

# CELA Annual report

**December 2019**

I am pleased to present this report, which has been developed to showcase the achievements and highlights across CELA for 2019, and to share our goals for 2020.

Throughout 2019 the CELA office has been alive with the constant hum of advocacy, collaboration and support for early and middle education. We head towards 2020 excited by what has been achieved this year, and enthusiastic for what lies ahead.

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## Communications

**1,000+**

HOURS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH MEMBERS

**92**

AMPLIFY!  
ARTICLES

Sent to over 20,000  
members & non members  
with an outstanding open rate

**8**

BROADSIDE  
EDITIONS

**4**

RATTLER  
MAGAZINES

3 digital & 1 printed

**45+**

L&D  
EDMS

## Online presence

**109,085**

WEBSITE VISITORS

**170,706**

WEB SESSIONS

with an average of 5 pages viewed per session

**311,884**

VIEWS OF AMPLIFY ARTICLES

**40,000**

VISITS TO MEMBER RESOURCES

**38,000**

VISITS TO LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

**8,800**

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

## Learning & Development



**4,500+**

EDUCATORS TRAINED



**31+**

REGIONAL TOWNS

**183**

SUBURBS



**6,376**

KM TRAVELLED BY  
CELA TRAINERS



**90+**

MEMBER RESOURCES

## A growing membership base

This year we have not only consolidated our membership base but have welcomed new members from preschool, long day care and OOSH across Australia. Members put great value around our offering, seeing the benefits of our 40 plus years as a leading voice for quality early education. Our membership offers great value, with a growing bank of over 90 sector leading resources, monthly webinars, events, publications (Rattler and Amplify), job postings, discounts on training, consulting, and our 1800 phone support line.

Through our 1800 support line we engage with members on a daily basis, taking calls on a wide range of topics from approved provider enquiries to queries about compliance, training and matters relating to the complexities associated with daily running of a service. Our support team have spent around 1,000 hours on the phone to members during 2019, passing on member feedback and insights that in turn guide the development of new resources, training and advocacy.

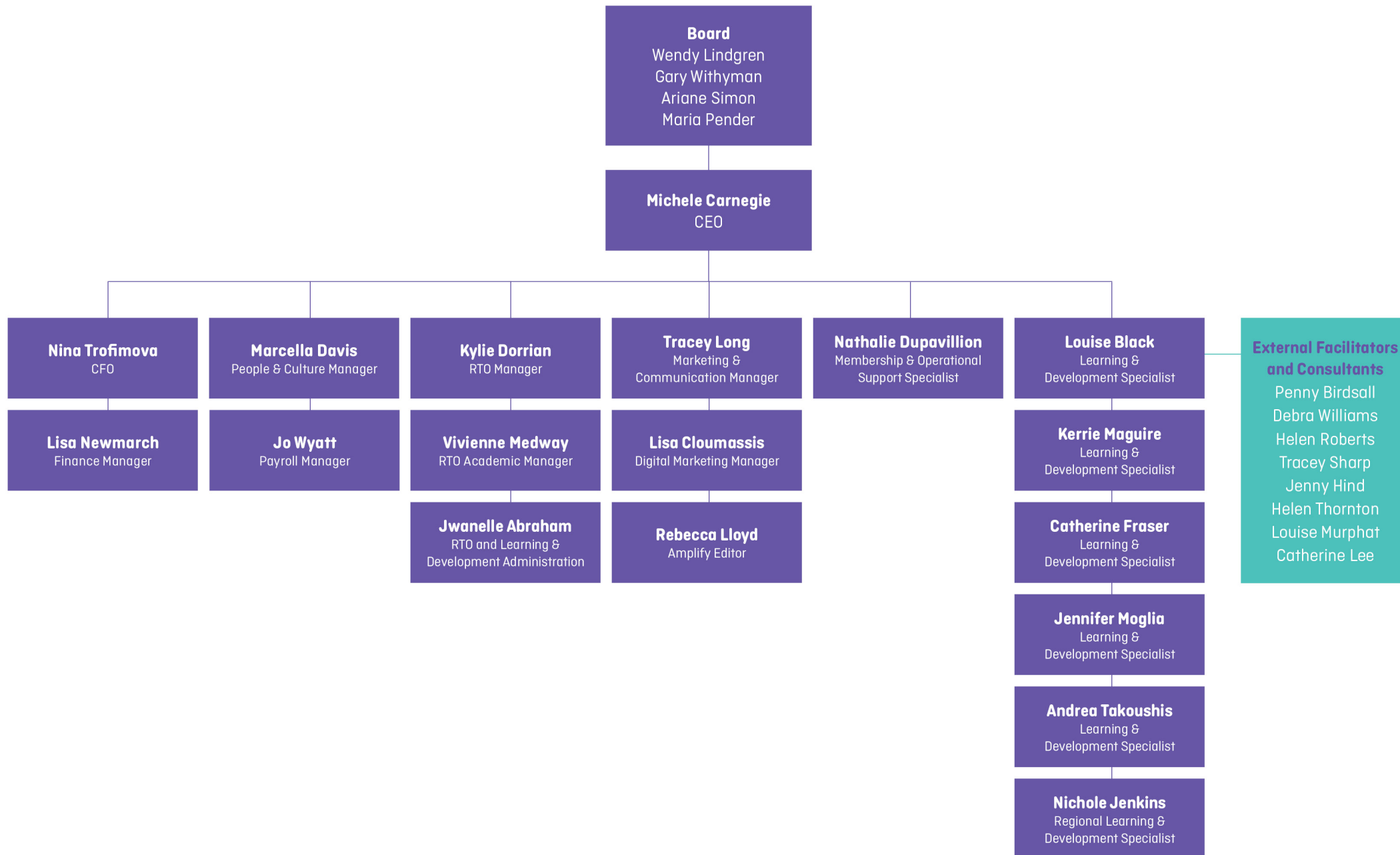
## A flourishing team

During this year our team of professionals has grown along with our membership base. Together with a core group of in-house experts, we now engage specialists with broad experience in core functional areas including IT, finance, RTO, and marketing.

Our team comprises an effective blend of permanent full time and part time staff, with high level sector expertise to meet the daily needs of member calls, emails, content and resource building. Our external facilitators contribute sector currency as they deliver training sessions and consultancy for CELA while working in early education management positions. We are continuously looking for new talent to add to our exceptional pool.

Combined, our team represents the diversity of skills required to maintain a sustainable organisation, which is highly equipped to deliver on the current and future needs of our sector.

# CELA Organisational Structure



## Strong communications

Our website has been a key communication tool this year, allowing us to spread the word about our membership offering, core services, and our advocacy for quality early education and care. The website has received over 109,100 visitors this year, with an average of 5 pages viewed on each session. Top pages were the home page, the member resource page (40,000 visits), the learning & development page (38,000 visits) and Amplify blog pages (311,884 views).

## Website restaging

While the website has been an invaluable communication tool, it has many issues and does not act as the professional window into our organisation that it should be. We are currently working with a team of developers and designers to re-stage the 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 allow us to capture contact details for the wider member team and communicate with the entire team of educators at our members services. This will enable a broader distribution of key early education information.

The new site will be stable and secure, using a new development platform called Kentico. When finished, it will contain the learning and development booking functionality within the same site, allowing for a streamlined booking experience and greater ability to capture information about who is booking sessions and how they came to the booking site.

## Rattler

In 2019 we moved Rattler to a digital edition, delivered three times a year in March, July and November, along with one printed annual compendium to be posted out in early December.

Moving to a digital edition has allowed us to keep the quality content historically provided by Rattler, without taking member funds away from other important resources.

This year we've covered topics such as how to welcome rainbow families, unpacking the process of assessment and rating, new Australian research into educator well-being, and the rise of leadership in early education settings. We already have a strong foundation of wonderful content commissioned for Rattler in 2020 including an article on childhood anxiety by Maggie Dent and an article which puts the spotlight on three services who are exceeding the National Quality Standard.

## Amplify and Broadside

92 Amplify articles were delivered to over 20,000 recipients via eDM in 2019, with an enviable open rate. Amplify pages on our website received over 311,884 views. Amplify was discovered by thousands of new readers through our social media presence and shared across the early education space by EEC professionals, media outlets and bodies including ACECQA.

8 Broadside editions went out during the year - these were some of our most widely read publications, covering important issues such as BBF funding, the election and CCS. Many of our broadside issues were written from knowledge gained through member surveys, allowing us to be a conduit to take member opinions to a wider audience.

## Events

During 2019 we hosted a number of successful events including masterclasses with Sarah Moore and Jennifer Ribarovski, the Director's Retreat and our annual Mobile Meet.

The feedback we have received from attendees has shown that these events are much needed opportunities for professionals in our sector to be inspired, learn and engage with each other.

### Director's Retreat

The Director's retreat was held in Byron Bay in May and November 2019. This three-day gathering brought together sector experts to facilitate the change and renewal that leaders need to effectively run their service. For some it was life changing.

*"Thank you so much for the last few days. I came to the retreat thinking that I might not continue in this sector I love so much. I now have a plan and have found the courage to have the difficult conversations I need to have to reconnect with my team." May 2019*

We will run the retreat again in 2020, kicking off with a three-day retreat in May. We have now re-named the event the Leadership Retreat to widen the appeal to a broader group of professionals.

### Mobile Meet

The annual Mobile Meet provides a forum for Mobile Children's Services to discuss issues related to Mobile service delivery, professional support funding, and policies that affect mobile services.

62 delegates attended our 2019 Meet from across NSW. The program was developed by CELA and MCSA, drawing upon extensive mobile connections in regional, remote and urban areas. Government engagement and advocacy sessions provided a space to build relationships and share the very real concerns that Mobiles have in relation to service delivery and funding.

The meet was a huge success - 86% of attendees said the sessions were very relevant to their work as an Educator and will change their practice as a result, while 100% of respondents said they achieved what they wanted from attending.

*"Overall the Mobile Meet exceeded my expectations. I met some amazing people and it has helped to create future support networks."*



## Accessible learning & development driven by innovation and expertise

Over 4,500 educators have been part of our learning and development, consultancy and mentoring programs across NSW, South Australia, Queensland and Victoria this year. In NSW alone, our team has delivered PD in 31 regional and remote towns and 183 suburbs across Sydney, as well as up to 3 calendar sessions per week held in our training room at Marrickville. In addition to this, we regularly engage with members through video conference and webinar across Australia.

CELA's learning and development program equips educators with the knowledge that changes practice and underpins quality early education. Our training calendar is developed on a bi-annual basis, in line with member feedback. Our sessions provide the tools that early education professionals require in order to deliver quality education and care and is focused around four key areas:

- ▶ Expertise
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Responsiveness
- ▶ Accessibility

## A platform for success

During 2019 we created a learning and development platform, which provides the foundation for our evolving program, and acts as a strong backbone to pitches for contracts. This platform, coupled with member feedback, was transferred into an insightful and innovative program in 2019 across two calendar releases, with NESA endorsement offered across most of our sessions.

## Sound RTO offering

At the start of the year we successfully achieved RTO re-registration led by our expert RTO manager. We re-launched our revised version of 'Identify and respond to children and young people at risk' as both face to face and webinar sessions and have maintained compliance review and reporting requirements. We believe the content for this session has now become one of the most sound, practical and rigorous qualifications available on this topic. In 2020 we will further enhance the accessibility of this session by offering it as an online course which participants can start at a date of their choice.

### **Delivering Assessment & Rating across NSW**

Recently we have welcomed the opportunity to deliver Assessment & Rating – Prepare, Collaborate, Communicate training on behalf of the NSW Department of Education.

This has presented an opportunity to share a professional learning experience that builds understanding and confidence in this vital area. Feedback has been exceptional, and it gives us great satisfaction to be able to provide such effective support for early education services across NSW. This initiative has now been extended into 2020 with additional sessions added to cater for demand. Our success in this area shows the high level of regard and appreciation for the relevance of content and standard of delivery.

## Consultancy

CELA provides a unique consultancy service. What sets us apart is the diversity of skills within our team, which means that we are able to successfully apply the very best expertise to the specific needs of our client.

Across the year we have worked with new and existing Approved Providers from conception of new early education services through to service approval. We have applied best practice to hundreds of policies that we have been contracted to review, as well as guiding many services experiencing serious operational matters through to a sustainable future.

We are particularly excited about our Strategic Planning service, where we have partnered with The Growth Activists to develop an early education specific program, which has already enabled a number of services to transform the way they operate and flourish.

Requests for consultancy are incredibly broad and at all times our focus is on helping clients to achieve quality early education with operational success.

## Financial stability

During 2019 we completely restructured our finance department and improved financial sustainability, posting a significantly reduced operating loss at FY2019 year-end \$72,548 (loss 2018 \$561,817/ loss 2017 \$866,633) which is a strong indicator that our new business structure and operating practices are sound and sustainable.

The restructure included the engagement of an external CFO to enable independent reporting to the board, so that nonpartisan advice and opinions are always accessible. We also made the bold move to change accounting software to a program that has a higher level of operational efficiencies, reporting capabilities and a wider pool of expertise to draw on.

A Finance Manager has joined the team, bringing a wealth of external industry experience, a methodical approach, and expertise in the new software. Please email [info@cela.org.au](mailto:info@cela.org.au) to request a copy of our audited financial report.

## Strengthening ties with our partner

During 2019 we continued to build our strong partnership with our premium partner Guild Insurance. For over 45 years, Guild Insurance have been insuring early learning, childcare, OOSH and preschool centres right across Australia. And for the last 30 years, Guild have been helping businesses with their Workers Compensation needs. We are proud to have a partner who have a common focus on caring for our members and the wider community. Organisations that actually pick up the phone when it rings, placing you with an expert who understands your issues and cares about helping you to find the answers you need. We thank Guild Insurance for their continued support in making a difference to the future of Australia's early education sector.

## Advocacy

We have Amplified our members' views on a wide range of issues impacting all service types including: Federal and NSW elections, Ministerial Roundtables, National ACECQA Review, NSW OOSH Project Strategy Sector Consultation, NSW ECE Advisory Group, NESSA Early Childhood Reference Group, NSW sector consultation on the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Review, and Reserve Bank Early Education Consultation.

In partnership with MCSA we will continue to advocate for mobile services across NSW as they move into assessment and rating and funding challenges. We are looking forward to holding Mobile Meet in March 2020, where the focus will be on assessment and rating, communication, wellbeing, and quality practices in a mobile context.

In October, I travelled with Leslie Loble, Deputy Secretary of the NSW Department of Education to the Central West of NSW. We visited Forbes Preschool and Condobolin Preschool Kindergarten to discuss matters impacting early education in regional and remote communities. Dust storm withstanding, I was particularly proud of centre directors Melissa Nesbitt and Amy Shine, who continue to demonstrate a strong focus and advocacy for quality early education. They are determined to maintain a sustainable, highly qualified and diverse team which meets the needs of all children and families, and a culture where educational equity thrives.

I especially want to highlight the valuable knowledge and insights we gathered from our members this year via surveys. Their input shaped our responses to government including the impact of Child Care Subsidy senate submission, Out of School Hours Care commentary, National Quality Framework review and joint submission between CELA, and the MCSA and Early Start UOW National Quality Partnership agreement on universal access to early childhood education review. Their level of response to these surveys ensures that our advocacy directly reflects the real issues in early education and carries weight with policy makers.

Our next advocacy research project involving members seeks to gain an understanding of the characteristics of services who successfully engage vulnerable communities through early education. We are particularly interested in how team culture, diverse skills and targeted professional development create environments where early education is a social equaliser which results in improved outcomes for children.

## Advocacy focus for 2020

In 2020 we will continue to focus our advocacy efforts around six areas:

- ▶ Building a sustainable, high quality early education workforce.
- ▶ Hold NSW Government accountable to improving the consistency of Assessment & Rating
- ▶ Closing the gap that has resulted from commonwealth policy, where we are seeing an increase in children caught up in the impact of adversity through no fault of their own and as a result not accessing the early education they need.
- ▶ Ensuring that all Australian children have access to quality early education.
- ▶ Addressing the increasing needs of regional services including funding, feasibility and workforce.
- ▶ Ensuring the continuation of the National Quality Partnership.

## Summary

2019 has been a successful year full of exciting opportunities and achievements for CELA. With our growing membership base, flourishing team of experts, unique offering and strong sector ties, we have built strong foundations for a financially independent and sustainable future.

We are incredibly proud of our advocacy efforts this year. United with other leading sector voices, together we have made a significant impact on the future of quality early education in Australia.

We look forward to continuing to advocate for quality early education across Australia in 2020 and thank you for your commitment and contribution to CELA.



**Michele Carnegie**

Chief Executive Officer

Community Early Learning Australia