



CELA ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2020

Contents

Message from our CEO.....	3
A Snapshot of our COVID-19 response	4
Response to the 2019/2020 bushfire devastation.....	6
Our Team	7
Advocacy	8
Integral communication	10
Learning & Development	13
Events	15
Consultancy	16
Sector development programmes	16
Strategic plan.....	16
Financial report	17
Partnerships	17
Summary	19



Message from our CEO

Across the globe, 2020 was an immensely complex year.

After a devastating bushfire season, communities had no time to recover as the

spread of the COVID 19 virus reached Australia. All of us, as individuals, family members, business owners and team members, were forced to make rapid adjustments, in a context never experienced before.

In our sector, we had to respond quickly and remain resilient, as we worked through numerous changes to funding, rules and regulations.

Even as schools and businesses closed, early childhood education and care services were deemed essential. Nationwide, our sector remained open, so as to provide support for parents, especially frontline workers, in medical and emergency services, so they could continue to do their work.

In such an uncertain environment for everyone, the need to collaborate, reorganise, and remain informed, was vital. The need to continue to advocate for our sector, was essential.

Our 2020 Annual Report is a record of how CELA did that, and the engagement and response of our members throughout an extraordinary year.

From the outset, our aim was to be a source of truth and accuracy for our members, turning complex information into clear guidance.

We shared knowledge, vital new information, advice and encouragement via our 1800 support line, news updates for members, Amplify blog and social media.

Thousands of members engaged with us on a daily basis, seeking facts, guidance and direction.

By year's end, many of you had taken the time to let us know how our support had been of great assistance to you.

I thank you sincerely for doing so, and would like to place on record the immense gratitude and respect I have for our CELA team.

Throughout 2020, they worked tirelessly, with great fortitude, professionalism and kindness as they supported our members throughout Australia.

I would also like to acknowledge each and every one of our members for your incredible resilience and commitment during the past year.

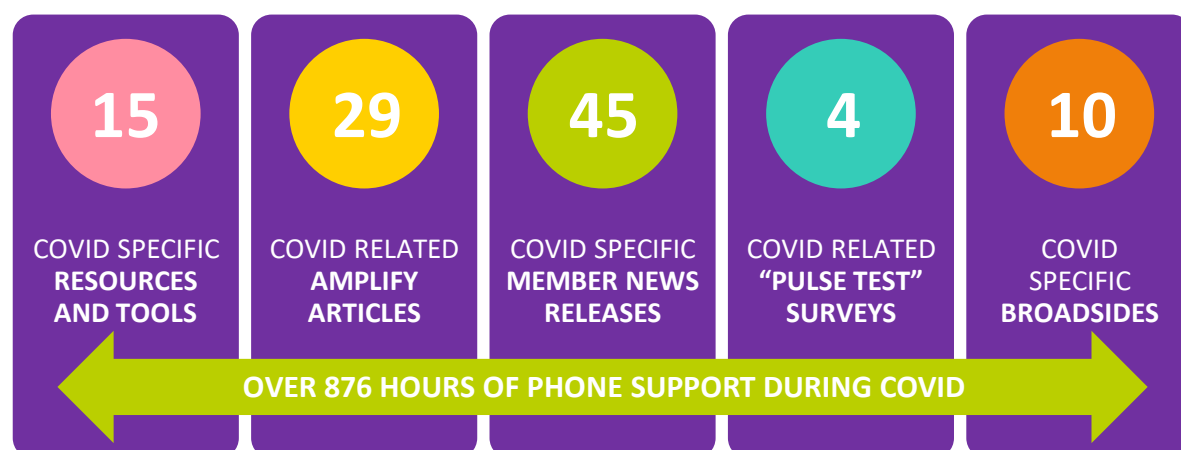
Looking ahead, none of us truly knows what 2021 will bring, however we remain committed to being a source of truth and support for our members.

Our purpose has not changed, 2020 only served to increase our resolve, to support your endeavours and continue advocacy for our sector, so that all Australian children have access to affordable, high quality early education and care.

Michele Carnegie
Chief Executive Officer
Community Early Learning Australia

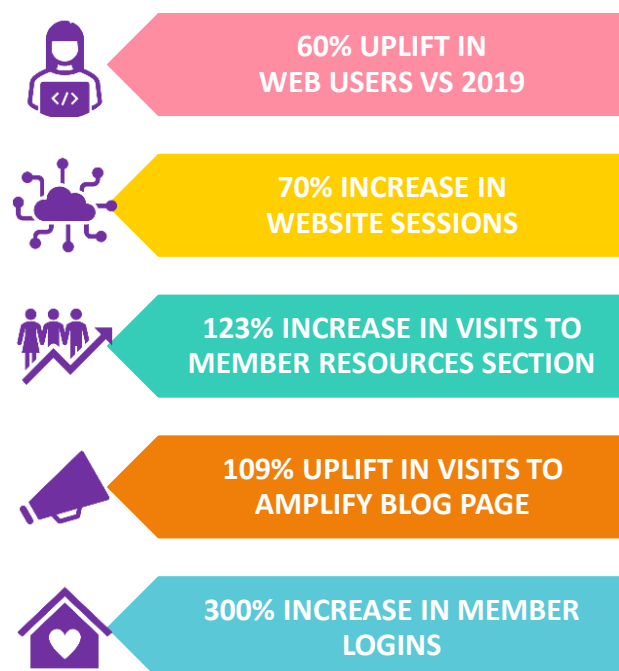
A Snapshot of our COVID-19 response

Communication and support



Web traffic

(% UPLIFT FOR 2020 VS 2019)



Professional Development



COVID specific sessions included:

- ▶ Supporting children's transition to ECEC in COVID context
- ▶ Transition to school in COVID environment with Professor Cathrine Neilson Hewett
- ▶ Coping with uncertainty and wellbeing in COVID environment
- ▶ Happiness is an inside job - free member wellbeing workshop with Petrea King

Resourcing and supporting our members and the wider sector

During 2020, as the threat of COVID-19 disrupted lives, livelihoods, communities and businesses across Australia, the early education sector became prominent as a vital essential service.

From the outset, we made it our mission to support members through every change and challenge.

Highlights:

- ▶ A **source of truth** for members, turning complex information into clear guidance. During the peak, we received a 161% increase in web traffic and 45% increase to the membership packages page. Our COVID related Amplify articles were read by over 155,000 people and shared widely by the sector.
- ▶ **Responsive to member needs**, we provided 15 new tools and policies, 45 member news updates and 10 Broadside reports.
- ▶ **Seamlessly pivoted** our training offering from face to face to live webinar format, delivering our calendar and customised sessions to over 7,000 participants.
- ▶ Successfully **advocated for vital sector funding** to ensure viability.
- ▶ Created **one of Australia's only ECEC COVID hotlines** answering over 4,000 calls and emails regarding COVID related matters.

Prior to the March work from home order and social distancing restrictions being announced, the CELA team moved to remote working, with all operations bought securely online. New planning systems were

implemented and integrated seamlessly, and new phone systems were put in place to ensure that customer and member responses never missed a beat. Within days a new training calendar was developed and face to face trainers began to deliver sessions via live webinar format to ensure that professional development could continue throughout the pandemic. An unforeseen benefit of the pandemic has been the increased uptake and acceptance of online learning, which has allowed us to make our professional development program available to a broader audience at a cost-effective price.

Advocacy became an even more vital part of our role, as families removed children from early education services and the financial viability of many of our members was threatened. Our CEO Michele Carnegie continued as a strong voice for the community sector, helping to secure government funding that has helped community preschools to keep their doors open and remain viable throughout the pandemic.

As a result of our strong sector expertise, we were engaged to deliver sector support to help community preschools and mobiles navigate the financial and administration challenges of the COVID-19 free preschool funding program.

While 2020 was an incredibly challenging year for us all, we are immensely inspired by the willingness of our members and the wider sector to adjust to this new 'COVID-normal' world of online training, changes to funding, and new protocols associated with social distancing and health related matters.

**“CELA makes what seems
to be impossible, manageable.”**

Tal, early educator and new CELA member (joined during COVID-19)

Response to the 2019/2020 bushfire devastation

The devastation of the Summer 2019/2020 bushfire season and its impact was felt very deeply by the CELA team. The effect that the fires had on the communities of many of our members never left our minds, and we know that many communities are still making their way through the challenging path to recovery as 2020 draws to a close.

Upon reflection, and in light of the many other challenges presented during 2020, it's the impact of the fires that stays with us as we progress towards 2021.

We are thankful that we were able to provide members in fire affected communities with some help and support, which came in the form of visits, outreach calls and advocacy.

In early 2020, CELA CEO Michele Carnegie personally visited a number of directly impacted member services. Ms Carnegie provided links to counsellors and successfully advocated for NSW State Government funding to assist in relieving immediate costs such as fee relief, repairs, cleaning and counselling services. At the same time, our member support team made outreach calls to members in fire affected communities to offer further help including links to key support services and information around funding, or just someone to talk to.

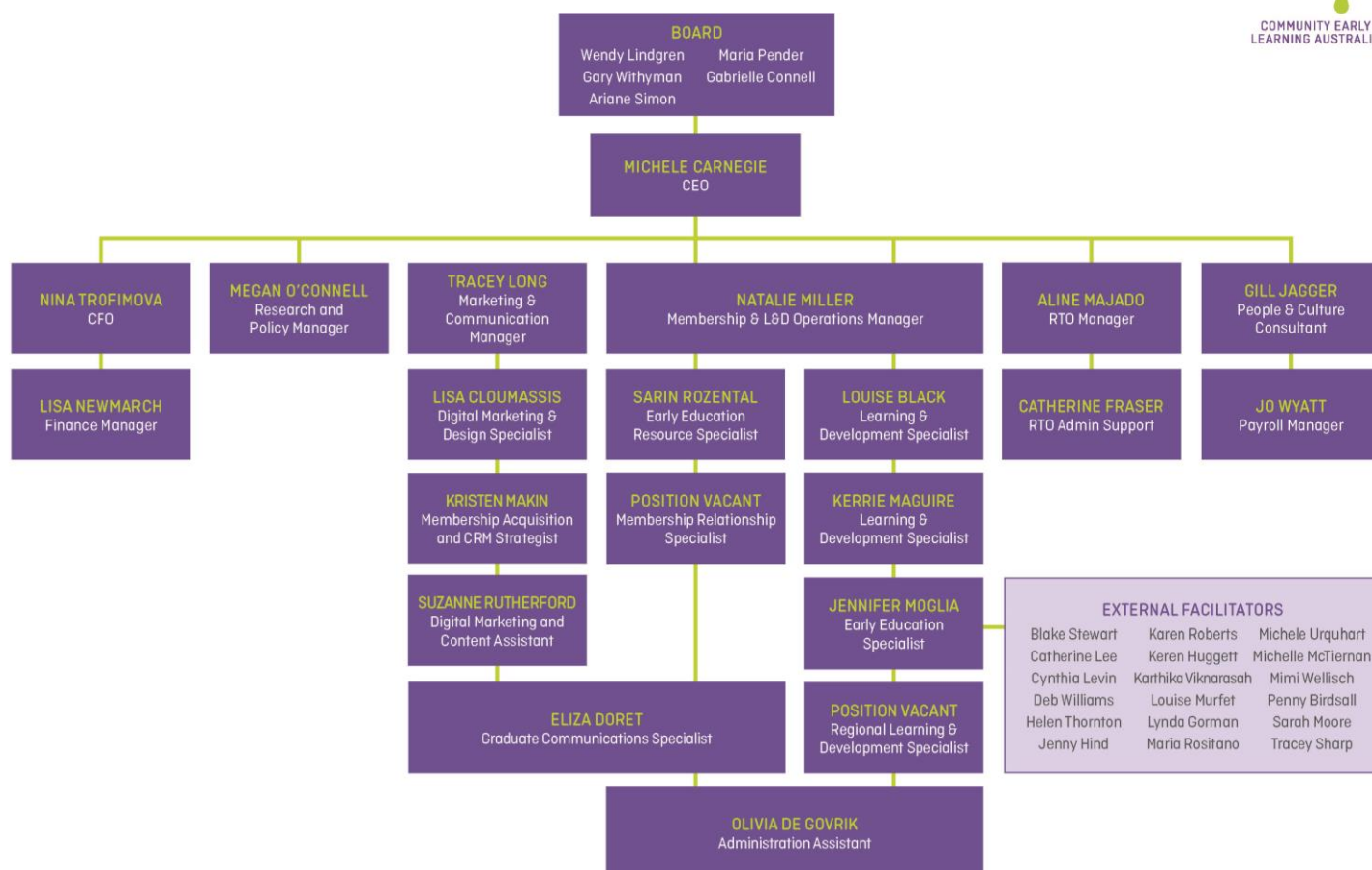
Read more about the devastation of the fires and how our support helped CELA member Cobargo Preschool on their road to recovery in our November 2020 edition of Rattler (Issue 132, page 4).

Our Team

The CELA Team comprises a range of deeply knowledgeable professionals and specialists, whose expertise spans all areas of quality early childhood education including practice, policy and research, strategic planning, service approval, finance, marketing, IT and business. In 2020 we expanded our team to include a broader range of external facilitators and consultants who we can engage for specific projects and initiatives.

The CELA Board is comprised of five members plus CEO Michele Carnegie, each with extensive credentials in our sector and related fields. Their combined experience stretches across service management, government, early education and care teacher training in TAFEs and Universities, advocacy and business consulting.

CELA ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Advocacy

During this challenging and uncertain time, we were extremely active in advocating for our members around a wide variety of funding and viability measures. Throughout 2020 we were in regular contact with commonwealth and state ministers and government agencies, sharing member stories and advocating for viability.

Our 1800 support line and COVID 'pulse check' surveys provided a valuable link to our member base of small providers and community preschools and continued to inform our advocacy stance.

Examples of COVID related advocacy in 2020 included:

Quality

- ▶ Provision of policies and advice to support enhanced cleaning protocols, hygiene and consistent COVID-19 responses
- ▶ Ongoing communications with the sector and government regarding clarification of key issues – from masks to orientations to supply issues and social distancing
- ▶ Provision of sector support around funding and viability

Workforce

- ▶ Training and mentoring to build educator capacity
- ▶ Liaison with the NSW government to clarify COVID-19 requirements for ECEC
- ▶ Ongoing pulse check surveys to identify key pressure points including research into emerging skills shortages and solutions
- ▶ Advocacy for wellbeing funding and provision of training sessions to support educator wellbeing
- ▶ Member support through our 1800 line
- ▶ Advocating for a workforce plan to support attraction, retention and development of quality ECEC workforce
- ▶ Advocacy regarding access to COVID-19 vaccine

Viability

- ▶ Advocating for access to JobKeeper
- ▶ Engagement with state and federal governments to provide funding to support viability
- ▶ Updating members on additional funding streams and providing information around free preschool
- ▶ Undertaking regular pulse check surveys to understand how providers are faring financially
- ▶ Joining the Thrive by Five campaign to help support quality community and small providers

Vulnerability

- ▶ Development of remote learning training program
- ▶ Advocacy to support free preschool and increased access to early education for vulnerable children
- ▶ Pre budget submission calls for expanded access to early childhood education
- ▶ Providing training on how educators should respond to vulnerability

Closing the gap for rural children

- ▶ Ongoing pulse check surveys to identify key pressure points
- ▶ Outreach to rural and regional members
- ▶ Expansion of online training
- ▶ Advocacy regarding emerging staff shortages and need for targeted approach to professional learning

Advisory panels

Throughout the year, CELA CEO Michele Carnegie represented our members at the following advisory panels:

- ▶ NSW Early Childhood Education Advisory Group
- ▶ NSW Education Standards Authority's (NESA) Early Childhood Reference Group
- ▶ NSW Education Emergency Preparedness Working Group
- ▶ NSW Education COVID Learnings Sub Group
- ▶ NSW Early Childhood Education Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children Sub Group

**“Thanks for all your advocacy and support during this season.
The policies and other resources have come in very handy and been
great timesavers to support us to develop ours.
We also appreciate the ongoing advocacy.”**

CELA member

Integral communication

CELA has always been a trusted source of knowledge and support for members, and during this challenging year, our members have needed our timely support more than ever.

Through our regular member news updates, 1800 support line, email and publications (Amplify, Rattler and Broadside), we have kept members and the wider sector up to date with changes to funding, policy and regulations, and helped them to navigate the implementation of these changes within their service.

Member news

Changes to funding and guidelines have been rapid and relentless during 2020. The sector has been overwhelmed with information which has often been unclear, confusing and complex.

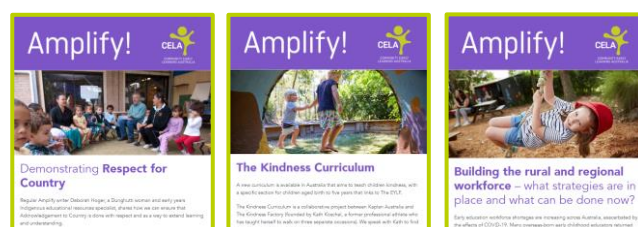
Our aim throughout the pandemic has been to act as a source of truth for our members. No matter the time of day or evening, we have been on hand to work through every announcement, acting as a conduit to filter the important aspects so that our members find out what they need to know in a timely manner.

48 member news updates were sent out during 2020, giving our members a regular, clear and concise picture of what they need to do now and what may happen next, providing comfort and support to our member base.

“Thank you for your emails and prompt response to concerns. Our team feel that we are in safe, sincere and certain hands with regards to our profession and sector. Your communication is factual, sensible and not alarmist.”

CELA member

Amplify



Launched in April 2017, CELA’s blog Amplify has cemented its reputation as the go-to source for discussion about early education and care sector topics. Our weekly publication is distributed to over 20,000 ECEC sector professionals each week.

Amplify continued to grow its readership and reputation throughout 2020. We delivered 102 original articles to our readers including 29 COVID related articles covering topics such as wearing masks, COVID safe tours, COVID safe orientations and celebrations, what happens after a COVID closure, wrangling runny noses, social distancing and remote learning.

Many of our articles were widely shared throughout the sector and on social media, and some articles were referenced in government sector notifications as a source of knowledge and truth.

Our team are dedicated to delivering timely news and information designed to help our sector to navigate the changes and challenges they face while continuing to inspire quality practice.

The following four COVID-related articles were among our most popular and widely shared for the year:

- ▶ [Social distancing in ECEC](#)
- ▶ [Wrangling runny noses in a COVID environment](#)

- ▶ [Wearing masks in ECEC](#)
- ▶ [How early education services are keeping staff and children safe](#)

Our top four non COVID- related articles were:

- ▶ [Avoiding the trap of cultural tokenism](#)
- ▶ [What is cultural appropriation and how do we avoid it?](#)
- ▶ [To queue or not to queue](#)
- ▶ [Best practice principles for supporting fussy eating in early childhood](#)

Rattler



Rattler continues to be one of the most respected early education journals published in Australia. During 2020 we released three digital and one printed edition to members and subscribers.

Each edition provides an in-depth look into the operations and achievements of one of our members, a summary of sector-related research and many inspiring articles covering program, practice and regulations, with a focus on quality.

For our December printed compendium, we commissioned artist Penelope Pratley to create a

beautiful cover illustration representing the support that the early education sector and care has provided to children and families throughout the pandemic.

The compendium brings together the most popular articles from Rattler's digital edition and our Amplify blog, featuring topics such as exploring children's anxiety, screens vs. nature, improving organisational culture, finding and keeping talent, avoiding the trap of cultural tokenism and caring for colleagues.

“We would like to say how much we enjoyed the December issue of Rattler + Amplify. The articles have created lots for us to reflect on and we have used them to support our PD.”

Amy Shine, Director of Forbes Preschool, CELA member

Broadside



During 2020, our Broadside bulletin continued to cover policy issues and news affecting the early education and care sector.

We released 11 Broadside editions written by CELA's Research and Policy Manager Megan O'Connell. Topics covered a range of important issues including How Children are Faring in the Year Before School, JobKeeper, Preschool Funding, ECEC viability and The Return to CCS. Many of these editions included information and statistics sourced from our members via pulse check surveys.

Tools & resources

CELA's tools and resources are regularly updated and expanded in response to the needs of our members. In 2020, we created a new suite of COVID-19 specific resources to help our members navigate the complexities of operating an early education service during a pandemic

These new tools were often developed from idea to distribution within a turnaround of under two days in order to meet member needs in the timeliest way possible.



New tools include:

- ▶ COVID-19 action plan
- ▶ Re-evaluating COVID priorities
- ▶ Staffing arrangements during COVID-19
- ▶ Physical distancing tool
- ▶ COVID-19 Risk Assessment tool
- ▶ COVID -19 Assistance for NSW Community – Preschools and Mobile Preschools

- ▶ Letter to parents
- ▶ Communicating with parents
- ▶ COVID-19 policy
- ▶ Dealing with infectious diseases
- ▶ Finance tools for all service types
- ▶ Support resource for ECEC services to prepare for COVID-19
- ▶ Coronavirus information for educators and staff
- ▶ Coronavirus information for parents and carers to support children
- ▶ Handwashing guidelines

These new tools and resources have been popular and greatly utilised by members. During 2020 the member resources section of our website received an uplift in visits of 123% vs 2019.

We continue to review our suite of tools and resources on a regular basis, adding new items in response to and in anticipation of member needs. CELA continues to frequently lead in providing tailored information about subjects of importance to our sector.

Website restaging

At the end of 2020, we are in the final phase of working with a team of developers and designers to re-stage the CELA website to better meet member needs with increased automation and enhanced experience.

The new website will have additional functionality allowing us to automate and streamline key communication points and functions such as payments, membership renewals and receipts. It will enable members to enter contact details for their wider team so that our communications can more easily reach and inform educators of all levels.

When completed, it will contain the learning and development booking functionality within the same site, allowing for a streamlined booking experience.

Learning & Development

Our move to a live webinar format for our calendar and customised sessions has been incredibly successful and has allowed us to train over 7,000 sector professionals across 325 individual sessions throughout 2020, a 36% uplift in participants compared to 2019.

As always, our focus remains on supporting educators in implementing quality practice for the benefit of children. During 2020 we introduced a COVID lens to many of our popular training sessions to ensure that we were meeting the needs of the sector in a current and relevant way.

**"We really enjoy our partnership with CELA.
Thank you for your support, information, webinars and resources during COVID.
They are so helpful, save time and reassuring."**

CELA member

Live webinars

In late March due to government requirements around social distancing, all face-to-face training sessions were postponed.

Within one week, a new calendar featuring 17 live webinar format training sessions had been developed. The sessions included a mixture of new topics, along with our most popular training sessions, offered for the very first time in live webinar format. We had our first bookings the day the new calendar was launched, and our live webinar format proved incredibly popular throughout the year, attracting members and non-members from across a diverse range of service types across Australia.

Our four most popular live webinars for 2020 were:

- ▶ The Law and Regs for Nominated Supervisors
- ▶ Practical approaches to programming for Educational Leaders
- ▶ Self-Assessment parts 1 & 2
- ▶ Neuroscience & behaviour

"Very easy to log on to. The content was very informative. It was great to get so many useful links to keep researching after the session."

Survey feedback from webinar attendee

RTO training - Identify & Respond

During 2020, we were among the first RTOs to re-launch CHCPRT001 Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk to include all updates from the Children's Guardian Act 2019.

We further streamlined our marking process, making it completely electronic. We implemented additional procedures to help students complete their course in a timely manner, ensuring that they can fulfill their role under National Regulations and are well supported throughout the course.

Launch of self-paced model

At the end of October we launched our new self-paced online version of CHCPRT001 Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk. This flexible mode of delivery has been incredibly popular, with an impressive uptake during the first 3 months of operation.

Our self-paced model is divided into 6 easy to understand modules. Modules contain a variety of materials to suit every learning style, including short videos, presentations and quizzes and a moderated discussion forum.

CELA's sector experts will monitor course progress through the eLearning platform and offer support via email whenever necessary. Language, literacy and numeracy support is also available.

COVID specific training

A wide range of COVID-specific training was developed during 2020 to help early education professionals through the challenges of the COVID environment. The topics were developed based on input from members and the sector, gained from phone conversations, pulse check surveys and advocacy meetings.

Topics included:

- ▶ Responding to the COVID-19 context – How to best support children’s transition to school
- ▶ Design and deliver a quality remote program for children
- ▶ Uncertainty and wellbeing – how are you coping?
- ▶ Leadership in rapid times of change

Member wellbeing workshop

In order to support and inspire members as the end of 2020 approached, we ran a free member-only wellness focussed webinar titled ‘Happiness is an Inside Job’, which was facilitated by Petrea King. Members were delighted at the opportunity to hear from Ms King, a well-known author, inspirational keynote speaker, teacher and facilitator who helps people to move positively through difficult journeys.

Events

Mobile Conference 2020

Mobile Conference 2020 provided an opportunity for mobile educators from across the state to come together virtually for a program of learning guaranteed to inspire.

With a focus on thriving in challenging times and elevating our commitment to children, our 2020 online Mobile Conference honed in on the issues impacting services across NSW including Assessment & Rating, managing uncertainty and compliance in a mobile setting.

Program highlights included:

- ▶ Managing uncertainty with Sarah Moore
- ▶ Assessment & Rating for Mobiles
- ▶ 'Select your session' topics include: Self-regulation and behaviour, reflective practice, STEM with Little Scientists, music and visual arts

Our first ever online version of Mobile Conference was a great success, enabling regional and remote educators to benefit from the increased accessibility provided by online learning.

Elevate 1 day conference

The rapid adoption of online training platforms allowed us to launch our first ever remote learning conference.

Early educators were invited to elevate their professional development with some of our sector's most respected leaders and thinkers.

Our uplifting program was designed to help participants to focus back in on what they do best after a challenging and relentless year.

Topics included:

- ▶ Change your brain, change your life with neuroscience educator Nathan Wallis
- ▶ When can I get off this roller-coaster? How to feel more in control of your time with Early Education Leadership Coach Sarah Moore
- ▶ STEM inquiry with Little Scientists' Hayley Bates
- ▶ Self-regulation with Associate Professor Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett
- ▶ Play Theory and Vulnerable & Valuable presented by respected CELA trainer Kerrie Maguire

The conference was a huge success, with over 100 participants joining in the day from all types of early education and care providers across NSW.

Consultancy

Our consultancy service was highly sought after during 2020, with our skilled sector experts helping services through start-up to compliance, ongoing quality initiatives and governance.

During 2020 we successfully completed large projects for corporate, government and community early education organisations, as well as ongoing service based projects across urban and regional areas and as far afield as Tibooburra and Broken Hill.

We are proud to make a real difference to the operation of new and existing services through policy development strategic planning and sustainability analysis.

Sector development programmes

During 2020 we were engaged by the NSW government to run a variety of sector development programs. This demonstrates CELA's reputation as a leading sector expert and the high level of regard the government has for our ability to provide high quality and engaging training, support and information.

In 2020 we ran the following programs:

- ▶ COVID-19 free preschool funding phone support
- ▶ Supporting preschool educators to deliver remote learning for children
- ▶ Assessment & Rating professional development via livestream
- ▶ Risk Assessment

At the end of 2020 we were engaged to begin work on two new projects:

- ▶ Early Education Leaders Peer Network
- ▶ Communicating Quality Ratings

Strategic plan

Strategic planning is an important part of sound internal governance. It provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals as well as a platform for guiding day-to-day decisions, evaluating progress and changing approaches when required.

In mid-2020 we engaged external consultants The Growth Activists to work with us on a new strategic plan. This has now been completed and team members are working through OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) which will ensure that CELA is in a strong position to continue driving change as Australia's peak body for early childhood education and care.

Financial report

CELA is a Not for Profit, self-funded organisation. Our revenue comes from membership, learning and development, consultancy and partnerships.

Our CFO, Purpose Accounting, described 2019/2020 as a busy and challenging year for CELA, bringing increased efficiency of the operations and adjustment to the COVID-19 situation. The organisation finished June 2020 on a strong note with a stable financial position, increased reserves and a solid foundation for 2020/2021.

Stepping into the new financial year, CELA's management secured new government and commercial agreements, established a sound online presence and significantly reduced employment and operational costs. CELA is in a healthy cash position, with annual expenses showing savings in comparison to the budget. Audited profit for the year was \$177,270 (FY19 loss (\$72,548) /FY 2018 loss (\$561,817)/FY loss 2017 (\$866,633)) which is a strong indicator that our new business structure and operating practices continue to be sound and sustainable.

Partnerships



We are proud to have partners with a common focus on caring for our members and the wider community. We thank Guild Insurance for their continued support in making a difference to the future of Australia's early education sector.

During the pandemic, Guild Insurance has provided invaluable support for their customers, including the continuation of a free employment law hotline designed to help early education and care services navigate questions and obligations around employee relations.



In November 2017 Mobile Children's Services Association (MCSA) and Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) announced a formal collaboration for the benefit of all members and the children and families they serve.

Both organisations have long and proud histories of advocacy and each has much to gain by working with the other in a formal way to further the provision of quality education and care. The announcement reflected the need of both parties to actively seek new ways to enhance professionalism across the sector and address the very real need for quality education and care in urban, regional and remote communities.

Motivated by a mutual focus on professional commitment and quality, the collaboration has created:

- a combined advocacy voice based on agreed policy positions;
- shared resources to deliver more effective communications;
- joint planning to collectively meet the professional development needs of our members, and
- an efficient and effective consortium to run projects, significantly extending each organisation's reach and making it an attractive delivery point for funding bodies.

Across 2020 CELA has been actively engaged with mobile services in many ways

Communications and resources

Our early education specialists made hundreds of proactive calls to NSW mobile services that were impacted by fires, floods and COVID, to support them through recovery and with questions around funding and policy.

In response to an awareness of knowledge gaps discovered through these proactive calls, we created an online resource containing COVID information relevant to mobile services.

Our 1800 support line continues to provide immediate advice for time poor mobile educators managing complex matters.

Training

As COVID restrictions began to escalate, MCSA and CELA had to make the incredibly difficult decision to postpone the annual Mobile Meet event in the interest of the safety of educators and that of the community in which they work. The event was planned to take place in Sydney, with mobile educators from across the state joining us for 3 days of professional development and networking,

Knowing how important professional development is to mobile teams, we decided to create an online version of the event. We are incredibly proud to have successfully delivered the first CELA Mobile Online Conference in October, covering a range of mobile specific topics to support the professional development needs of teams and individual educators. The online format was incredibly well received, with 99% of participants saying that they would attend an online conference again.

Our move to an online format for our entire range of calendar training sessions has also been particularly beneficial for mobile educators, allowing them to access every topic without having to leave their local area.

Advocacy

We continue to be strong advocates for mobiles, with a particular focus on funding and viability.

This has included putting forward recommendations for funding contracts that appropriately support the communities in which mobiles operate, as well as advocacy for Fee Free Preschool.

Throughout the pandemic, we highlighted the need for venue security, drew attention to the onerous task of cleaning venues before and after sessions as well as additional cleaning and rotation of resources required on a daily basis and financial viability. We continue to promote the integral role that mobiles play in supporting the needs of early education in regional and remote communities.

As a result of our advocacy, NSW Department of Education's Early Childhood Education Directorate funded CELA to deliver mobile specific Assessment & Rating and Compliance sessions at the 2020 Mobile Online Conference.

Summary

During 2020, CELA significantly expanded services and resources to ensure we provided the highest levels of support to members during the bushfire season and the COVID 19 pandemic.

By the end of the first quarter of 2020 we moved to a remote work model, and moved all training, consultancy and events online.

Our entire organisation focused on providing timely and reliable information for our members, becoming a vital source of truth through our regular Member News bulletins, Amplify blog and Broadside editions.

We launched new COVID related tools and training programs and innovative initiatives including COVID related sector support, a self-paced Identify & Respond model and our first online conferences – Elevate and Mobile Conference 2020.

Our sector experts provided over 876 hours of phone support, helping early education and care professionals to navigate the changes to funding, regulations and practices due to the pandemic. The CELA website received a 123% increase in visits to our member resources section during the year.

Through 2020, we trained over 7,000 professionals across 325 individual sessions, a 36% increase in participants compared to 2019.

As well as providing heightened levels of support, CELA represented the voice of our members at every opportunity.

Led by our CEO, we actively advocated for small and community providers across topics including financial viability, bushfire recovery, vaccinations, workforce, remote learning and increased access to early education for vulnerable children.

During the year, we also expanded our team of sector professionals to ensure we are in a strong position to continue even greater levels of member support in 2021 and beyond.

At the end of an immensely challenging year, we have been heartened to receive an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from members, many of whom have thanked us for helping them through one of the most difficult years they have ever experienced.

We would like to congratulate our members for their incredible resilience and commitment during 2020 and to assure them that CELA as always, will continue to support them.

Grounded in community values, our promise, as partners in our sector, is an unswerving commitment to helping you provide high quality, affordable early childhood education and care, in the best interests of all Australian children.