SOLUTIONS

## RESOURCES

ELAA continued to support members through the development and maintenance of high-quality resources to address evolving sector needs. Our PolicyWorks Catalogue remained a cornerstone of this support throughout this period, providing 437 subscribers with clear, practical, and compliant policy templates to guide service operations and strengthen governance.

Over the financial year, more than 25 policy templates were updated, and two new templates were introduced to reflect regulatory requirements, sector reforms, and emerging priorities such as Free Kinder, Pre-Prep, and the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

We have also made changes to ensure subscribers can easily identify and reference policy changes when communicating with families, staff, and regulators.

To further strengthen child safety practices, ELAA released a Child Safe Standards Implementation Tool, designed to help services embed a child-centred approach and ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Through ELAA's development of resources, we continue to ensure that we remain a trusted organisation that supports services to meet their compliance and quality obligations with confidence.

## TRAINING

Our training program continued to provide practical, high-quality professional development across governance, child safety, and compliance. We hosted 40 drop-in sessions, trainings, and information sessions to help over 1,400 participants understand and apply regulatory changes, facilitated focus groups to gather sector feedback, and strengthened resources to reflect real service needs.

Practical training opportunities were delivered to build the capacity of CoM and service leaders, ensuring that our members are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to provide safe, high-quality early learning environments.

## FY25 WEBINARS, DROP-IN SESSIONS, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION SESSIONS



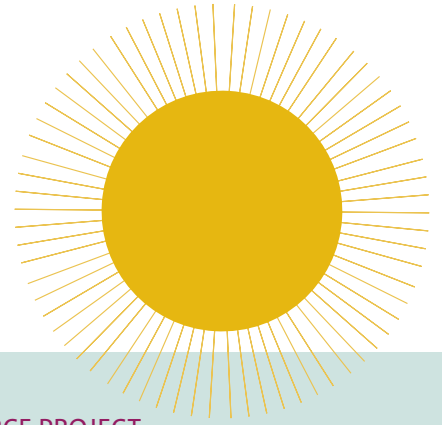
*“Very informative content, supported by relevant professionals. Clear and straightforward booking instructions/process and relevant resources accessible to all attendees.”*

Participant (2025)

## FY25 MOST REGISTERED

Webinars, drop-in sessions, training and information sessions	Registrations
Targeting Cognition to Improve Behaviour	170
Starting from the Beginning Session 1 – Governance, Planning and Reporting obligations	92
SAEW Project: Ways to embed Child-Safe Standards in Professional Practice	83
Employer responsibilities: workplace complaints and Reportable Conduct Scheme	76
Financial Management	69
Bullying, CCYP and “what can we do to be prepared”	65

# PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



## SKILLING AN ADAPTABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE WORKFORCE PROJECT

ELAA is proud to have supported the growth and capability of Victoria's early childhood workforce through the Skilling an Adaptable Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce (SAEW) Project, which concluded on 30 June 2025.

Throughout the project, a dedicated online Community of Practice platform provided access to self-paced learning

and professional connection across the sector. By project completion, more than 1,100 participants had completed over 2,300 e-learning modules across 33 learning experiences. The project also delivered peer support meetings, guest speaker sessions, and 12 workshops that encouraged collaboration and reflective practice among early years professionals.

ELAA acknowledges and thanks project partners Gowrie Victoria and The Y Ballarat for their collaboration and expertise. Together, the project has delivered a strong foundation for ongoing workforce development and strengthened quality outcomes for children and families across Victoria.

*“The learning module was very informative, and it was created and thought out so well. It was very easy to navigate, follow and understand. It fostered my understanding and enhanced my ability as an educator and upskilled me on how to continue to support children.”*

SAEW participant.

## CATALYST

Catalyst was introduced in 2025 as a pilot program to support CoM kindergartens considering a transition to EYMs.

Throughout the pilot, ELAA worked with seven standalone kindergartens, providing tailored guidance and resources to navigate the governance and operational complexities involved. The program supported services to prepare governance documentation, explore management

options, and undertake the decision-making processes required to determine the most suitable path forward.

The initiative was developed in response to sector data highlighting the challenges of governance transitions and the need for structured, hands-on support. By helping services strengthen their understanding and confidence, the pilot created a more streamlined and informed process for CoM-to-EYM transitions.

# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

In its 14th year of delivering the Starting Out Safely early childhood Road Safety Education (RSE) program, ELAA has continued to make a significant impact in RSE across Victoria's early childhood sector. This year, the program delivered 500 ThingleToodle sessions, bringing engaging road safety messages directly to young children and their educators.

The Inquiry Project supported services to embed road safety education within their curriculum, while the development and promotion of RSE and Safe Transportation

Policies helped strengthen practice across the sector.

To build educator capability, 45 professional development sessions were delivered, complemented by 24 culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) sessions to ensure resources and information reached CALD communities.

ELAA also participated in 10 community events, extending the program's reach to families and local communities. A key achievement was the establishment of Victoria's Child Car Seat Stakeholder Group, which brought together leading organisations to collaborate on improving child car seat safety across the state.

*"Amazing. So informative and easy to listen to."*

Participant (2024)



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

ELAA has continued to strengthen its focus on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) across the early childhood sector. Three well-received seminars, Safety, Not Just Child's Play were delivered to help services strengthen their safety practices and support staff wellbeing.

ELAA also participated in the WorkSafe Health and Social Assistance Stakeholder Group and provided OHS inspections, Manual Handling Code of Practice training, and general OHS training to member services.

The Championing Work Safety in Early Learning Project (IPHECS) progressed strongly this year, moving from planning into implementation. The project aims to strengthen health and safety leadership by supporting Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and foster consultative representation through awareness, evidence building, and practical strategies. Key milestones included establishing governance groups, completing foundational research, and commencing the action research phase with six early learning organisations. The next stage will focus on capturing best practices and creating sustainable resources to support a lasting culture of safety beyond the project's funding period.

*"Thank you for delivering an amazing session. You have left us all thinking and have a different outlook on the OHS. We are already thinking of ways to reduce some of the risks we have in our service and develop long term goals."*

Safety, Not Just Child's Play Participant (July 2025).

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT for the year ended 30 June 2025

The Summarised Income and Expenditure Statement and the Statement of Financial Position are summarised from the audited financial statements. Complete copies of the audited financial statements are available on request.

	2025	2024
<b>INCOME</b>	\$	\$
Revenue from operating activities	3,467,719	4,047,303
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Employee benefits expense	(2,344,780)	(2,479,168)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(117,044)	(161,100)
Professional fees	(161,445)	(165,485)
Conference and training costs	(290,224)	(311,671)
Office expenses	(394,446)	(300,168)
Marketing and advertising costs	(22,289)	(16,363)
Lease interest	(4,606)	(17,873)
Program consulting costs	(186,181)	(493,187)
Other expenses	(36,570)	(26,168)
Total expenses	(3,557,585)	(3,971,183)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>(89,866)</b>	<b>76,120</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>(89,866)</b>	<b>76,120</b>



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
as at 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
<b>ASSETS</b>	\$	\$
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,525,319	1,046,581
Trade and other receivables	354,899	437,235
Inventories	-	7,734
Other financial assets	-	1,182,009
Other assets	54,926	80,154
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>2,935,144</b>	<b>2,753,713</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	21,630	33,106
Intangible assets	-	9,069
Right of use assets	-	127,585
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>21,630</b>	<b>169,760</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>2,956,774</b>	<b>2,923,473</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	326,174	209,722
Lease liability	-	116,141
Employee benefits	246,480	257,438
Deferred income	1,472,790	1,330,196
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>2,045,444</b>	<b>1,913,497</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	-	18,636
Employee benefits	20,197	10,341
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>20,197</b>	<b>28,977</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>2,065,641</b>	<b>1,942,474</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>891,133</b>	<b>980,999</b>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Retained surplus	891,133	980,999
<b>Total members' funds</b>	<b>891,133</b>	<b>980,999</b>

# AUDITOR'S REPORT

## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF EARLY LEARNING ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

### OPINION

The summarised financial statements, which comprise the summarised statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025 and the summarised income and expenditure statement for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial report of Early Learning Association Australia for the year ended 30 June 2025.

In our opinion, the accompanying summarised financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with (or a fair summary of) the audited financial report, on the basis described in Note 1 to the audited financial report of Early Learning Association Australia for the year ended 30 June 2025.

### SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The summarised financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the summarised financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The summarised financial statements and the audited financial report do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial report.

### THE AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT AND OUR REPORT THEREON

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 22 October 2025.

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board of Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the summary financial statements.

### AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summarised financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with (or are a fair summary of) the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements..



**Nexia Melbourne Audit Pty Ltd**  
Melbourne



**Chapman Wan**  
Director

Dated this 22nd day of October 2025

### Advisory. Tax. Audit.

Registered Audit Company 291969

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# LOOKING AHEAD

**ELAA is well positioned to make a significant impact in the coming financial year, and the organisation has already made progress in embarking on a period of strategic renewal and enhanced impact.**

As we enter 2026, ELAA is developing a new strategic plan along with dedicated communications and advocacy strategies that will strengthen how we connect with, support, and represent our members and the broader ECEC sector.

Our approach to member communication is evolving. We are engaging more proactively and strategically, ensuring our members receive timely, relevant information that helps them navigate change with confidence. Through expanded member events and webinars, we are creating more opportunities for connection, learning and peer support across the sector.

ELAA's voice in public discourse has also grown stronger. We have amplified our presence through media engagement to help shape the narrative around critical sector issues and bring member perspectives to the forefront of policy conversations.

Our advocacy efforts have intensified at both State and Federal levels. We are building stronger relationships with key Members of Parliament and decision-makers, ensuring that the needs of ECEC services are clearly understood and prioritised in policy development. As significant reforms continue to reshape the sector, ELAA is positioned to be a powerful advocate for sustainable, quality early learning that serves all Australian children and families.

The year ahead promises continued change and we look forward to working alongside our members to build on the foundations we have established and to create lasting, positive impact for ECEC in Australia.



# OUR PEOPLE

At the heart of ELAA's work are our people. They are a dedicated team of professionals and a committed Board who share a vision for excellence and equity in ECEC. Together, they provide the leadership, expertise, and care that underpin every aspect of our work with members and the broader sector.

## BOARD

ELAA's Board provides strategic oversight and guidance to ensure the organisation remains responsive, accountable, and member focused.



Aileen Ashford – *Chair*  
Appointed: 2020



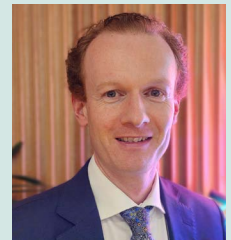
Filippo Miotto – *Treasurer*  
Appointed: 2023  
(resigned 2025)



Stacey Fox – *Secretary*  
Appointed: 2017  
(resigned 2025)



Tracey McKay  
Appointed: 2018



Hugh Bastiaan  
Appointed: 2024



Samantha Kolasa  
– *Deputy Chair*  
Appointed: 2019



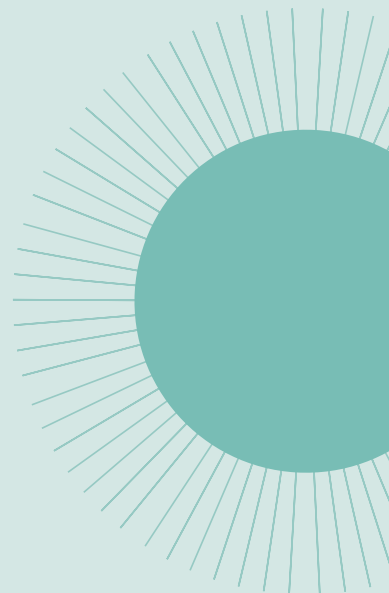
Stuart Braganza-Travis  
– *Interim Treasurer*  
Appointed: 2024



Grant Boyd  
Appointed: 2018



Leanne Bilinski  
Appointed: 2023



# OUR PEOPLE

## TEAM

Our staff bring expertise across policy, advocacy, membership, operations, and communications. Their collaboration and dedication ensure that ELAA continues to be a trusted voice for the sector and a valued support for members.

<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	<i>Chief Executive Officer:</i> Dr Karina Davis	<i>Interim Chief Executive Officer:</i> Tim Watts (until April 2025)	<i>Executive Manager:</i> Karina Viksne (until April 2025)  <i>Executive Assistant:</i> Taylor Burge	<i>General Manager – Enabling Services:</i> Chris Stallard (until July 2025)	<i>General Manager – Member Solutions:</i> Katrina Nightingale
<b>ENGAGEMENT &amp; MARKETING</b>	<i>Digital Communications and Marketing Lead:</i> Yao Cheng (until June 2025)	<i>Digital Marketing and Membership Coordinator:</i> Elodie Raveau (family leave)	<i>Digital Marketing and Membership Coordinator:</i> Louise Blair-West	<i>Manager – Engagement and Marketing:</i> Kine Asguatsen (until July 2024)	
<b>MEMBER SOLUTIONS</b>	<i>Advisor – Best Start, Best Life Reform and Engagement:</i> Leanne Rodriguez	<i>Advisor – Member Solutions and Consultancy:</i> Erin Taylor  <i>Advisor – Member Solutions and Training:</i> Guillermina Rollero	<i>Advisor – Member Solutions:</i> Georgina Delbridge  <i>Member Innovation and Resource Specialist:</i> Loredana Dowdle	<i>Payroll Advisor:</i> Frank Guzzo  <i>Senior Advisor – Governance and Compliance:</i> Corinne Leita (until July 2025)	<i>Senior Advisor – Workplace Relations:</i> Emma Incerti-Zapedowski
<b>PROJECT DELIVERY &amp; OPERATIONS</b>	<i>Administration Specialist – Project Support:</i> Georgia Arrowsmith (until June 2025)	<i>Business Analyst:</i> Johanna Morcom	<i>Manager – Digital Transformation Project Delivery:</i> Ruchi Gupta (until September 2024)	<i>Manager – SAEW Project Delivery:</i> Greg Box (until January 2025)	
<b>RSE &amp; OHS</b>	<i>Manager – Road Safety Education:</i> Zora Marko	<i>Administration Specialist – Road Safety Education Project Support:</i> Christina Martono	<i>OHS Project Officer:</i> Anita Mathews	<i>Specialist – Road Safety Education Project Administrator:</i> Anita Valenzisi	

## LIFE MEMBERS

ELAA recognises the contribution of the following people to furthering its goals (and those of its predecessor, Kindergarten Parents Victoria) and for their service to the ECEC sector through life membership:

Carol Allen  
Pat Brown  
Lee Cath  
Jo Geurts  
David Haesler

David Layton  
Gerard Mansour  
Karalynn McDonnell  
Patrick Moriarty  
Annette Mutimer

Pauline Ogden  
Danny Pearson  
Nicole Pilsworth  
Charles Power  
Krishnan Rangaswamy

Marg Stephens  
Kathy Townley  
Karen Weston  
Carlene Wilson

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to our work this year. Our gratitude goes to our members, preferred partners, sector partners, government colleagues, and supporters. Your collaboration and shared commitment to quality outcomes for children and families make our work possible.

We also acknowledge our Board and staff for their leadership, dedication, and teamwork throughout the year. Their efforts continue to strengthen ELAA's voice and impact across the ECEC sector.

## OUR PARTNERS

ELAA would like to acknowledge the expertise and support received from our preferred partners, many of whom make exclusive offers to ELAA members.

**anzuk.education**

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

**BUNNINGS  
TRADE**

BUNNINGS TRADE –  
hardware, landscaping,  
and infrastructure  
improvement supplies

**officeworks**

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

**TERMINA**

TERMINA – energy  
management software





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