



# ECTA Annual Conference

## Speakers for the 2017 ECTA Annual Conference



**Madeline Avci** is an Occupational Therapist and Teacher who has worked with children for over twenty years in Australia, America and Turkey. She is also the mother of three energetic and imaginative boys. Madeline is a big advocate for reducing children's time in front of screens and providing them with a multisensory childhood by getting them outside. Both at work and through her own children she sees time and time again, the joy in children's eyes as they rise up to meet the challenges that nature provides. Madeline is the Director of Jump Up Occupational Therapy, a business that supports children and families to develop independence and resilience in their daily lives. Madeline is also the Director of Barefoot Nature Play Pty Ltd, which aims to ignite children's passion for playing outdoors. Barefoot Nature Play brings together all of Madeline's experience in a way that offers children a 'just right' experience in a world that often feels too hurried, stressed and chaotic.



**Katchia Avenell** is the Pedagogical Leader of Inspired Family Day Care (QLD). A Nature Pedagogue, she is a former educator at The Cubby House in Birkdale, founder of The Garden Gathering (an unstructured gardening play experience within Community Gardens locations), co-founder of the Brisbane-based Nature Playgroup (a weekly nature immersion experience for children in all weather in a variety of local suburban, near-wild and wild spaces) and is currently the lead Nature Pedagogue and Kindergarten Teacher for an all weather, outdoor kindergarten on the banks of a river in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Katchia is a Kodaly-trained music specialist and certified in the Primary Years International Baccalaureate; she is a fully qualified and registered teacher who has taught all ages in both the public and private sector, and is currently studying her Masters in Education. She has worked with high-needs and at risk youth and has provided respite and alternative education to children with diverse schooling needs and socio-developmental requirements. Katchia has a deep love of nature and the healing benefits of nature education and outside play. She believes in the educational benefits of unstructured outside play, child-led investigations and peer-to-peer teaching, in conjunction with appropriate scaffolding and provision experiences. She is an advocate of play work, loose parts and role play, as well as the importance of music and the arts in our everyday environment.



**Jo Broadbent** has been working in the early childhood sector for 17 years. She is the Early Years Transition Coordinator at Rochedale State School and over the past three years, has developed both a professional teacher learning network and school-based transition program in this role. Jo's teaching background in a variety of early childhood settings including as Lead Educator in child care, Teacher/Director in community kindergartens and Prep Teacher for Education Qld gives her a unique perspective on practical models for developing positive and successful transitions to school. Jo is passionate about connecting teachers, children, families, early learning settings and schools to create shared goals and a collaborative approach school transitions.



**Deb Brosseuk** has 20 years' experience as an early years classroom teacher and learning support teacher in state and independent school settings. She holds a Masters degree in Boys' Education from the University of Newcastle. Deb is undertaking doctoral study in multimodal literacy research at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. She currently works as a sessional academic staff member in the School of Early Childhood and the School of Cultural and Professional Learning at QUT where she teaches education pre-service teachers. Deb's principle research and teaching interests centre on developing and implementing hybrid multimodal literacy pedagogy in early years classrooms. **CANCELLED**



**Niki Buchan** is an Educational Consultant with Natural Learning Early Childhood Consultancy. She has a biomedical background, is originally from South Africa, lived in Scotland for many years and has been calling Australia home since 2011. She works internationally as a conference keynote speaker, nature pedagogue, nature kindergarten facilitator, naturalistic playground advisor, international study visit facilitator, mentor, author as well as delivering a range of professional learning opportunities on all aspects of early child care. She founded her own Family Day Care, Long Day Care and Pre-schools in South Africa, moved to Scotland where she was Head of Morrison's Academy Nursery, recognised as a Centre of Excellence. She worked with Claire Warden, delivering early years training, leading an action research project, co-authoring books and establishing the first nature kindergartens in the UK. She was delighted to be offered a position in Australia. Niki has a reputation as a strong advocate for children's right to a high quality childhood, including having their voices heard. She is considered a leading voice in promoting nature-based practice internationally. Her book *Children in Wild Nature* was published by Teaching Solutions in 2015 and adapted for the UK.



**Heather Joy Campbell** – and yes, that is the name given to her at birth! – is a professional laughter wellness practitioner and one of a handful of Certified Laughter Yoga Teachers in Australia personally trained by the founder of Laughter Yoga, Dr Madan Kataria. Her working life in media and organisational communications has been ruled by deadlines and headlines. Stress has been ever-present. Heather Joy deals with it differently now, thanks to laughter yoga, a unique combination of slow yogic breathing, gentle stretches and simulated laughter exercises. Her discovery of laughter yoga came about when researching a story. Days after filing her copy, she found herself in a city park seeking to actually experience what she'd written about. Forty minutes later, the cares of her world had vanished. A few months later, Heather Joy trained to be a Laughter Yoga Leader, volunteering to run free community laughter sessions in that same park. In early 2016, Heather Joy was accepted into Dr Kataria's intensive Laughter Yoga Teacher program in Bangalore, India. In 2016, Heather Joy has been engaged to facilitate laughter yoga sessions and conference workshops, present public forums and train laughter yoga leaders throughout Queensland. Her mission is to spread the happydemic of wellness through laughter, seriously – and she still makes time for her weekly volunteer 'giveback' through her local laughter club.



**Mark Cooper** has over 30 years' experience in early childhood education. He was an early years teacher and education advisor before moving into public service roles in early childhood policy, curriculum and teaching and learning. Currently with the Early Learning Pathways team, Mark's work focuses on promoting children's continuity of learning and development through the transition to school initiative and the age appropriate pedagogies program.



**Lee Gane** is a driven and passionate education and care professional. She holds a Masters in Training and Development, a Bachelor of Teaching in Early Childhood Education and Care, a Diploma in Children's Services (Centre-based Care) and draws on years of lived experience in a range of roles across the education and care profession. Having held positions as an educator, early childhood teacher, director, approved provider, validator, consultant, trainer and assessor in the EC field. Lee understands, recognises and values the critical work and expertise of the education and care professional. Lee wants to support EC practitioners to realise their potential, connect with and reclaim their internal passion, unite and speak up for our profession to grow a sustainable education and care workforce that is valued, supported and well equipped to educate and nurture children's belonging being and becoming.



**Jane Goodfellow** is an early childhood special needs teacher and has also been working as a tertiary lecturer in education for the last 20 years. Jane's early childhood work is as a part-time Pre-K teacher with children with autism and is experiencing success in her student's learning and development through a play-based curriculum. Being profoundly deaf herself, Jane recognises the unique communication and academic needs of young children with additional needs and is committed to sharing this knowledge with her professional network.



**Helen Hodgson**, Deb Verstege, Tracy Mulloni, and Melissa Lee have over 75 years' experience in the early childhood sector between them. Together they form part of the Lady Gowrie Qld Central Governing Body team. Working collaboratively to support affiliated community kindergartens across the state, they have been involved in a range of early learning environments, including long day care, kindergarten, primary school, and training. Sharing a passion for children, play-based learning, and the value of rich, diverse, genuine relationships, they enjoy travelling to visit services both in Brisbane and right throughout regional Queensland and advocating for the benefits of high quality early childhood programs and practice.



**Desley Jones** has over 25 years' experience in early childhood education and is director of Ballymore Kindergarten in Brisbane. She has a degree in education and an honours degree in psychology, and is a recipient of a NEITA ASG Inspirational Teaching Award. She was nominated for the award by kindergarten parents in recognition of her emphasis on children's social and emotional wellbeing in her educational program. Desley's framework for intentional teaching for relationships 'Creating a Caring Community of Learners' was accepted for presentation at the Infants and Early Childhood Social and Emotional Wellbeing Conference (IECSEW) held in Canberra in 2013. In addition to teaching full-time, Desley presents workshops and writes journal articles for educators.



**Brenda Kettle** has over 25 years' experience in education, teaching in a variety of roles, including learning support and numeracy coach across Prep to Year 7. This experience has been a valuable basis for Brenda's current role as a Principal Project Officer in the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), developing and delivering professional learning workshops and resources to support Queensland teachers to implement Australian Curriculum: Mathematics.



**Ingrid King** is an occupational therapist, author and international speaker. She has worked in South Africa, the US, New Zealand and Australia assisting children at-risk and those with mild to moderate sensory and motor delays. Ingrid has a Masters in Occupational Therapy and has conducted research on perceptual motor and fine motor programs. She has a special interest in school readiness and how to effectively prepare young children's bodies and minds for success at school. Ingrid enjoys sharing her knowledge in a user-friendly and creative way with educators, teachers and parents. She has conducted many workshops and her resources are used in over ten countries. Ingrid is married to a primary teacher and they educated their own children for the first five years while travelling and living overseas.



**Cherie Lamb** has worked in the not-for-profit sector for more than 25 years, running early intervention and prevention programs that facilitated access for families from migrant and refugee backgrounds into school, early childhood services, family support and employment. Cherie recently led the 'EMBRACE - Culture in Kindy Program' for QCOSS, a program that aimed to increase access to Kindergarten for families from diverse cultural backgrounds. She founded and managed the 'Pathways to Prevention Project', an early intervention program in South West Brisbane and coordinated the 'Families in Cultural Transition Program' for refugees and torture and trauma survivors in NSW. Cherie is currently a PhD candidate with the School of Education at The University of New England and is researching facilitating access to and participation in early childhood programs for families from refugee backgrounds.



**Melissa Lee**, Deb Verstege, Tracy Mulloni and Helene Hodgson have over 75 years' experience in the early childhood sector between them. Together they form part of the Lady Gowrie Qld Central Governing Body team. Working collaboratively to support affiliated community kindergartens across the state, they have been involved in a range of early learning environments, including long day care, kindergarten, primary school, and training. Sharing a passion for children, play-based learning, and the value of rich, diverse, genuine relationships, they enjoy travelling to visit services both in Brisbane and right throughout regional Queensland and advocating for the benefits of high quality early childhood programs and practice.



**Sue Lewin** is an early childhood teacher, singer and songwriter who has produced eight music CDs for young children, including 'Heave ho and over we go' and 'Those things we do' with Peter Stewart. The CDs include traditional songs and dances from around the world as well as original pieces. Her children's musicals 'The little pirate's adventures' and 'Dancing the boomchacha boogie', written with Narelle Oliver, have both been staged in London.



**Dr Mary Lincoln** is the Director, Early Learning Pathways in the Department of Education and Training. She has extensive experience as a kindergarten and early years teacher. Mary is currently leading Queensland's statewide initiatives in implementing the Australian Early Development Census, supporting successful transitions, and along with colleagues in the regions refocusing on age appropriate pedagogies in Prep.



**Sharron "mirii" Lindh** Proud Gamilaraay Wiradyuri woman, Sharron "mirii" Lindh is the founder of Indigenous Insights, which focuses on Cultural Education and Wellbeing for children, families and educators, providing professional development and early childhood workshops. Along with 27 years' experience within early childhood and primary sectors, Sharron is passion driven by her own life experiences enabling her to share her unique Culture, promoting reconciliation, and providing better educational outcomes for all. Miri was nominated, and won the award for the 2016 Child Friendly Excellence Award for her valuable contribution to families and children within the Inala to Ipswich area. In February 2016, Stand and Grow - Warranhabu Buwanhabu was born, a collaborative CD, which herself, Sue Lewin and Peter Stewart created, an amazing work of art produced by passionate people for the same purpose. Sharron has an insatiable passion for sharing her dreaming, in hope that we all can walk together with respect, sharing, and caring for Mother Earth, her waters, each other and living things. [www.earlychildmusic.com.au](http://www.earlychildmusic.com.au)



**Rhonda Livingstone** is the National Education Leader, ACECQA. She also leads the teams responsible for promoting and recognising quality educational programs, practices and policies and supporting the sector and authorised officers to build a shared understanding of and commitment to implementing the National Quality Framework (NQF); and continual quality improvement. Rhonda has a wealth of experience in the early education and care sector, having worked in preschools and long day care centres, and as an assessor of programs and services for both the Queensland Government and the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland. Rhonda's extensive involvement in the National Quality Agenda reforms saw her contribute to the development of the National Quality Standard and its guide, assessment and rating tools and processes, and the training and testing program for authorised officers. Rhonda also worked as a Senior Advisor, Excellent Rating with ACECQA and as a sessional education academic with the Queensland University of Technology.



**Kath Lloyd** is an early childhood music specialist, with a particular interest in interpersonal development. She has been a registered KMEIA (Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia) teacher since 2000, and is currently running the "do-re-mi: music for children" program at Margaret Cribb Child Care Centre, UQ. She coordinates and teaches the Open Conservatorium ECM (Early Childhood Music) program, including weekly sessions at the Lady Cilento children's Hospital school. Kath also offers professional development seminars and workshops to peers and childcare centre carers, and mentors graduates. Keen to deepen her understanding of children's cognitive, language, social and emotional development, Kath is midst a Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) at QUT. She believes that singing is every child's first language, their voices are their first instrument, and that active engagement in collaborative musical activities has far reaching impact on all areas of their development.



**Emma Mancer** is an enthusiastic educator with a love for performing arts and a passion for psychology. She has been teaching children ranging from Prep to Year 12 for eight years with a focus on performing arts and humanities. Emma is currently completing her postgraduate studies to become a developmental psychologist and has combined her two passions to develop ways of fostering sensory processing in early childhood through the use of drama. More information available online.

Websites:

[www.createplaylearn.net](http://www.createplaylearn.net), [www.facebook.com/createplaylearnau](https://www.facebook.com/createplaylearnau)



**Kelly McBurnie** currently holds the role of Prep Coordinator at St Peters Indooroopilly. Kelly has been involved in the educational sector for almost 20 years as a teacher, coordinator and early literacy workshop presenter. In 2013 Kelly received a National Excellence in Teaching Award for innovation and was nominated as Brisbane Person of the Year. Her classroom was highlighted in Australian Teachers Magazine and she has written articles for The Educational Leader, Copeland Publishing (Brisbane Child) and for <http://www.woman.com.au/>. Kelly has worked with gifted and talented students, on a special project to raise funds for the RSPCA, which was also recognised in the media during 2013. In 2014 she was nominated as Griffith University's Alumni of the Year and her achievements were featured in the 2016 Undergraduate Study Guide. In October 2016 she represented Australia, presenting a paper for peer review at the Asian Conference in Education in Kobe, Japan. This year she has worked with Professor Frank Crowther in the production of his book Discovering your pedagogical gift, which is due to be published mid-year through ACER.



**Tina Millar** has over 40 years' experience in the early education and care sector. She has worked extensively within this sector throughout Australia and New Zealand. In addition she has worked as a Teacher within the tertiary sector at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. During her time at Swinburne Martina developed curriculum for early childhood educators, workbooks and videos for distance learning and face to face learning. Her passion and commitment to the field includes active involvement in the International Family Day Care Organisation for eight years, committee of management of Outside School Hours Care services, and community-based services providing training and support to low income clients seeking work in this sector. She has spent the past 14 years working at Inclusion Works! initially as the Training Co-ordinator for delivery of professional development and now as the Operations Manager overseeing all services contracted to Inclusion Works! for both fee-for-service programs as well as government funded programs focusing on educational outcomes for zero to eight-year-olds. Tina works closely with all teams at Inclusion Works! to support inclusive quality service delivery.



**Debbie Miller** is the Director of Education and Learning at Pathways to Resilience Trust. She is an experienced educator specialising in early childhood and has worked extensively across the educational field, as an educator in early years settings to tutoring in tertiary education. She presents at conferences around strengths-based practice to develop resilience, support behaviour and children's wellbeing. She is the author of Wings: an approach to social and emotional wellbeing in early years 0 to 5 years, which has recently been accredited as evidence based by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.



**Tracy Mulloni**, Deb Verstege, Helene Hodgson and Melissa Lee have over 75 years' experience in the early childhood sector between them. Together they form part of the Lady Gowrie Qld Central Governing Body team. Working collaboratively to support affiliated community kindergartens across the state, they have been involved in a range of early learning environments, including long day care, kindergarten, primary school, and training. Sharing a passion for children, play-based learning, and the value of rich, diverse, genuine relationships, they enjoy travelling to visit services both in Brisbane and right throughout regional Queensland and advocating for the benefits of high quality early childhood programs and practice.



**Sandi Phoenix** coaches and mentors educators from a strengths-based perspective, informed by a comprehensive understanding of the NQF and underpinning theory. Sandi takes a positive approach to guiding expected behavioural choices within inclusive learning environments, following vast experience working with children who display complex behaviours since 2001. In recent years Sandi has been involved in supporting educators and teams through individualised in-service PD, presenting at conferences, developing written resources, and consulting in the design of curriculum planning software. Currently, Sandi is studying a Master of Education while continuing to collaborate with educators and teams to support positive relationships and partnerships in the education and care sector through her work as Principal Facilitator at Phoenix Support for Educators. She is highly regarded nationwide as a speaker, coach, mentor and professional development facilitator for the education and care sector.



**Linda Rago** is the President of the Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia and holds a number of qualifications including a Bachelor of Business Communication (QUT), Diploma of Oriental Therapies and Shiatsu (Melb), Diploma of Meiso Shiatsu (Italy), Diploma of Okido Yoga (International) as well as Yoga Life training (Bris), 15 years of beach yoga Straddie public classes and is the Owner/Operator of The Yoga Tower Clinic at Point Lookout. Her specialist treatment areas include breathing as a therapeutic tool, injury rehabilitation, pain management, relaxation, and holistic care of the mind and body. Linda is an energetic and interesting presenter having spent years as a TV journalist and writer, presenter/producer on *Totally Wild* on Channel 10 and moving/instructing large groups of people on the beach on North Stradbroke Island. Linda is the resident teacher for 'Better breathing and falls prevention' at the Minjerribah Respite Centre.



**Professor Pieter Rossouw** is the Director of Mediros Clinical Solutions, The BRAINGro Institute and The Neuropsychotherapy Institute – companies that provide training and conduct research in Neurobiology and Neuropsychotherapy. Pieter is also a Professor in Brain Based Education at CQU and the President of The International Association of Clinical Neuropsychotherapy (IACN). Currently he focuses on teaching and research in the fields of neurobiology and neuropsychotherapy as well as clinical training for clinicians, psychologists and general practitioners. Pieter holds Honours Degrees in Philosophy and Psychology, a Master Degree in Clinical Psychology and a PhD. Pieter is a member of the QLD Counselling Association, The Australian Psychological Society and the APS College of Clinical Psychologists. Pieter was a Professor in Clinical Psychology in South Africa (University of the Free State). He also taught at Universities in Canada, the USA, NZ and Holland. Prior to his role as professor in Education at CQU Pieter was the Director of the Master of Counselling Program in the School of Psychology at the UQ. Pieter specialises in Neuropsychotherapy and is an expert in trauma, anxiety and mood disorders. He has published 7 Scientific Books and 75 scientific articles. He has been involved in research in extensive clinical trials and presented keynote research papers at 60 International Conferences worldwide.



**Anthony Shearer** has worked as a preschool teacher, school administrator, policy officer, education advisor, and currently works as a teacher educator with ACU. He is currently undertaking doctoral study, with a focus on assessment in the first year of school. Anthony also works as a critical friend to schools, focusing on reinvigorating play and active learning into early years pedagogy. Anthony has worked as a writer and manager on a number of curriculum projects for the State of Queensland, including English, Technology, and the development of curriculum and support materials to support the implementation of the Prep year in Queensland. Anthony has a range of interests associated with early childhood education including assessment, documentation and educational policy.



**Gabrielle Sinclair** has been in the Queensland Public Service for more than 20 years. Gabrielle started her professional career as a Year One teacher and has undergraduate degrees in Teaching and Education, a Master's degree in Education and an Executive Master's degree in Public Administration. Gabrielle joined Corrective Services as an Education Officer and spent 16 years working with offenders and victims to address the effects of low educational attainment and social disengagement, and to re-establish connections with family and communities to reduce the risk of recidivism. Since 1999, Gabrielle has held Senior Executive positions in a number of departments including Infrastructure and Planning, Local Government and Sport and Recreation, and Corrective Services. Before her appointment as Chief Executive Officer, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, Gabrielle was the Deputy Director-General, Early Childhood and Community Engagement, Queensland Department of Education and Training.



**Archana Sinh** has been involved in early childhood education and learning for around 20 years. She has worked with children as a teacher in India, Papua New Guinea and Australia. In Australia most of her experience has been working in Long Day Care Centres as a teacher. She has also worked as a director of a centre, as an assistant director, and as a training officer for child studies in Brisbane and Sydney.



**Sue Southey** is Co-director at Springwood Community Kindergarten. She works part-time teaching and uses her non-teaching days to provide training, in-house support and professional development for early childhood educators throughout Australia. In 2009 she was a State Finalist in the NEITA Inspirational Teaching Award and in 2013 she received the Inspirational Teaching Award from the Down Syndrome Association of Queensland. In recent years Sue has worked as a sessional academic at QUT and Griffith University, and as a team member of the K-10 resources team at QCAA (formally Queensland Studies Authority).



**Catherine Stark** is a Qualified Yoga Teacher specialising in kids and families. With her experience spanning across 20 years in the Human Services sector, working with children in child care services, kindergartens, children with special needs/disabilities, and then going on to teach yoga within early childhood settings, yoga studios and privately, she has developed a broad range of skills that nurture and support the developing child in a creative and fun way. Over the past year Catherine has been presenting Educator Workshops for Angel Yoga 4 Kids which are three hour workshops presenting yoga skills to Early Childhood Educators to use in the classroom. Participants have fun learning simple yoga techniques that they can all use to assist their teaching. Catherine developed and delivered a yoga program for The Out of The Box Childrens' Festival at Queensland Performing Arts Centre for Yogababy (Brisbane Yoga school). There is so much joy that comes from kids yoga along with the many health benefits. When we engage in yoga practise in a fun way there is no limit to how we all can grow and develop.



**Melissa Strader** is an early childhood teacher, having worked with children across diverse sectors for over 20 years. Melissa is also a registered Art Therapist, an authorised Parenting Effectiveness Training (PET) Instructor from the Gordon Training Institute, and is certified in Choice Theory from the William Glasser Institute Australia. Melissa currently runs Enliven, Enrich, Engage! offering a range of programs for parents and teachers. Her most challenging role is learning every day how to be a better parent to her two young children.



**Kathryn Tonges** has taught from early childhood to tertiary level with 20 years teaching children's services at TAFE. Conducting parenting courses for over 30 years, she is SEO for the Effectiveness Training Institute of Australia, QLD, and a National Trainer. Whilst living in Beijing, Kathryn co-authored a book to help expatriate children cope with changes. Currently she writes for Kids on the Coast and Kids in the City magazines, and for her website The Parent Within. Kathryn continues to teach effectiveness training courses and coaches parents online. Her passion is helping parents, carers and teachers build quality relationships with children.



**Tash Treveton** feels strongly about children's rights to a REAL childhood, of imaginative play in open-ended environments. She is particularly passionate about children connecting with nature and her focus tends to drift to those areas. Tash began as an untrained casual 16 years ago, studied and experienced through to being a Service Director as well as an Educational Leader of Woodrising Community Preschool & CCC in Newcastle, NSW. This became one of the first centres to gain an 'Exceeding the National Standards' level in the current rating system in the area. In 2007 Tash and her business partner, Nicole Sheehan, spent hours discussing the need for inspiring professional development in their local area and as a result founded their educational training and consultancy business, Inspired EC. Their passion and enthusiasm in their beliefs has allowed the company as well as the services they offer to develop and expand and has been successful in 'inspiring' thousands of educators Australia-wide. Tash is passionate and enthusiastic about anything related to children's wellbeing and supporting adults to develop this. She has a particular interest in creating naturalistic playgrounds for children and communities, and likes nothing more than getting in there and digging creek beds or creating fairy gardens!



**Dr Ira van der Steenstraten** is trained as a psychiatrist, psychotherapist and family therapist at the University of Amsterdam and the Academic Medical Centre in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She is currently working as a Life Coach at Breeze LifeCoaching. Ira is an experienced mindfulness trainer, and has developed a number of innovative mindfulness and resilience programs for individuals and groups such as teachers, schoolchildren, doctors, physiotherapists, families and chronic pain patients. She has over 20 years' experience working in various medical and therapeutic settings. At present she specialises in providing mindfulness and resilience training to adults and children. Dr Ira van der Steenstraten has always been committed to empowering patients, clients and others she works with, to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be able to manage and improve their own wellbeing. Her mindfulness work focuses on preventative rather than curative techniques, and has proved effective and successful in enabling a wide range of people to benefit from mindfulness.



**Linda Vella** has been an early year's teacher with the Department of Education and Training, for 30 years. She has also lectured at the Central Queensland University Mackay Campus, with the Early Childhood faculty, taken on the role as facilitator for the implementation for the Early Year's Curriculum Guidelines with the introduction of the preparatory year and is also an Abecedarian coach. Currently Linda is acting as the ECEC Director for Central Queensland Region.



**Deb Verstege**, Tracy Mulloni, Helene Hodgson and Melissa Lee have over 75 years' experience in the early childhood sector between them. Together they form part of the Lady Gowrie Qld Central Governing Body team. Working collaboratively to support affiliated community kindergartens across the state, they have been involved in a range of early learning environments, including long day care, kindergarten, primary school, and training. Sharing a passion for children, play-based learning, and the value of rich, diverse, genuine relationships, they enjoy travelling to visit services both in Brisbane and right throughout regional Queensland and advocating for the benefits of high quality early childhood programs and practice.



**Jeannel Walsh** has extensive experience as an early childhood classroom teacher as well as a special education teacher. Two years ago, Jeannel moved to the position of Abecedarian Project Officer in Central Queensland. As 3a project officer, Jeannel has been responsible for organising, training and implementing the 3a program throughout the region. Today she is the Transition and Partnership Officer based in Gladstone and supports schools from the North Burnett, to the Banana Shire and through the Boyne Island as well as coordinating the 3a project in Central Queensland.



**Robyn Whiting** works to inspire teachers to provide engaging and equitable opportunities to maximise student achievement. She has taught interstate, overseas and in Queensland across a variety of roles and phases of learning. In her current role, Robyn leads the development of resources and professional learning for Queensland teachers to implement curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 10.



**Hayley Wilkes** is the Principal Project Officer (Prep to Year 6) at Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) Hayley has taught across primary year levels and has spent most of her time teaching in the early years. She has taught in remote far north Queensland and in Brisbane. Hayley is passionate about reading and writing and sharing this enjoyment with students in the early years. As a Principal Project Officer (Literacy), Hayley facilitates literacy workshops across Queensland to provide teachers with strategies to support student learning and implement the Australian curriculum.



**Cecelia Wright** is a leading multicultural trainer, communicator and champion for indigenous education and inclusion. Cecelia is also the founder of 'Cultural Inclusions' providing authentic and unique Torres Strait Islander resources and education workshops for the early childhood sector. Originally from Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, Cecelia has dedicated her career to supporting inclusion and embedding cultural practices in the early childhood sector for over 15 years. Cecelia has worked in a variety of early childhood services and schools around Australia, at registered training organisations, and most recently the Indigenous Professional Support Unit supporting Early Childhood Services in the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and throughout the Torres Strait Islands.



**Kathryn Yarrow** (B Ed, ATMusA, DipMusTeach, Aust Kodaly Cert. EC) is an early childhood music specialist who is currently loving working in a Community Kindergarten. Having taught private and group piano lessons for 25 years, and do-re-mi music for children classes (birth to eight years) for 15 years, Kathryn believes that music is the perfect vehicle through which young children can learn, grow, develop and explore creativity. Kathryn has presented numerous workshops for KMEIA Qld, provided professional development workshops for childcare teachers and presented at ECTA in 2016 and 2012.



**Rachael Yates** joined the teaching staff at St Peters Lutheran College in 2003 and has been the ICT Facilitator for Prep to Year 7 for the past ten years. With a passion for integrating technology seamlessly into the curriculum, Rachael's major focus is to provide professional development for staff and support the teaching and learning of digital technologies in the classroom. Rachael has over 20 years teaching experience and a Masters of Information Technology in Education.



**Kim Walters** currently coordinates the ECTA website and conference website and is the conference convenor. Kim also is a member of the journal committee and coordinates the ECTA Webinars and works with the ECTA Regional Groups coordinator. Kim continues to coordinate her own local group the ECTA Cooloola Regional Group. As president Kim is actively involved in attending state and national forums giving early childhood a national voice. One of Kim's early childhood highlights was in 2006 when she took leave to attend a Reggio Emilia educational tour with a USA and Canadian group of early childhood professionals.