A voice for young children

75 years of Early Childhood Australia

FRANCES PRESS AND SANDIE WONG
About Early Childhood Australia

Early Childhood Australia actively promotes the provision of high-quality services for all young children from birth to eight years and their families, and supports the important role of parents. Early Childhood Australia is also the national umbrella organisation for children’s services and a leading early childhood publisher.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Early Childhood Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the Elders both past and present.

About the authors

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Both are passionate about history.
Dedication

This history of Early Childhood Australia is dedicated to the many people who have built its voice over the years—all those advocates for young children who, quite simply, would not—and will not—give up.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Early Childhood Australia (ECA) for providing us with the opportunity to write a brief history of this fascinating organisation. It has been an absorbing project and has deepened our understanding of the history of early childhood education and care in Australia.

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The establishment of Kindergarten Unions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The birth of the Australian Association of Pre-School Child Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The war years (1939–1945)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cloud of war is lifted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1960s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1970s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1980s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1990s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new millennium and a new early childhood agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequently used acronyms** 99

**Appendices** 100

**References** 112
Early Childhood Australia (ECA) began in 1938 as the Australia Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD). In the 1950s it became the Australian Preschool Association (APA). In 1980 it became known as the Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA) and it adopted its current name, Early Childhood Australia, in 2003.

Under each iteration, it has left an impressive legacy of long-lasting initiatives including, but not limited to, the Lady Gowrie Child Centres; the Organisation Mondiale Pour l’Education Prescolaire (OMEP) in Australia; and the Code of Ethics for the Australian early childhood profession. AECA branches in NSW, Victoria and Queensland piloted childcare accreditation before any Australian government thought the accreditation of early childhood education and care services mattered.

The AAPSCD organised its first Australian early childhood conference in 1939 and early childhood educators in Australia have benefited from its national conferences ever since—28 to date. In addition, the organisation has a formidable publication record. From its inception it has sought to produce and provide information for early childhood educators and parents in matters pertaining to early childhood in ways that are accessible, meaningful and designed to support better experiences for children.

There are shortcomings to the history contained in this book that we must acknowledge from the outset. The constraints of time and budget have meant that there have been many important contributors to the work of ECA whom we have not had the opportunity to interview. Similarly, we suspect that there are archival treasures in various state and territory localities that we have not had the time to mine. No doubt many people will be able to identify significant gaps in what is contained within these pages and we hope that, in time, a more comprehensive account will be written.

Sadly, we have not been able to mention by name all those people who have made significant contributions to ECA, nor have we done justice to the work of the ECA branches. By default, much of what we have written has focused on the work of the organisation nationally. Yet ECA is a federated body, and much of its strength comes from the work of its members in each branch.
Many of the early childhood initiatives mentioned in these pages were conceived at the branch level. Despite its shortcomings, we hope that this history contributes to creating a renewed appreciation of the contribution ECA has made to early childhood education and care since its creation in 1938. In the introduction to her draft history of the Australian Early Childhood Association (1993) Jackson-Nakano wrote of ‘the spirit of the indomitable women who founded this Association. They were strong, remarkable, relentless, demanding, persistent and influential.’

As authors we have been delighted to uncover the long track records of colleagues and acquaintances, as well as those unknown to us, who have made significant contributions to improving the quality of care and education environments for young children over the decades. ECA has been a conduit for this commitment and energy. We too have felt inspired by these advocates for young children who, quite simply, would not—and will not—give up.

A little about the structure of the book

A number of chapters present some information about the social and political developments of the time. This is to place the work of the organisation in context. It is easy to read the past through the lens of the present and we felt it was important to provide a taste of the changing nature of Australian society.

Many chapters devote sections to the Lady Gowrie Child Centres. Though ECA and the Lady Gowrie Centres today are separate entities, this was not the case for a considerable part of both organisations’ histories. Indeed, a great deal of the time of the AAPSCD/APA Federal Officers was spent travelling around Australia visiting the Gowries, overseeing the quality of their programs, and it seems, inspecting somewhat intimidated student teachers!

So too, the Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges (KTCs) receive numerous mentions. The principals of the KTCs were members of the AAPSCD/APA National Council and these connections were critical to the role the organisation played in establishing standards for early childhood education.

Appendices at the back of the book provide an ‘at a glance’ summary of people and achievements.

Terminology and definitions

In many sections of the book we have used the terms ‘preschool’ and ‘child care’ rather than the contemporary term ‘early childhood education and care’. We have done so deliberately to highlight the distinct nature of these forms of early childhood provision throughout much of this history. This distinction is important to a number of the debates about the direction of early childhood policy in which the organisation was engaged.

Throughout the book different terms are used in relation to various forms of early childhood education and care. These terms are sometimes a product of history (for example, Day Nursery), and sometimes a product of common usage for a particular location (for example, crèche). The following definitions apply to these terms within this book:

**Preschool and Kindergarten**: Centre-based sessional early childhood education and care available to children from age three until school age.

**Day Nurseries, Crèches and Child Care**: These services provided care for longer hours for children from infancy. Child care came into more common usage from the 1970s onwards.

**Nursery Schools**: Long day care services for children aged from about three years to school age. Many had trained nursery school teachers.

**Family Day Care**: Home-based child care offered within the day carers’ homes, under the supervision of a coordination unit.

**Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges/Kindergarten Training Colleges**: Kindergarten Colleges prepared teachers for teaching in preschool programs. In some states these were known as Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges and in others as Kindergarten Training Colleges. The abbreviation KTC is used to encompass both these titles.
We need to look to our past. Has anything really valuable been lost in the onward surge? ... We need to evaluate our present very carefully. There is so much that could be done. ... We need to look to the future lest present habit and expediency determine our direction; rather should we be guided by reasoned planning based on expanding knowledge of children and seen in relation to a complete scheme of education in its widest sense.

The historical roots of ECA are intertwined with those of Australia’s early kindergarten movement. Thus, this historical account begins with a brief explanation of the conditions that led to the establishment of Kindergarten Unions throughout Australia. Concern for the wellbeing of young children and the provision of high-quality early years’ education is a narrative that permeates ECA’s 75-year history.

The幼儿园运动是一个慈善性慈善的女人们做出的回应，目的是解决内城区贫困儿童的困境。它也发展了进步的教育理念，以及从新科学理解中成长和发展的新科学理解。幼儿园运动的早期历史与20世纪初妇女在澳大利亚公共生活中的影响力交织在一起，反映在《伊顿教育协会》的75年历史中。

The plight of poor children in late nineteenth century Australia

For many children living in late nineteenth century colonial Australia life was hard. Despite technological advancement and impressive scientific discoveries
(e.g. transportation, communication and medicine), in poor, inner-city neighbourhoods many children grew up in squalid, unsanitary, overcrowded and unsafe conditions. Many children died of illnesses and infectious diseases, and newspapers of the time were replete with stories of children being injured in accidents, abused, abandoned or murdered—forcing one medical doctor of the time to refer to the high number of children’s deaths as ‘the massacre of the innocents’ (Arthur, 1894, p. 5).

At the same time, there was growing interest in, and concern about, children’s welfare. Scientific studies had led to increased understanding about children’s growth and development, and the importance of intervening early in children’s lives to improve later developmental outcomes. Children increasingly featured in literature and art, games and toys were developed for them, and events such as picnics and parties were arranged especially for children (Wong, 2006). Child-rearing practices became the subject of parenting books and newspaper articles. Typical of this writing is the following piece from the popular women’s magazine The Dawn (1893), entitled The training of children. It strongly advocates the importance of early ‘training’ in order to advance future generations:

*Can there be too much said to bring about the desired result of having future generations evolve a higher life, and live on a more exalted plane, morally, mentally and physically, than their predecessors have ever enjoyed? The training cannot commence too early in life.*

Thus, the late nineteenth century was a period of contradiction in relation to children. On the one hand, social conditions were such that the lives of very poor children were often severely compromised, with many never reaching adulthood. On the other hand, there was growing awareness of the needs of young children and mounting recognition that poor children’s lives could be both saved and improved by attending to their social conditions. This created a prerogative for those concerned with the wellbeing of children to intervene in the lives of children and their families.

Women’s position in nineteenth century

The history of such female-dominated organisations as Kindergarten Unions goes hand in hand with the history of women’s emancipation. In the late nineteenth century, the dominant view of women was that they should content themselves with their traditional roles as wives, homemakers and mothers. Mothers were the principle carers of young children but they received very little support for undertaking this role. Mothers, who were poor, widowed or without husbands, often were compelled to work to support their families. Some mothers were able to bring their children to their place of work. Others left their young children in the care of family, neighbours or friends while they worked. However, for many women, their only option was to leave their children unattended. The following anecdote, frequently retold by Maybanke Anderson (an advocate for progressive education and founder of Kindergarten Union in NSW), tells of an encounter she had with a mother on the streets of Woolloomooloo, Sydney. When asked by Anderson if she worked, the mother was said to have replied:

‘Yes’m, mostly every day. Either washin’ or cleanin’. What do I do with the children? Well, yer see it’s like this. The lidades where I go won’t ‘ave no youngsters about the place, so I ’ave to leave ’em ’ere. ‘Outside?’ ‘Well, you know, I couldn’t leave the door open, so I ’ave just to lock ’em out’. And there they were, three grubby mites, sitting on the narrow curb, with their feet in the gutter. (Anderson, 1912, p. 21).

This anecdote poignantly illustrates the choices these mothers in poverty were forced to make on a daily basis in regards to the ‘care’ of their children, so that they could earn a subsistence living.

Yet this was also a time when women were advancing their rights and striving for greater equality with men. Highly educated and politically active ‘New Women’ (so called), agitated for universal franchise, female employment and women’s access to higher education.2

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2 South Australian women obtained the vote in 1894. In 1899 female suffrage was attained in Western Australia. Women across Australia (except Aboriginal women) were franchised in 1901. However, equity was far from being achieved and women often worked for half the salary of their male peers (Lake, 1999).
Women began to assert their place in the public sphere, often in relation to matters that could be argued were a ‘natural’ concern for them. In this milieu of burgeoning feminist activity, Kindergarten Unions provided an avenue for women to engage in publicly significant duties, gain employment and access to higher education. This was in an area deemed by most people at the time to be at least permissible, if not desirable, namely the care and education of young children (Wong, 2006).

Education practices in nineteenth century colonial Australia

The emergence of Kindergarten Unions is also a story of progressive educational ideas. For most of Australia’s early colonial history, the provision of education was primarily the responsibility of private enterprises or the church. Children of wealthy colonists tended to receive their formal education at home with parents or a tutor, or within private, fee-charging schools; whereas children of less wealthy and poor families received their formal instruction in philanthropic and church establishments (Barcan, 1965).

The second half of the nineteenth century, however, was a period marked by intense lobbying from advocates for free, secular and universally available education. Between the years 1872 and 1899 each colony (from 1901, state) introduced Public Education Acts (or their equivalent), making it compulsory for young children to attend school. Although ages of compulsion varied from between six or seven to 12 or 15, these schools were attended by many very young children. For instance, records show that in 1893, 27,879 children (constituting one-seventh of the total school population) attending public schools in New South Wales were under six years of age (Snow, 1989). The attendance of these very young children was primarily due to the fact that they attended with their elder siblings who were often charged with the responsibility of caring for them while their parents worked.

Public schools were often cramped and confined, and for the most part young children, some as young as 18 months, sat alongside their older peers and were subjected to the same instructional techniques, namely rote learning of dislocated facts through the Monitorial System, causing Anderson to lament ‘Boys and girls … sat … like wooden tubs, waiting for knowledge to be poured into them from other larger tubs’ (Anderson, 1914, p. 1).

Fröebel’s Kindergarten methods

Fröebel’s Kindergarten methods, which were deeply spiritual and attuned to assist ‘man’ attain spiritual enlightenment, valued children as individuals, but also viewed them as important contributors to humanity’s progressive march. In particular, he believed in the joy of childhood and privileged play as … the purest, most spiritual activity of man at this stage, and, at the same time, typical of human life as a whole—of the inner hidden natural life in man and all things (Fröebel4, The Education of Man, p. 55).

Through play, he argued, children learnt for life: The plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later life (Fröebel, The Education of Man, p. 55).

Educational settings based on Fröebelian Kindergarten methods aimed to be environments in which children’s inner tendency to grow and blossom could be fostered in a ‘natural’ way. Fröelian Scheer, in 1895, the year the first Kindergarten Union was formed, noted that:

The word ‘Kindergarten’ suggests … a children’s garden, in which the children are human blossoms, to be tended and cherished, like nature’s blossoms, not forced to grow and develop [sic] unnaturally by external means, but by means of self-activity, which is to be guided into right channels. … This institution was not to be a school, a place for instruction, but an educational institution, where free development was to be allowed and nothing to cramp or hinder the unfolding mind. (Scheer, 1895, p. 5 [speech marks in the original]).

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3 In NSW, for example, Sir Charles Cowper, Sir Henry Parkes and the Reverend James Greenwood of the Education League.

4 Fröebel’s Education of man was first published 1820 but didn’t become more widely known until the late-nineteenth century when his work was translated into English.
Although there had been several attempts during the nineteenth century to modify educational practices to better accommodate the needs of young children, for example, with the introduction of Infant Schools, these attempts were sporadic and short-lived. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, when Fröebel’s ideas about kindergarten began to inform educational thinkers in Australia, that early childhood education started to be developed in a sustained or systematic way. Australian educational reformers, such as Anderson, argued for a movement away from the ‘deficient’ and ‘misguided’ teacher-directed, curriculum-driven, ‘fact cramming, and repression’ (Scheer, 1894, p. 5) typical in traditional public schools of the time, to a more child-centred pedagogy.

Thus the Australian kindergarten movement emerged, giving rise to the creation of Kindergarten Unions in Australia. These Kindergarten Unions were concerned with educational practices within schools and establishing free kindergartens for children aged three to school age. The Kindergarten Unions’ objectives reflected both educational and philanthropic ideals.

The aims of the NSW Kindergarten Union (the first in Australia) were, for example:

To set forth Kindergarten Principles. To endeavour to get those principles introduced into every school in New South Wales. To open Free Kindergartens wherever possible in poor neighbourhoods. (Newton, 1904, p. 9)

By 1911, Kindergarten Unions or Associations had been established in all states (see Appendix 1 for a summary). They were voluntary, philanthropic organisations, founded primarily by people from the middle and upper classes concerned with the welfare of young children and convinced of the value of preschool education. Kindergarten Unions, however, were largely unsuccessful in their endeavour to reform educational practices in public schools. According to Maybanke Anderson, ‘No one wanted to know about kindergarten. ... We were all well-meaning enthusiasts. Could worse be said of anyone?’ (1914, p. 2). In the face of rejection, they set about establishing an independent kindergarten in order to model kindergarten methods. And so began what was to become the Kindergarten Unions’ main work of establishing Free Kindergartens in the poor areas of capital cities.

Development of Kindergarten Unions and Kindergarten Colleges in each state

The Kindergarten Union of NSW established the first Free Kindergarten in Australia in 1896 in the poor Sydney suburb of Woollomooloo. The idea spread rapidly across the country. Facilitated by advocates from New South Wales, especially Maybanke Anderson, Lillian de Lissa and Frances Newton, Free Kindergartens were established in South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland, the latter incorporating créches and known as the Queensland Crèche and Kindergarten Association. In Victoria, the first Free Kindergartens were established largely by church-based organisations and pre-dated the formation of the Free Kindergarten Union in 1908 (Mellor, 2009a).

Free Kindergartens were warmly embraced by the local communities in which they were established and were often filled to capacity within only a few weeks of opening. They were staffed by trained kindergarten teachers and assistants. Recognising the need for ‘properly trained teachers’ (Anderson, 1912, p. 28) in kindergartens, most Kindergarten Unions established Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges (or Kindergarten Training Colleges) (KTCs). Although initially based on Fröebelian methods, Free Kindergartens were dynamic and innovative institutions. Those involved in the early kindergarten movement travelled widely and many teacher-educators came to Australia from overseas, bringing with them new ideas and ways of thinking. Some of the most influential ideas in these early days came from Maria Montessori (Italy), the MacMillan sisters and Susan Isaacs (United Kingdom), and the Child Study Movement led by G. Stanley Hall (USA).

5 In Queensland the Kindergarten Union equivalent was the Crèche and Kindergarten (C&K) Association. In general, reference to the Kindergarten Unions at a national level can be understood to include C&K.
6 In some kindergartens children as young as 18 months attended.
7 So-called because they were free of charge.
The establishment of Free Kindergartens was not without controversy. Some commentators of the time considered education for such young children to be a waste of resources. Others misunderstood the purpose of kindergartens and considered them as attempting to supplant the role of mothers. The following excerpt from the 1904 Annual Report of the NSW Kindergarten Union, tells of the founders’ frustration at the need to perpetually negotiate and plead with governments and donors for financial assistance (Newton, 1904, p. 9):

Does the State realise that if it be recognised, encouraged and fostered for the next few years it will gain such a momentum that its influence and protective power against internal and external evils in the generations to come will be greater than all the standing armies in the world? This may seem like a strong statement to some, but only he who does not know the power of an idea, whose historic knowledge and prophetic sense are lacking, will say ‘nay’ to it.

It seems that from its very inception in Australia advocates have had to continually agitate, cajole and persuade, for the provision of early years’ education and care services.

Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges

Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges, specialising in early childhood teacher education, were established by Kindergarten Unions in most states. Although the courses varied slightly across the colleges, they were all three years long (longer than most State Teachers’ Colleges) and included the study of child development and early childhood pedagogy. The students, who were all female and mostly lived communally in student accommodation, were also expected to engage in domestic training as well as personal development opportunities. The Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges (KTC) were mostly independent from the State Teachers’ Colleges. They attracted students mostly from the middle to upper class. Students had to pay fees, although several had bursaries available. Graduates of KTCs would usually work in the Free Kindergartens. The KTCs gave women a legitimate form of education and employment, enabling them to become financially independent. However, remuneration for kindergarten teachers once qualified was poor.
The Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD) was born of a significant shift in the development of Kindergarten Unions in Australia, in the 1930s, from individual state-based organisations to a federated national peak body. This shift occurred against a backdrop of increasing government interest in, and concern with, children’s welfare, and growing recognition of the role day nurseries (crèches)\(^{10}\) and kindergartens could play in contributing to the health and wellbeing of the nation.

**Children—a national concern**

Up until the 1920s the health and welfare of young Australian children had been primarily a state responsibility. Philanthropic organisations such as Kindergarten Unions and Day Nursery associations were supported to varying degrees by state government subsidies but were also dependent on charitable donations. Throughout the 1920s, however, children’s health and wellbeing became a topic of discussion and debate in the Australian media, and in academic and government circles (Brennan, 1998). In particular, World War I had stoked concerns about Australia’s isolation from other ‘western’ countries and its susceptibility to invasion. It was argued that Australia needed a strong local population capable of defending the country. Attention was drawn to the need to stem the ‘wastage’ associated with the high infant mortality and morbidity of the times.

There was a dawning recognition, informed by scientific discoveries, that providing for children’s health and welfare could have not only lasting positive effects on their wellbeing but also flow-on benefits.

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\(^{10}\) Day Nurseries were also referred to as crèches and provided long day care for the children of mothers who were compelled to work—such as widowed or abandoned mothers or those whose husbands were incapacitated and unable to provide for them. They developed alongside but separate from the Kindergarten Unions—although several women were involved in both the Day Nursery and Kindergarten movements.
for the nation. There were also those who believed that given the ‘correct’ type of education, children were the best option for ensuring the development of a ‘brotherhood of man’ and ensuring lasting world peace.

These dual concerns—the need to protect children and to invest in them for the good of humanity—are reflected in the League of Nations Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1924, which stated:

1. The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually.

2. The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured.

3. The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress.

4. The child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood, and must be protected against every form of exploitation.

5. The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men.

In 1925 the Federal Health Council (the forerunner of the National Health & Medical Research Council [NHMRC]), chaired by Dr John Howard Lidgett Cumpston, was established, informed by a New South Wales Royal Commission into the decline of the population and infant mortality (1904). Drawing attention to the health of young children in the period between infancy (which was covered to some extent by infant welfare centres) and school age (which was covered by school health visitors), the Council urged state health and education authorities to give serious attention to preventative health measures. Indeed, so neglected were children of this age that the New South Wales Department of Public Health, noted in its annual publication Our babies (1936, p. 27):11

Concerns about children’s welfare were exacerbated by the economic depression that commenced in the late 1920s and continued until 1932. Unemployment surged to over 20 per cent and many families were forced to share housing. Homes were often overcrowded and disease and infection were rampant. Many children fell victim to starvation and deprivation and suffered their long-term consequences. The Annual Reports of the Kindergarten Unions contain harrowing tales of abject living conditions, inadequate clothing, malnutrition and disease. During this period, despite severe financial strain and at personal cost to many kindergarten advocates, Kindergarten Unions along with other child welfare organisations, continued to

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11 Published annually from at least 1931 to 1952, this magazine-style publication (with every other page used for advertising) was targeted at mothers and provided information on infant and child care.
Chapter 1: The birth of the Australian Association of Pre-School Child Development

support children, families and communities living in the poorest neighbourhoods. Many kindergartens introduced a midday meal to ensure children had some nutrition; they also secured clothing and organised holidays so that children could get away from their overcrowded homes and enjoy sunshine and fresh air.

Concerns with children’s wellbeing were further heightened in the 1930s by the prospect of another war. The realisation that many men were deemed unfit for military service, often due to conditions they experienced as children, once again drew attention to the need to invest in children’s welfare as a national priority. In 1937, the first session of the NHMRC (established to raise standards of health and wellbeing in Australia) raised grave concerns about the declining birth rate, and maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

Such concerns prompted the Commonwealth Government to commit funds to support maternal and child welfare. In 1935, to mark the Silver Jubilee of the Coronation of King George V, Dr Earle Page (Acting Prime Minister) had announced a campaign to raise funds for welfare work for mothers and children to which the Government contributed £50 000. In 1937, the Treasurer, Mr R. G. Casey, announced £100 000 would be spent on improving the health of the preschool-aged child. However, as Dr Cumpston (Commonwealth Director-General of Health) pointed out to Mr Casey, no national organisation yet existed that could carry out this work. A nationally representative body concerned with the interests of preschool children would need to be formed.

Early stages in the development of the AAPSCD

From their inception, Kindergarten Unions had been state based and largely worked independently. In September 1936, the Women’s Centenary Congress on Child Welfare, part of the celebrations marking the centenary of the founding of South Australia, brought together leading figures in child welfare and preschool education from around the nation. At this Congress many people involved with the kindergarten movement met for the first time. They took this opportunity to convene the first interstate meeting of Kindergarten Unions, opened by Lady Gowrie (wife of the Governor General and Patroness-in-Chief of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria), and the seeds of a national body were sown.

In Melbourne a month later, Lady Gowrie met with Kindergarten Union representatives Lady Bonython (South Australia), Lady Julius (NSW), Mrs a’Beckett (Victoria) and Dr Stoneman (Western Australia). They decided to hold a follow-up meeting of all state Kindergarten Unions and the Queensland Crèche and Kindergarten Association—with the purpose of forming a national body to represent kindergarten unions on national affairs.

Meanwhile the Federal Government continued to investigate the welfare of young children. Following Casey’s budget announcement of 1937, Cumpston, in his capacity as Director-General of Health, wrote to the heads of each state health department seeking their recommendations for what could be done in relation to ‘the preschool child’. Each replied with glowing reports on their respective kindergarten organisations. Cumpston also commissioned Dr Vera Scantlebury Brown (first Director of Infant Welfare in Victoria and first Honorary Medical Officer for the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria) to prepare a report on the care of preschool children.

Lady Zara Gowrie
Scantlebury Brown’s report, Care of the Preschool Child (1937), was written with the assistance of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria (Waters, 2000). It recommended attention to the health of preschool-aged children, the establishment of model nursery-kindergartens to demonstrate kindergarten methods, and research into young children’s development. The report was later endorsed by the NHMRC (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Cumpston subsequently commissioned Scantlebury Brown to prepare a second report on the requirements for adequately supervising children’s development before school age and into the costs of establishing nursery-kindergarten demonstration centres. She worked closely on this report with members of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria—Ada a’Beckett, Christine Heinig, Alice Creswick and Frances Derham. The commissioning of this report was no doubt a source of great optimism for those concerned with kindergartens, especially those from the Victorian Free Kindergarten Union.

State kindergarten bodies continued to independently lobby the Federal Government for funds. For instance, in 1937 the presidents of both Victoria (a’Beckett) and New South Wales (E. H. Hall) Kindergarten Unions wrote separately to the Federal Minister for Health, asking for funding to establish kindergartens. Neither was successful.

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<tr>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Mr H. E. Hall</th>
<th>President, Kindergarten Union NSW</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Florence Sulman</td>
<td>Benefactor and Committee member, Kindergarten Union NSW</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jean Wyndham</td>
<td>Acting Head (and graduate), Sydney Kindergarten Teachers’ College</td>
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<td>Ella Slack</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>Dorothy King</td>
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<td>Doris Beeston</td>
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<td>Mrs A. K. Goode</td>
<td>Founder, Kindergarten Union of South Australia</td>
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<td>Christine Heinig</td>
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<td>Nancy Francis</td>
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<td>Ada a’Beckett</td>
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<td>Observers</td>
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<td>Jean McMillan</td>
<td>QLD Student, Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers’ College</td>
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<td>Stella Allen</td>
<td>Journalist, <em>The Argus</em>—Victoria</td>
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<td>Mrs Vercoe</td>
<td>Daughter of Lady Bonython—SA</td>
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The Federal Government was disinclined to deal with state-based services because it couldn’t be seen to favour one state over another or interfere in state affairs. This provided further impetus for the Kindergarten Unions to amalgamate into one national body with which the Federal Government could deal.

The formation of the AAPSCD ‘a very valuable organisation’

On 17 March, 1938, Lady Huntingfield (wife of the Governor of Victoria) opened a joint meeting of the Kindergarten Unions at Mooroolbark, the Kindergarten Teachers’ College in Kew, Melbourne. Lady Huntingfield, in opening the meeting, emphasised the importance of the state Kindergarten Unions being represented by an executive body to facilitate their discussions with the Federal Government on matters related to the care, education and welfare of the preschool child (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Mrs Goode, a founder of Kindergarten Union in South Australia, moved that a’Beckett take the chair, a motion carried unanimously. a’Beckett explained that the Victorian Kindergarten Union had approached the Federal Government for a grant to establish a model kindergarten and was awaiting a reply. She argued that the Federal Government might consider establishing centres in all states, hence an executive federal body representing all state Kindergarten Unions on matters relating to the preschool child would be desirable.

The 18 women and one man representing each of the state Kindergarten Unions (see Table 1.1 for list of attendees) were no doubt highly cognisant of the current interest in child welfare shown by the Federal Government, and were perhaps a little concerned that any funding might go solely to Victoria (as the Scantlebury Brown report had arisen from this state). The meeting unanimously carried a motion, proposed by Goode, to develop an executive body to represent all state Kindergarten Unions on national issues.

The purpose of the organisation would be:
- to coordinate the work of the six Kindergarten Unions
- to set up standards for the guidance of young children in Nursery-Kindergartens

Mary Thompson, Lorna Ruddock, Yseult Bailey, Jean Denton and Nancy Fairfax at morning tea for annual executive meeting 1959, Canberra

12 a’Beckett, 1939, p. 20
AAPSCD first conference

A main aim of the AAPSCD was to organise a biennial conference. Less than a year after the meeting in Melbourne, the first biennial conference was opened by Lady Gowrie. Held from 30 January to 4 February, 1939, at the Union Theatre, University of Melbourne, speakers stressed the importance of the scientific examination of children and childhood (AAPSCD, 1939). In her opening address Lady Gowrie observed that, ‘Never before in the history of the world has science looked at a child’s need with so maternal an eye’.

Cumpston noted in his conference report (AAPCSD, 1939):

>This is the period during which growth is most rapid and consequently it is of the greatest importance that we should have complete knowledge of all the phenomena of growth at this period and of the principles of its correct control. More especially do we need to study and direct those aspects which we may comprehensively call correct physical and mental posture.

The conference covered issues related to the preschool child’s growth and development including nutrition, physical and mental health, as well as papers on art, music and singing, parent education, child guidance, keeping records, the changing emphasis on kindergarten work, finance and voluntary helpers (AAPSCD, 1939).

In her address to the conference AAPSCD’s President, a’Beckett recalled that Cecily Hamilton had remarked that the twentieth century was the Age of the Child. Astutely, and in recognition of the great work being done by women for the welfare of women and children, a’Beckett (1939, p. 12) then went on to say:

>It is also the first century in which women have had any choice in public organisation, and as Winifred Holtby remarked I do not think the two facts disconnected.

The final wording of the AAPSCD Constitution was agreed on the last day of the conference, 4 February, 1939. The objects of the organisation would be:

- to set standards for the training of Kindergarten teachers
- to establish a Federal Bureau of Publications relating to preschool work, and
- to organise a conference biennially.

The organisation was to be known as the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD). This long and rather cumbersome name was intentionally chosen to be inclusive of a range of organisations interested in the care, education and welfare of young children (AAPSCD, 1939). Playing on its acronym—AAPSCD—the organisation was later to become affectionately known as ‘Aspidistra’ by its supporters (Spearritt, 1980).
Chapter 1: The birth of the Australian Association of Pre-School Child Development

- to promote the continuous activities of organisations having as their object the well-balanced physical, mental and emotional growth and development of the preschool child
- to act as a medium through which the Association and affiliated bodies may approach the Federal and State Governments in matters pertaining to the welfare of the preschool child
- to form a Federal Bureau (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Thus the AAPSCD became the first national body representing early childhood education in Australia. It represented 78 Free Kindergartens and nine Nursery Schools13 through the Kindergarten Unions and the Queensland Crèche and Kindergarten Association, with a collective roll of 5512 children (a’Beckett, 1939, p. 15). The Kindergarten Unions of each state, and when formed the Kindergarten Unions of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, were full members of the Association. Affiliated membership was available to organisations that complied with AAPSCD standards of health and guidance. The Association’s national headquarters were to be in Canberra (in fact the AAPSCD continued to run out of Melbourne until 1945, and only then did it move to Canberra). The Executive (President, Vice-Presidents, State Representatives and an Honorary Secretary-Treasurer) were to meet annually.

This must have been an extremely busy time for those involved with the AAPSCD. At the same time that final amendments were being made to the Constitution, and its first national conference was being planned, it was also charged with the establishment and development of six Model Demonstration Child Development Centres—the Lady Gowrie Child Centres.

Establishment of Lady Gowrie Child Centres

As Model Child Development Centres, the Lady Gowrie Child Centres constituted a significant aspect of the Federal Government’s response to improving child welfare. As the only national organisation representing the concerns of the preschool child, the AAPSCD was charged with the responsibility for establishing and subsequently running the centres.

In his 1937 policy speech, Prime Minister Lyons had announced the allocation £100,000 for a National Health Campaign especially focused on the health of women and children. Page, Federal Minister for Health, submitted a proposal to Cabinet, based on Scantlebury Brown’s report and endorsed by the NHMRC, for the funds to be expended on Model Child Development Centres in each state capital city, in collaboration with the state Departments of Health (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). These would act as centres for training, demonstration and research and serve the three-fold purposes of acting as a kindergarten, providing medical supervision and demonstrating kindergarten methods (Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

Once approved, the total funds from the National Health Campaign (£100,000) were allocated to the establishment and operating costs (for five years) of the centres—£90,000 for the six states, with the balance to be used for establishing a centre in Canberra.

The federal and respective state Departments of Health were responsible for the medical programs while medical research investigating children’s growth, development and nutrition was supervised by a Federal Medical Officer, Dr Frederick Clements from the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra.

However, it was the newly federated AAPSCD that was enlisted to establish and run the centres. Speaking of this decision Page said:

We are satisfied after an inquiry that the Federal body, AAPSCD, has the knowledge and experience to carry out this through effectively for us, and so long as they can carry it out satisfactorily we shall free them from financial anxiety which so often hampers good work. (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

a’Beckett (President) announced proudly at AAPSCD’s first biennial conference (1939) that:

The Federal Government is prepared for the first time to help each state by making available funds for building, equipping and staffing for five years, a model centre for preschool child development in each capital city, in the hope that State Departments of Education and Health, municipal bodies, educationalists

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13 Nursery Schools were long day care services for children aged three years to school age; many had trained nursery school teachers.
and teachers, doctors, students, nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists, parents and voluntary workers, may visit the Centres, observe, note, question and discuss what is being done and endeavour to get such help and development brought into use for the whole of our 480 000 preschool children instead of the 2½% now touched.

Likening the AAPSCD to a child that had not yet reached its first birthday, a’Beckett (1939) informed the audience:

We are giving it the greatest care and attention possible so that when it comes to the toddler stage and begins to stand and walk, it may be absolutely healthy with as few defects as possible. I think we may say that the pre-natal care bestowed—the right nutrition, the calm deliberation as to time and place of its birth, with experts in readiness to offer help and advice—have all been factors in this production of a fine and healthy infant definitely above the average and duly impressing the Federal Minister of Health and his Director-General so that they have determined to act as its Godfathers, making a fine christening gift of a Model Demonstration Centre for Preschool Child Development in each capital city.

I am confident that the Godfather will have cause to be proud, as the years pass, of this fine offspring, born in March 1938.

a’Beckett (1939) noted the centres would be named in honour of their ‘godmother’ Lady Gowrie, whose advocacy to successive governments for the welfare of young children was a major factor in their development. They were a joint venture between the federal and state Departments of Health, the AAPSCD and state Kindergarten Unions. The state governments provided the land and the Federal Government provided capital for the buildings and covered administrative costs for a period of five years. The Kindergarten Unions, overseen by the AAPSCD and in association with the Director-General of Health Cumpston, were responsible for building the Centres. Once built, the day to day running of the Centres became the responsibility of local Lady Gowrie Child Centre committees.

On learning of its role in supervising the establishment of the centres, the AAPSCD nominated Christine Heinig and Jean Wyndham, at that time Principals of Melbourne KTC and Sydney KTC respectively, to liaise with Cumpston in Canberra (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Together they drew up a plan for the centres. They were to be built on a site of approximately one acre, in densely populated areas, but not in close proximity to an already established kindergarten, and have a travel radius for children of half a mile. They were to each accommodate 100 children aged between 18 months and six years of age divided into three groups (25 two-year-olds, 35 three-year-olds, 40 four-year-olds). The buildings in each state were to follow a similar plan and be simple and cheap to construct. Each centre would be equipped with a range of indoor (e.g. blocks, socio-dramatic, craft, books) and outdoor (e.g. sandpits, climbing frames, wheeled toys, gardening equipment) play materials and equipment, as well as a flagpole and flag (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

From their inception the Gowries were interdisciplinary, designed to model kindergarten methods and be centres for the scientific study of young children’s growth and development (Cumpston & Heinig, 1945). They were staffed by teachers (a head teacher, and two teachers for each group of children), an infant welfare nurse/dietician, social worker, part-time psychologist, dentist and medical doctor, as well as ancillary staff such as assistants, a secretary, cook and kitchen maid, and gardener-cleaner. The staff were to be paid above-award wages in order to attract the ‘best’ people. In addition to their demonstration role, it was proposed that the centres could also be used as training schools for nursery teachers.

In 1938, Heinig and Cumpston began what must have been an exhausting series of visits to each state Kindergarten Union to assist them prepare for building the Gowries. As part of this busy schedule they visited, by boat and train, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane in May, Tasmania in June, and Perth in July. Christine Heinig was to continue in the taxing work of establishing and overseeing the Gowries for several years—‘continuously travelling, remaining in each place about three or four weeks at a time’ (Heinig, 1940, p. 1). Subsequent to resigning her position as Principal of Melbourne KTC, she was appointed first Federal Officer for the AAPSCD,
at the first executive meeting of the AAPSCD in 1938, a position she took up after a six-month visit to the United Kingdom and United States where she met with a range of early years’ advocates, attended conferences, visited several early years’ services, delivered multiple lectures and wrote a journal article!

Heinig (and her successors) who worked closely with Cumpston, was essentially a conduit between the AAPSCD and the Federal Government:

I have found the work continuously interesting and stimulating, and there seems to be no end to the things that one learns when trying to meet the problems that arise in a project such as the Lady Gowrie Child Centre Programme. (Heinig, 1940, p. 1).

The newly formed AAPSCD paid close attention to the development of the Gowries, overseeing everything from the height of lavatories, shelving and doorknobs to a safe storage space for the teachers’ purses. Likewise careful attention was paid to the materials and equipment to be used by the children. Although they endeavoured to shop ‘intelligently and economically’ (AAPSCD, 1939, p. 1), the budget was tightly controlled by Cumpston. Everything had to be approved by him and he rejected any plans that went over budget, sending them back to the various committees for revision (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Eventually, after much searching, negotiating and dealing, each state secured a site for their centre:

- Melbourne—Carlton
- Perth—Victoria Park
- Adelaide—Thebarton
- Brisbane—Spring Hill
- Hobart—Battery Point
- Sydney—Erskineville

Appropriate plans were made, tenders were received and approvals given to commence building in 1938. Although built to the same basic plan by Melbourne architect Marcus Martin, each centre was adapted to its local conditions and had its own unique character. Commenting on working with architects Heinig noted:

Since architects in many of the States have not had the problem of building a preschool previously, and since so many features are entirely new to them they are in need of all the help that can be given to them to understand how the buildings are to be used. (Heinig, 1939, p. 1).

Interior designers were consulted on colour schemes and decoration because, according to Heinig, ‘It is easy to spoil the general effect of a building by choosing furnishings not in keeping with the general line’ (Heinig, 1939, p. 1). A number of materials were donated by local businesses. Lady Gowrie donated a clock to all centres except Sydney—which had received three clocks from ‘other’ friends. Staffing of the centres was dealt with by a sub-committee of the AAPSCD, consisting of representatives from Victoria, proxies of Western Australia, the President and Honorary Secretary of the AAPSCD and the Principal of Melbourne KTC. All appointments had to be endorsed by Cumpston.

There is little doubt that the Government’s decision to spend all its National Health Campaign funds on the Lady Gowrie Centres was a major coup for the fledgling AAPSCD. In a press report in The Argus (1938: cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993), a’Beckett was quoted as saying that the decision represented a tremendously important step forward that would benefit preschool children over the whole of Australia and that:

It will make it possible for us to extend the knowledge and work of the nursery schools and kindergartens so that not only the under-privileged but the over-privileged children will gradually be given the opportunity of benefiting by these special arrangements. I have no doubt that the formation of the AAPSCD has commended the movement by the Minister for Health, showing, as it does, that we are not isolated units in each State, but groups endeavouring to work together for the good of the whole.

But it wasn’t all plain sailing. The most ‘vexing criticism’ of the centres, according to Heinig (1940), coming from the clergy and frequently reported in the press, was that they weakened family ties ‘by taking children from their homes’ and that they taught no religious education. Further, many organisations that had been working for decades for the wellbeing of mothers and children, such as
Maternal and Child Welfare organisations and the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association (SDN & NSA), wrote to the Federal Minister of Health bitterly complaining, somewhat justifiably, that they had been overlooked (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Cumpston was particularly concerned that SDN & NSA, which had been providing day nurseries and nursery schools in New South Wales since 1906, would use its influence with the Minister of Health in NSW to cause serious complications for the development of the centre in Sydney. The potential for ill-will was further compounded by the fact that SDN & NSA, because it was not a Kindergarten Union, was initially excluded from membership of the AAPSCD (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). To placate the organisation, Cumpston instructed Heinig to undertake urgent conciliatory negotiations with SDN & NSA, and AAPSCD membership criteria were amended so that SDN & NSA could become an affiliated member, but it did not do so until 1951 (Pendred, n.d.).

A perceived lack of clarity over the respective responsibilities of state and federal Departments of Health also caused tension. The Gowries were funded through the federal Department of Health but state Departments of Health were responsible for some aspects including the purchase of a site for the centres.

Federal/state tensions, prompted a’Beckett, in her Presidential Address at the first biennial conference, to announce (1939):

> To State Governments we would say that the Federal Government is not attempting to interfere with the work of the States, not to supersede anything they are doing, but is anxious to supplement the work for little children by showing what can and ought to be done, if money and expert knowledge are available.

Additionally, several state Kindergarten Unions had their own unique challenges (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). In Brisbane, tensions between the crèches and kindergartens—with the former being anxious that crèche work would be supplanted—threatened the development of the Brisbane Centre. In New South Wales there were ‘petty antagonisms’ between the Kindergarten Union and the Sydney KTC. Several state Kindergarten Unions had limited funding resulting in less than ideal equipment or programs in their kindergartens. Moreover, some state committees were less well prepared or had less capacity for undertaking the work than others. In particular, Tasmania, which had only just formed a state Kindergarten Union and had no training college, had little experience or understanding of early years education. Consequently, as they journeyed around the country, Heinig and Cumpston often found themselves having to resolve sometimes long-held tensions, and make recommendations that went far beyond the establishment of the centres.

So why was the AAPSCD, a newly convened organisation, albeit founded by members with long-established histories in providing services for preschool children, chosen to oversee this major work? It was likely a mixture of political connections, political expediency, serendipity and strategy (Mellor, 2009a). Lady Gowrie’s personal involvement in the kindergarten movement and her ability to wield personal pressure on politicians on behalf of the Kindergarten Unions was undoubtedly a reason why the AAPSCD was subsequently invited to oversee the management of the centres.

Likewise Cumpston, whose own mother was one of the pioneer kindergarten advocates, had a strong commitment to, and familiarity with, the kindergarten movement (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). The AAPSCD may have been considered a safer political option than other organisations. The work of some child welfare organisations, such as SDN & NSA, was widely considered to be a radical assault on the ‘natural’ order of mothering and was far from universally accepted (Wong, 2006). However, the Kindergarten Unions’ decision to move to a federated body, coming as it did at the same time as the government announced its budget plans, was undoubtedly strategic. As the only national body concerned with preschool children, the AAPSCD became an obvious choice to oversee the development of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres.

The establishment of the AAPSCD in 1938 and the subsequent development of Lady Gowrie Child Centres mark a significant event in the history of early childhood education and care in Australia. But the celebrations were somewhat overshadowed by a momentous event—Britain’s declaration of war on Germany announced on 3 September, 1939.
CHAPTER 2

The war years (1939–1945)

A visit to a centre such as this cannot fail to prove uplifting at a time when the world is passing through a crisis precipitated by forces that are the antithesis of the constructive objects for which Lady Gowrie Child Centres have been established. (‘Woman’s Realm’, The West Australian, 19 August, 1940).

England’s declaration of war upon Germany in 1939 was to affect the fledgling association, coming as it did three months before the opening of the first Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Carlton, Victoria on 8 December, 1939. In 1940, the remainder of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres were officially opened: the Brisbane and Hobart Gowrie Centres opened in July; the Adelaide Centre was officially declared open in August 1940, although it had been accepting children since April of that year; the Perth Gowrie followed in September; and Sydney in October.

Despite the war, the opening of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres attracted much media attention and was used by the AAPSCD to promote the value of preschool education. Each centre’s non-teaching director played an important role in demonstrating and interpreting the work of the centre to its many visitors. In addition, the Lady Gowrie Centre directors were often prominent in the public arena. For instance, Margaret Evans, Director of the WA Lady Gowrie Centre, wrote a series of articles for the Western Mail in 1946 which described the work of the WA Centre and offered parenting advice. Several documentaries were made in the Gowries on child nutrition and physical development and shown in newsreels across Australia. Importantly, the centres became the vehicle through which AAPSCD established and demonstrated standards of preschool education relating to matters such as staff qualifications, ratios of teachers to children, buildings, equipment and hours of operation.

The approach of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres epitomised the emerging emphasis upon scientific principles for child development. Under the funding committed by the Department of Health, these child
development centres were to study ‘the problems of physical growth, nutrition and development’ (Cumpston, n.p., cited in Clements & MacPherson, 1945). This research focus required that the Gowrie Centres only enrol ‘well children’ who were born in Australia, of Australian-born parents (Brennan 1998). As Brennan (1998) points out, this focus excluded Aboriginal children and really denoted Australian children of Anglo-Saxon heritage. In part, this focus was driven by a desire to know whether ‘a distinct racial type is evolving in this country’ (Hill, 1949, p. 13).

As previously noted, each centre employed an interdisciplinary team including a kindergarten teacher, a non-teaching director, a social worker and a nurse (Spearritt, 1980) with the collective role of monitoring the health, education, welfare and development of Australian preschool children. As Jean Ferguson recalled in her memoirs of the Brisbane Lady Gowrie Centre (1997, cited in Gahan, 2005, pp. 6–7):

Child study both from a medical and educational perspective was a vital element in the Centre’s programme. Each child had a medical check on arrival each morning … pictures were taken of the child’s posture on a regular basis; the food he ate at the Centre was scientifically balanced; his home was visited twice yearly by the social worker … each week the whole staff [including] five fully-qualified kindergarten teachers sat down and considered a variety of reports on two or three specific children. The teachers presented reports on the child’s behaviour at the centre, the social worker on the condition of his home and the attitude of his parents, the medical officer on the child’s health, and the sister augmented this with an account of her daily contact with the child and his parents. After discussion, the reports would be summarised, the child’s needs identified and recommendations made for parents.

The detailed records of children’s development were sometimes controversial. Not only did staff examine children daily, parents were asked to give accounts of children’s eating, sleeping and toileting habits. Further, parents themselves could be the objects of enquiry, as staff sometimes sought information from children’s neighbours about the child’s family (Brennan 1998). In addition, children were often required to strip so that accurate measures and observations could be taken. The Health Record report of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres contains photographs of naked children having their posture, height, weight and measurements checked (Clements & MacPherson, 1945). Unsurprisingly, Brennan reports that many young children objected strongly to having all their clothes taken off ‘and, on this issue, parents were often prepared to support children against the staff’ (1998, p. 41). The Gowries, like most kindergartens, were staffed by middle- and upper-class women, while the families using the services were drawn from the working class and poor. Staff were often critical of working women and, according to Brennan (1998, p. 43) ‘(t)here is little evidence that the staff had any understanding of the larger social problems which beset these families, problems such as inadequate wages, poor housing and lack of child care’. That being said, the Gowrie Centres did assist mothers with food and clothing, particularly those whose husbands had gone off to war, and the AAPSCD advocated for government measures to support parents to raise healthy children. For instance, the organisation provided input into the Child Endowment Scheme introduced in 1941 by the Menzies Government (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Not surprisingly, Australia’s participation in the war affected the work of the AAPSCD. At the same time as KTCs were trying to attract teaching recruits, many young women were supporting the war effort by working in munitions factories, filling the jobs left vacant by the men who had gone to war, or joining the services themselves. In this climate it became important for the AAPSCD and its work through the Lady Gowrie Child Centres to be regarded as part of women’s contribution to the war effort and to nation building. Hence, as president of AAPSCD, a’Beckett advocated that ‘caring for the preschool child should prove, in this time of war, a valuable form of national service’ (Sunday Mail, 3 July, 1940 cited in Gahan, 2005).

The role of early childhood education and care as a legitimate domestic contribution to Australia’s war effort was often revisited. In laying the foundation stone of the Lady Gowrie Centre in Erskineville, Sydney, Lady Gowrie declared, ‘... by planning for
the care and education of these children, we are protecting our heritage, and the future for which we are fighting' (Sydney Morning Herald, 8 April, 1940, p. 4).

Miss Helen Paul, Principal of the Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers’ College, foreshadowed a link between kindergarten work, democracy and citizenship in her 1941 address to the students, stating that:

*If we can help to build up people through our understanding of them, we are doing something in some small way to help peace … next to the men, children in our communities must be supported.* (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

The second biennial conference ‘Stability and progress in time of war’

The second biennial conference of the AAPSCD was held in 1941 under the banner ‘Stability and progress in time of war’. Beckett addressed the conference with the following words:

*The cry of today is for a better world, a reconstructed society. What better beginning can we make than by adopting measures to provide every Australian child with adequate food, proper clothing, suitable housing and a happy environment so as to lay the foundations of a society in which every child will be developed to its potential maximum of physical, mental and emotional or spiritual health.* (2 June, 1941).

Speakers at the conference stressed the importance of upholding high standards in kindergarten training. In her opening address to the conference, Lady Gowrie asserted that teachers’ work with young children and parent education were fundamental to Australia’s best interests and teacher training of at least three years duration was necessary (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). In a speech entitled ‘Education for Insecurity’, Professor Ashby from the University of Sydney argued that kindergarten methods should be applied to secondary education in order to prepare children for the world after the war. Ashby posited that the post-war world would be based on new values and the transition to this new world would be marred by social and economic insecurity. Therefore, the present generation needed to be educated for an insecure world where familiar standards were of little importance. Following this conference, the Executive of the AAPSCD resolved at their annual meeting (September 1941) to coordinate and raise the standards of kindergarten training (Jackson-Nakano, 1993) despite the context of declining teacher numbers because of the impact of the war (Gardiner, 1982).

In 1942, the fear of Japanese invasion after the fall of Singapore resulted in the closure of a number of kindergartens in Western Australia and Queensland. The Civil Defence Council closed all kindergartens in Perth. Cumpston ordered that all staff leave the Perth Lady Gowrie Centre, except for the director, secretary and caretaker. The centre’s records were placed in a large steel trunk and buried in a trench and the centre temporarily became an Emergency Transfusion Centre run by the Red Cross. Similarly, the Queensland Government ordered the closure of the Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Brisbane. The Perth centre was closed for four months and the Brisbane centre closed for a year (Jackson-Nakano, 1993; Kerr, 1994).

Kindergarten of the air: An Australian invention

The closures of kindergartens in Perth and Brisbane exacerbated the teacher shortage as many, now unemployed, kindergarten teachers took up other types of work that were much better paid (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). In addition, even in areas where kindergartens weren’t closed, many teachers sought work with national service. In order to stem this tide, Heinig negotiated with the Commonwealth Manpower Authority to declare kindergarten and preschool work a reserved occupation, hence distinguishing it as a national service. The resulting Commonwealth directive meant that kindergarten teachers were not permitted to take up other positions (Gardiner, 1982).

When Perth kindergartens closed the director of the Perth Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Margaret Evans, proposed the idea of kindergarten by radio as a means of continuing to support the provision of kindergarten to young children while they were at home.

She took the idea to the Kindergarten Union of Western Australia where it was enthusiastically supported.
The executive of the WA Branch appointed Mrs Catherine King, who presented a successful women’s program on the ABC, to speak to the State Manager of the ABC about trialling a daily radio program, Kindergarten of the air (Graham-Taylor, 1996). This was a world first. Margaret Graham, a graduate of the Perth KTC, became its first presenter in Perth. The program was a great success and in May 1943 the ABC centralised the program in Sydney, although the Perth version continued to broadcast in Western Australia because of the two-hour time difference (Graham-Taylor, 1996).

Ruth Fenner, a graduate of the KTC at Waverley, was the first national broadcaster of Kindergarten of the air. She soon alternated daily with Melbourne KTC graduate, Anne Dreyer. As well as being heard throughout the nation, the program was broadcast to the members of the Australian Armed Forces ‘who were posted overseas and were able to imagine themselves at home with their children’ (Davis, 2003). The show reached an audience of 100 000 listeners each day, and from July 1943 was recorded for broadcast in Britain, South Africa and the United States (Norton, 2002; Zollo, 2003). In 1948 a weekly broadcast of Kindergarten of the air became part of the official program of Radio Australia (Dreyer, 1989).

The development of wartime children’s centres

The war made many industries dependent upon women’s labour, thus the absence of child care was problematic. Although supportive of kindergarten, many members of the AAPSCD did not view child care favourably and disapproved of mothers being in paid employment (Brennan, 1998). However, the exigencies of war did result in the AAPSCD being involved in the planning of wartime children’s centres. A Coordinating Committee for Child Care in War-time, based in Melbourne, included representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, the AAPSCD, trade unions, health and social work (Davis, 1988; Brennan, 1998).

There was a considerable clash of values on this committee. The differences resolved [sic] around the philosophy that ‘the child’s needs are paramount’ and that ‘we must not make a need for child care’. Thus, the traditional child care organisations … were strongly opposed to mothers being in paid employment. On the other hand, the experience of these organisations was a great asset in many ways. (Crow, 1983 cited in Davis, 1988, p. 154).

Heinig, with the help of Gladys Pendred, Helen Paul, Madeline Crump and Scantlebury Brown, among others, drew up plans for the Brunswick Children’s Centre in Melbourne as a model for wartime children’s centres (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). At that time, Brunswick was an industrial suburb in which thousands of women were employed in textile factories.

Wartime centres marked a significant shift in early childhood programs. They were not established for the ‘needy’ but because women’s labour was important for the war effort (Mellor, 1990). Preference for places was given to mothers engaged in war-related work, for instance, those working in munitions factories (Spearritt, 1980). In total, 14 centres were established Australia-wide: nine in Victoria, two in South Australia and three in New South Wales (Brennan, 1998). In a number of kindergartens, hours were extended from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm and availability open to children as young as two-years-old.
Nevertheless, the number of wartime centres failed to meet demand. In Melbourne, for instance, the four wartime centres had waiting lists twice the size of their enrolments (Gardiner 1982). Underlying ambivalence about the desirability of married women being in paid employment prevented larger scale expansion (Brennan 1998).

The third biennial conference: The ‘Child and the Atlantic Charter’

War restrictions resulted in the 1943 biennial conference being based in each state, with each organising its own conference under the shared theme of the ‘Child and the Atlantic Charter’. The Atlantic Charter was a joint declaration of a vision for a post-war world (United Nations, n.d.). The focus upon the Atlantic Charter arose from the New Education Fellowship (NEF) conference of educational experts which was held in London in April 1942. The NEF had originated in England at the end of the nineteenth century around a belief in education as a means of creating a just society. It emphasised equal opportunity, creativity and cooperation (Gregg, 1993). The NEF conference in 1942 was concerned with the situation of children after the war and produced a ‘statement of the basic and minimum rights of children to be secured and guarded’ (cited in Veerman 1992, p. 285). Governments of all allied nations were urged to approve the resulting Children’s charter for the post war world. The Charter’s principles were based on the belief that a new society could be built through educational reform (Veerman, 1992). The Charter declared:

- The personality of the child is sacred and the needs of the child must be the foundation of any good educational system.
- The right of every child to proper food, clothing and shelter shall be accepted as a first charge on the resources of the nation.
- For every child there shall always be available medical attention and treatment.
- All children shall have equal opportunity of access to the nation’s stores of knowledge and wisdom.
- There shall be full-time schooling for every child.
- Religious training should be available for all children. (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.)

The wide-ranging concerns of the AAPSCD for measures to support children’s wellbeing were evident in the types of resolutions that emerged from the state conferences. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the conference urged:

… the formulation of a national child welfare programme, the establishment of a national children’s bureau at Canberra, the improvement of nutritional standards, the provision of a large Federal grant for education, more children’s libraries, and the training of male play leaders. (National Children’s Bureau Urged, SMH 23 August, 1943).

The AAPSCD’s suggestion of a formation of a National Children’s Bureau was considered at a conference of the Ministers of Health. Cumpston reported to the Commonwealth Minister for Health that a general resolution had been passed at this conference which read as follows:
This conference is of the opinion that, in order to secure continuity of record, supervision of child from birth to end of school life be a function of the Health Department in each State; and that further attention be given by school medical officers and other medical practitioners to the preschool child through some well organised system under the Health Department; and that pre-natal clinics be extended whenever the opportunity offers to give advice to expectant mothers, especially in relation to diet; and that more extensive systematic training in home science be instituted. (cited Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

Scantlebury Brown, whose work had so effectively supported the funding of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, then produced a paper on What could be done by the public health department in the care of the preschool child. Scantlebury Brown proffered the example of the Victorian Department of Health in which two highly qualified Preschool Educational Officers were appointed to the Infant Welfare Division to advise on matters relating to ‘the preschool child’. Among other recommendations, she argued that the Public Health Department could subsidise the appointment of a preschool educational officer to Infant and Child Welfare Centre staff and help Infant and Child Welfare Committees and staff to organise this new branch of preschool activities. She called for the coordination of activities related to preschool children and that groups caring for children under six should be registered (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Nurturing preschool leadership

In 1944, in an effort to generate leadership in Australian preschool education, Mrs Alice Creswick donated money for a scholarship to enable a student to undertake a two-year course of study in Child Development in the United States of America. Heather Lyon was chosen as the first holder of this travelling scholarship. In a letter recalling her interview prior to being awarded the scholarship, Lyon wrote:

In early May 1944, I received a phone call from the Secretary of the Kindergarten Training College asking me to go that afternoon to see Mrs Creswick at her home. I therefore hurried through my Kindergarten duties at Fishermens Bend where I had been Director since 1942, and arrived, per bus and tram, at Mrs Creswick’s home, in a rather breathless state.

Mrs Creswick served tea, then in her charming and forthright way put me through my paces as to my opinion of world events, the progress of the war, and likely future developments in the preschool field. It was a formidable interview and I felt I was being assessed from every possible angle.

Lyon evidently interviewed well. She commenced her trip in July 1944 and finished in 1946. It is worth reproducing her account of her return journey. Not only is her letter illustrative of the impact of the war, it also portrays something of the international movement for early childhood education and care evident at the time.

Shipping of course was still a problem and there was nothing on the Pacific rim. I finally got a passage on the ex-hospital ship “Gripsholm” sailing to Gothenberg and spent 2 to 3 weeks in Sweden studying the magnificent children’s playgrounds and the well planned and equipped childcare centres. The S.S “Saga” took me from there to Southampton – and, in the almost 2 months I spent in England waiting for a ship sailing for Australia, I saw something of the wartime daycare and nursery programmes and attended a Conference of the Nursery Schools Association at St Andrews, Scotland.

Finally I was allocated a berth on the Orient liner “Orbita”, a battered old ship which had been a troop carrier, and was still in the same condition as it was when the last soldier stepped off. I had a bunk and one hook for clothes in a cabin sleeping 21 people! The food had been taken on in Australia (because of the food shortage in Britain) and much of it was quite inedible as the refrigeration was poor. It took us 6 long weeks to reach Melbourne. (Lyon, 1993).
Notwithstanding the long journey home, Alice Creswick’s first endowment appears to have succeeded in achieving its goal to nurture leadership in kindergarten education. Heather Lyon went on to be Supervisor of Practice Teaching at the Melbourne KTC (1947); Vice-Principal of Melbourne KTC in 1948; and Principal from 1952 to her retirement in 1977.

The first few years of AAPSCD’s existence must have been exciting as the organisation built, staffed and established the Lady Gowrie Child Centres as model preschool programs. Further, having a national body provided an impetus for early childhood professionals and supporters to meet nationally and exchange ideas, especially through the biennial conferences. However, the impact of the war in Australia presented the fledgling AAPSCD with unanticipated challenges. Problems in recruiting and retaining staff and attracting students to kindergarten teachers’ colleges were especially acute.

As the war years drew to a close however, the AAPSCD faced a new difficulty. Significantly, the initial funding to the Gowries was for a period of five years only. No funding had been guaranteed beyond this time. Following representation from a’Beckett to Cumpston in March 1944, the Minister for Health approved 12 months additional funding for the Gowries while their position was clarified (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).
CHAPTER 3

The cloud of war is lifted
*The transition to the post-war world*

*It has been fascinating to watch the change in attitude of the general public from the sentimental to the intelligent. Once they admired the dear little children sitting on their chairs and singing their songs so prettily; now they appreciate the preschool centre as a place where children are learning to live together as social beings, where trained personnel seek the co-operation of the parents in guiding their children through the many difficulties which beset them in their growth towards a well-rounded personality. (AAPSCD and Lady Gowrie Child Centre Perth 1940–1945).*

In early May, 1945, news came of Germany’s surrender and the war in the Pacific ended in the following August. As the war was ending, so too was the five-year plan for Lady Gowrie Centres. The centres had spent their early years, like the children who attended, growing up through the war. As a result, they were beset with many difficulties that were not foreseen at their inception: high staff turnover; temporary closures in Perth and Brisbane; the necessity of converting the Melbourne Centre into a wartime nursery; budget restrictions and the erratic attendance patterns of many children (Jackson-Nakano, 1993; Clements & Macpherson, 1945; Hill, 1949). At the end of this funding period, the question was: had these six preschool demonstration centres been a success?

Although the founders of the centres envisaged them to be a focus of research, external studies using the data were minimal. This may not have been surprising given the disruption of war. Much of the research that did take place was by staff and published as pamphlets for parent education (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

However, in 1945 and 1949, two reports were released: *The Lady Gowrie Child Centres: The health record* (Clements & MacPherson, 1945) and *A first analysis of case history records of children attending*
the Lady Gowrie Child Centres (Hill, 1949). The first report came from the Senior Commonwealth Medical Officer within the Department of Health. As its name suggests, it primarily focused on the health records of the centres, and paid little attention to their educational program. According to this report, nearly 1300 children attended the Lady Gowrie Child Centres during the first four years they were operating. Through their attendance, many children had been diagnosed with health problems that were addressed in some way through activities at the centres. For example, many children were found to have cardiac lesions that caused fatigue. They were given additional periods of rest while at the centre. Postural defects, such as ‘knock-knees’, were identified and exercise programs designed to remedy them (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

In their report, Clements and MacPherson argued that parent education was central to the work of kindergartens and that ‘the good work commenced at the Centre must be continued in the home’. This necessitated ‘full parental cooperation’ (1945, p. 11). Although the report is descriptive rather than evaluative and does not list any shortcomings of the centres, it does assert that a lack of parental cooperation could indeed be the cause of ‘many of the failures in the Centres’ regarding the satisfactory progress of children’s growth and development (1945, p. 11).

Conscious of the absence of attention to the non-medical records of the Gowrie centres, the AAPSCD with funding from the Department of Health, employed Miss Edna Hill to undertake A First Analysis of Case History Records of Children Attending the Lady Gowrie Child Centres (1949). From Hill’s review of case histories (1940–1945 inclusive) over 2000 children had attended the centres. This report provided descriptive information on issues relating to families such as family composition, the employment patterns of fathers and mothers, family health, housing (including the cleanliness and atmosphere of the homes) and what children ate at home. Indeed, the national focus on improving children’s nutrition seems to have made the eating habits of children attending the centres something of an obsession! In relation to the Lady Gowrie Centre programs, the report discussed routines (toileting and dressing), mealtimes, sleep patterns, indoor and outdoor play, and children’s interest in specific aspects of the curricula such as the music program and story groups. It then provided an overview of children’s social and emotional development, including an overview of children’s speech. Neither of these studies evaluated the Gowries themselves. Rather, in the spirit of the initial funding being targeted to child study, they reported findings from the data about the children and families attending.

Spreading the reach of the kindergarten

Certainly the AAPSCD was successful in publicising the benefits of kindergarten education. This it did through the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, its successful national conferences and its efforts in establishing more kindergartens elsewhere. Miss Gladys Pendred, an active member of the Free Kindergarten Union in Victoria, and later the Federal Officer of AAPSCD, advised on the building of Canberra’s first Nursery-Kindergarten at Acton, opened by Lady Gowrie on April 22, 1944 (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Scantlebury Brown, whose efforts in the 1930s contributed to the funding of the Gowries, facilitated the significant expansion of kindergartens in Victoria. As Director of Maternal, Infant and Preschool Welfare, within the Victorian Department of Health, she succeeded in the establishment of a preschool section within the Department in 1945 (Brennan, 1998; Mellor, 1990). Thus throughout the war years, the perception of the role of kindergartens shifted, and increasingly preschool education became desirable for more prosperous families. In 1942, a locally sponsored kindergarten opened in the well-to-do Sydney suburb of Cheltenham, and in 1944, Killara (Brennan, 1998). This shift in the social positioning of preschool resulted in a notable increase in demand in the years immediately following the war and into the 1950s.

Teacher shortages

The years immediately following the war were still a time of shortages despite the cessation of the hostilities. Many kindergartens lacked equipment and demands for the greater availability of preschools served to exacerbate the already existing staff shortages (Brennan, 1998). Stresses upon staffing throughout the war years had taken their toll.
Distressingly, Jackson-Nakano (1993) reports that one government source noted that the standard of teaching within the Lady Gowrie Child Centres had deteriorated to such an extent that, should the trend continue, the centres risked no longer being a credit to the government.

The AAPSCD was under pressure from Army and Air Force personnel to waive the requirement of a Leaving Certificate for kindergarten college entry. It was proposed that young women leaving the services at the end of the war should be able to enter kindergarten training based on their service record and their agreement to take Adult Matriculation and/or an Intelligence Test. In 1945, in response to concern about standards, the AAPSCD sponsored a meeting of all the principals of the kindergarten teacher training colleges. This resulted in a national publication outlining minimum standards for teacher training. The standards emphasised the development needs of the whole child; the importance of understanding the child’s relationship to family and community life; and the need for cooperation between home and school in the task of providing adequately for the total daily life experiences of the child. Teacher training was to involve lectures, discussions, reading, observations and practical experiences. It was also considered important to imbue students with an open-minded experimental and creative approach to work and an outgoing and responsive attitude to life (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Scholarships were made available for teachers, but it seems that many young women stayed only one year before dropping out to get married—prompting the Premier of Tasmania to remark at a Premiers’ conference that kindergarten trainees seemed to rate highly in the matrimonial stakes (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). To give a sense of the extent of the shortfall, in 1948 enrolments in the Victorian KTC reached 153 students. However, it was estimated that 200 preschool teachers a year would be needed to meet demand in Victoria (Gardiner, 1982). Thus at the same time the idea of kindergartens was becoming more popular, their expansion was constrained by a scarcity of teachers. The demand for preschools and teachers to staff them was soon intensified by the post-war baby boom (Mellor, 1990).

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1 Madeline Crump, Melbourne KTC; Hazel Harrison, Adelaide KTC; Jean Wyndham, Sydney KTC; Isla Stamp, Perth KTC; Gladys Pendred, Field Officer for the Nursery-Kindergarten Extension Board; Christine Heinig, Federal Officer; and Helen Paul, Director of Preschool Activities for the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria.
Change, insecurity and loss

The end of the war and the immediate post-war period was a time of intense change for the AAPSCD as it experienced a significant loss of prominent figures associated with the work of the organisation. Lady Gowrie returned to England in 1944. Heinig resigned in 1944 and, after penning with Cumpston a book about the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, Pre-school Centres in Australia, headed back to the United States in 1945. Cumpston, who had been a strong supporter of the Gowries within the government, retired in May 1945 (Jackson-Nakano, 1993; Waters, 2002). Scantlebury Brown, who had provided invaluable support in gaining initial funding for the Gowries, died in 1946. a’Beckett, who had been president of AAPSCD since its inception, resigned in 1947 due to ill health and later died in May 1948.

In addition to adjusting to the loss of many early leaders, the AAPSCD faced many other challenges.

The Lady Gowrie Child Centres

The fortunes of the AAPSCD continued to be linked to its management of the Gowrie Centres and, in the immediate post-war period, ongoing government support for the Lady Gowrie Centres was by no means assured. A view was forming within the Commonwealth Government that the Gowrie Centres had done excellent work and fulfilled their initial aims, thus there was no need to provide ongoing funding. One proposal was that responsibility for funding be handed to the states. Tussling between the Commonwealth and states about which level of government should be responsible for funding the Gowrie Centres and the AAPSCD was to become a recurring theme. Indeed, as Isla Stamp (1975) pointed out some 30 years later in her report, ‘Young children in perspective’, since the first five-year funding commitment, funds were only ever secured for one-, two- or three-year periods.

Heinig was replaced by Gladys Pendred as Federal Officer of the AAPSCD. She and a’Beckett, as President, were the centre of intense lobbying efforts to secure ongoing and, ideally, increased funding for the centres. In a letter to Pendred, a’Beckett wrote the following account of a visit to Senator Keane who, as well as being the Minister for Customs, was the acting Minister for Health:

He began by saying, ‘Now, what do you want’. So I said first, we want a decision in connection with the Federal grant and I told him it was made only until 30 June, 1946 and of course members of staff would not apply for jobs for only six months.

Second, we wanted some sort of security of policy and wanted the Government to consider a further 5 year plan. He then rang the PM at Canberra and in less than five minutes got Ben3. Told him I was there with him and that we were ‘rattled’ about next year’s appointments for the LGCCs4, and he would remember that it was decided to stop the grants on 30 June 1946.

‘Now then, Ben,’ he said, ‘what can we do about it! I know the job this AAPSCD is doing and I’m for the kids. So come on, let’s give it to them ... No, Ben, that’s no good, Mrs a’Beckett must know now... Alright, look up the estimates, I’ll wait, but remember, Ben, I hold the purse strings ... Well, Ben! What do you think? Yes, that’s better, Oh! alright I’ll tell Mrs a’Beckett she need not see you on Tuesday, that will save some time. Right. I think that will satisfy her ...’

Rang off.

Then he said, ‘what we have received is that we’ll continue the grant until 30 June, 1947’. To which I added, in the meantime the Government will consider its policy for a future 5 year plan, because it hampers the work when we don’t know what’s going to happen.

I left, shaking him by his fat hand ...’

(cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

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2 In November 1946 the Vera Scantlebury Brown Child Welfare Memorial Trust was established to support research in the areas of health, welfare or education, (particularly ante-natal to preschool age). It is administered by the University of Melbourne.

3 Ben Chifley, then Prime Minister.

4 Lady Gowrie Child Centres.
At an executive meeting in Melbourne on May 24, 1946, the organisation considered a plan devised by the Kindergarten Union of Western Australia, ‘The future of preschool child care in Australia’. In presenting the proposal the Western Australian delegate, Stamp, explained that the plan was intended as a basis of discussion, and it was debated at length. This plan argued that the provision of kindergarten could no longer be shouldered by voluntary bodies alone and that responsibility should be shared by Commonwealth and state governments, local governing bodies, voluntary organisations and parents.

In June, it was announced that the Cabinet had agreed to continue its support under the administration of the Minister for Health for a further period of three years. Despite previously expressed concerns about progressively deteriorating teaching standards, no increase in funding was forthcoming. The AAPSCD was under pressure to streamline the administration of the centres. How to do so was the question. There appears to have been some tussling between Dr Metcalfe, as acting Director-General of Health, and Dr Clements, the Senior Commonwealth Medical Officer in Canberra, about the best way forward. Initially, Metcalfe proposed abolishing the nurse’s position in each centre.

There is a very grave shortage of nurses in the community. I suggest that the daily inspection might well be done by one of the teachers. The other duties of the nurse appear to be of a minor nature. (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993 n.p.).

In response, Pendred pointed out that, the centres’ nurses were middle-aged, and/or married, or not in good health thus they would be little use in easing the nursing shortage. The Commonwealth Medical Officers in each state and territory were, in general, supportive of abolishing the nurses’ positions. However, Clements, who had written the 1945 Health report on the Lady Gowrie Centres, opposed the abolition of the nurse’s position and argued that any centre that enabled children from the age of two to five to come together served two fundamental purposes: it afforded children the opportunity for social development and adjustment; and it provided a focus where they could be subjected to regular health supervision. Clements instead favoured a reassessment of policy:

When the Centres were established five years ago it was with the object of providing the community with ‘demonstration’ units of well equipped, well managed centres, where the handling of children was in accordance with the best accepted methods. … It is now accepted that the Commonwealth will, for the next few years, have to manage the Lady Gowrie Centres. If this is so, then it is, in my opinion, the opportune time for a long term overall policy to be laid down within the limitations of the finances available. (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Metcalfe clearly considered the Gowries too expensive and in a letter to the committee presidents of each stated:

The cost is 35 pounds per child per year … it is obvious that the community cannot provide preschool care for the child population at anything like this rate. (cited in Jackson-Nakano,1993).

He proposed combining the work of the nurse and social worker; reducing the hours of the two-year nursery from five to three; and no longer taking posture photographs and collecting anthropometric data. Clements was perhaps more supportive and wrote to Metcalfe suggesting measures to simplify the administration of the Gowrie grants. In essence the money would be paid through the AAPSCD to the Lady Gowrie Committees rather than to the Kindergarten Unions and Crèche and Kindergarten Association. The grant was to be divided equally between the centres, leaving £1000 for the Federal Officer of the AAPSCD and £1600 for miscellaneous expenditures, such as maintenance. This proposal appears to have been accepted. The committees of each Lady Gowrie Centre became committees of management, responsible for administering the government grant within the AAPSCD’s administrative framework. The Federal Officer retained responsibility for the educational program of the centres (AECA, 1985).

The preschool emphasis

In spite of ongoing concerns about funding and the need to garner government support, AAPSCD continued to look at ways to spread the preschool
message, to improve the quality of preschool education, and to support parents in their parenting role.

It turned its attention to the provision of preschool more generally. The expansion of kindergartens, rather than nurseries or extended hours services, reflected the re-emphasis on women’s primary role as homemakers after the war had ended. In 1947, only 8.6 per cent of married women in Australia worked outside the home (Brennan, 1998, p. 59). Extended hours wartime services lost their funding, and as Brennan asserts, ‘at every opportunity’ the AAPSCD ‘distanced their project from child “minding’” (1998, p. 52). According to Davis:

... Brunswick Children’s Centre, once regarded as an exciting new development in children’s services, became a forgotten part of our history, a demonstration project whose demonstrations ultimately went unheeded (1988, p. 165).

In evidence to the Western Australian Royal Commission on Kindergartens, the President of the AAPSCD, Yseult Bailey, claimed that it was ‘undesirable for children under three years of age to be in groups’ and instead advocated for subsidies for mothers to remain at home as an alternative to assisting them enter or remain in paid employment through the provision of child care. Further, she agreed with the Royal Commissioner that mothers who worked through choice, not necessity, were ‘shirking responsibility’ (Brennan, 1998, p. 55). Typifying this attitude to working mothers, Day Nurseries were not, at first, able to be members of AAPSCD. In 1948, this barrier was cracked with the Victorian Day Nursery Association becoming a member of the Victorian branch (Spearritt, 1979). In 1950, the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association (SDN&NSA) was accepted as a full member (Pendred, n.d.).

Because the demands for preschool education were so great, a number of the Gowrie Centres changed their attendance patterns. Perth, for instance, ceased its full-day program (9.00 am to 3.00 pm) in 1950, in part to enable more children to attend by offering two preschool sessions a day, morning and afternoon (Kerr, 1994).

Education and research

Parent education remained a strong focus for the Association. It produced Parents’ News Sheets with titles such as: Your child’s emotions; Your child’s mother; Your child’s mind; Your child’s playthings; and Your child’s interests; and others which addressed issues such as children’s posture, and how to fit children’s shoes. These were widely distributed (including to New Zealand). In 1953, Pendred provided a series of six talks on ‘Understanding children’ over ABC radio.

Professional support also remained high on the agenda and the AAPSCD started to consider the need to produce booklets to support professional practice on topics such as play material, buildings and playgrounds. In 1952 AAPSCD published Play materials and in 1958 Planning the programme in a preschool centre, among the first of a long line of professional publications to be produced by the organisation. Additionally, in the early 1950s a number of the Lady Gowrie Centres developed research specialisations and all maintained their role as sites for practice teaching for the KTCs.

The Sydney Gowrie became a laboratory for a Social Paediatrics course. The Melbourne Gowrie focused on children’s health from the ante-natal period to preschool years. Fifth-year medical students used the centre to study the ‘well child’ under the direction of the Director of the Children’s Hospital. The Adelaide Gowrie facilitated the study of the health and education of children aged three–eight years, and provided a demonstration program for health and education principles from nursery school to infants’ school.

It also developed a Parent Education Extension Program in collaboration with the Education Department, children’s hospitals, doctors and psychologists. Parents were referred to the centre to see ‘the wise management of children’ (Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.), and could obtain counselling and participate in parent education.

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1 Edith Olga Yseult Bailey, sometimes referred to as Edith Bailey.
The Adelaide centre also conducted research into the muscle tone of well children to help physiotherapists treat poliomyelitis, as there were many such cases in Australia at the time. The Perth Gowrie focused on ‘parental attitudes’ with research carried out under the direction of Professor Walker, a Professor of Psychology and Dr Spinley. Brisbane was a laboratory for a course in Social Paediatrics for sixth-year medical students attending the University of Queensland (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

In her September 1952 report to the executive, the Federal Officer, Pendred, noted the following research studies that had been undertaken:

- At the Brisbane Centre, E. Hill (1949) ‘Personality deviations of preschool children’ (under the direction of Professor J. Bostock). Published by the University of Queensland.
- At the Sydney Centre, W. Debus (1951) ‘Aggression in preschool children’ (under the direction of Professor C.R. McRae).
- At the Melbourne Centre, E. Ferguson (1952) ‘The emotional and social behaviour of preschool children and how their behaviour is affected by daily versus spaced attendance at a nursery school’ (under the direction of Professor Oeser).

In 1956 the national organisation received its first research grant. This was awarded to Mrs Lefroy of Perth to look at ‘children’s concepts of social relations’.

The Gowries had an excellent reputation as demonstration centres. During the 1950s, fifth-year medical students would visit the rooms of the Melbourne centre to learn how to talk with children, and the Gowries hosted many overseas visitors (Waters, 2000). Nevertheless, AAPSCD’s struggles with funding naturally affected the viability of the Lady Gowrie Centres. According to Stamp, in 1955 the Association had to consider closing three of the six Lady Gowrie Centres because of uncertain finances.

If the LGCC program and the Australian Association for Preschool Child Development were warp and woof, the changing finances resulted in a series of fading and brightening patterns constantly affecting the uses to be made of the cloth. (Stamp, 1975, p. 2).

Post-war migration and the changing face of Australia

In 1945, the Labor Government introduced an immigration program, partly to build up the Australian population and to help economic growth (Greenwood, 1977), and partly as a humanitarian response to war-torn Europe where over 10 million people were displaced. Between 1947 and 1953 over 170 000 displaced persons, predominantly from Greece, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, arrived in Australia with the assistance of the Australian Government (Jupp, 2007; Donnelly, 2008). During the 1960s, immigration agreements were in place with almost all western European states, Turkey and in 1970, Yugoslavia (Jupp, 2007). By 1966 there were over 2 500 000 new arrivals from the United States, Britain and the European continent including Italy, Greece, Holland, Germany, Poland and Yugoslavia (Greenwood, 1977).

As noted previously, the original emphasis of the Lady Gowrie Centres had been on children ‘born in Australia of Australian-born parents’ (cited in Kerr, 1994, p. 46), but this was never strictly adhered to. Throughout the forties and early fifties the majority of children attending the Gowries had been of Anglo-Saxon heritage, but an estimated 23 per cent did not fulfil the original criteria. The changing composition of the Australian population through post-war migration challenged the raison d’être for such eligibility criteria.

In light of post-war migration, in her address to the 1952 AAPSCD conference, the President Bailey raised the importance to the organisation of assisting migrants to settle in Australia (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). However, most centres had long waiting lists for places and the desirability of giving migrant families preference generated considerable debate lest it cause consternation among those already on the list. By 1960, a report on The progress and assimilation of migrant children (Special Committee of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, 1960) reported that while most preschools surveyed had some migrant children, each had only a very small number.
There was concern about the conditions of child-minding facilities within migrant camps. In 1952 the AAPSCD submitted a report on *Child minding centres within migrant hostels in Australia* (Leschen & Pendred, cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993) to the Department of Labour and National Services. The report recommended that the Commonwealth Government accept responsibility for the wellbeing of children within the hostels and raise the standards of the facilities provided. Specific recommendations included: providing play materials; staffing centres according to minimum preschool standards; limiting numbers to less than 50 children in one building; providing health checks; and ensuring children had a midday sleep.

In 1954 the AAPSCD, under an initiative of the Department of Immigration, hosted English classes for migrant mothers while the staff cared for the children. In that same year the Public Service Board approved the appointment of preschool teachers in Immigration Preschool Centres at the same rate of pay as other Commonwealth preschool teachers.

A change of name

In 1954 the AAPSCD changed its name to the Australian Preschool Association (APA) and changed its structure to become a more representative body that brought together an array of preschool associations under state and federal branches. Until this time the AAPSCD had been dominated by the Kindergarten Unions. Although the Victorian Day Nursery Association was granted membership in 1948, other similar institutions were not eligible for membership until 1950 (Spearritt, 1979).

The objects of the new Association included: the promotion of ‘the optimum development of the preschool child’ including the provision of adequate developmental opportunities; the provision of support to parents; the formulation and promotion of standards for preschool services; and the coordination of the work of the Lady Gowrie Centres. Tellingly, the objects explicitly state the Association’s role in promoting:
… the recognition by the Government, Federal and State, and by the community, of the value of the Lady Gowrie Child centres in contributing to the optimum development of the preschool child …

and further the need for the Association:

To act as a medium for co-ordinated approaches to the Federal Government, committees and commissions established by the Government, and other appropriate authorities on matters pertaining to the preschool child.

The Alice Creswick Scholarship Fund

In 1955 Mrs Alice Creswick once more sought to cultivate professional leadership in the preschool movement. Among the many strings to her bow, Creswick was President of the Free Kindergarten Union in Victoria in 1939 and again in 1946, foundation Vice-President of AAPSCD (now APA); and a later life Vice-President of its Victorian Branch. Donating $4000 of her own funds and raising $4000 from other sources, she established the Alice Creswick Scholarship. In 1956, the fund’s first beneficiary, Jean Adamson, went to study in the United States. Subsequently, 17 more teachers became Alice Creswick Scholarship recipients (refer to Appendix 8) and many made important contributions to the preschool field. The Australian Preschool Quarterly, which was first published in 1960, was commenced by Creswick Scholars Adamson and Phyllis Scott (Waniganayake, 2001).

An international outlook

Creswick was also instrumental in getting the Australian Government to support a preschool program under the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan was formulated in 1951 to support professional training and facilities in south and south-east Asia (Greenwood, 1977). At Creswick’s instigation the APA established a Colombo Plan preschool standing committee in 1953.

This committee sent training officers to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to report on that country’s preschool needs. A scholarship for a Ceylonese student to study in Australia was then offered by the Commonwealth Government and a course of study arranged at Melbourne KTC. A preschool association was established in Ceylon and acted as a point of contact for the Australian APA. Later through the APA’s involvement in the Colombo Plan, Joan Fry was sent to Singapore and the Federal Officer, Gladys Pendred, undertook work in the Philippines (Mawdsley, 2011; Pendred, n.d.).

This was also a time when strong links were forged with the Organisation Mondiale pour l’Education Prescolaire (OMEP). In the wake of the devastation and displacement caused by the second world war, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was established in 1946. It acted as an international resource providing expert advice and supporting the ‘pioneering of new ideas and the bridging of national and international political, religious or disciplinary divides’ (Waters, 2007). The newly formed UNESCO was concerned with the education of children only from age six and did not include preschool education as part of its remit. OMEP was born out of belief that an international organisation was needed to promote early childhood education throughout the world. The AAPSCD was invited to the inception of OMEP in Paris in December 1946. Lyon was in London at the tail end of her Creswick Scholarship and the AAPSCD asked that she represent the organisation. However Lyon, who had been waiting to get home to Australia for some time, had heard that she was finally able to obtain a berth on a ship returning to Australia and so cabled the AAPSCD to recommend Joan Fry. At the time, Fry was in London on study leave from the Sydney Nursery School Teachers’ College (Waters, 2007) and represented the AAPSCD at the inaugural meeting of the ‘International Federation of Childhood Education’. This organisation was to become OMEP at a conference in Prague in 1948. Bailey was seconded as its first Vice-President for Australasia.

AAPSCD was keen to have an Australian Committee of OMEP and sought assistance from the Commonwealth Government to establish one. However, the government refused on the grounds that it was not its role to sanction or support an international non-governmental organisation. As a result, in May 1954, AAPSCD wrote to the general secretary of OMEP requesting that AAPSCD be
accepted as Australia’s National Committee (Waters 2007). In 1956, the OMEP World Council in Greece gave official recognition to the Australian National Committee, along with the Committees of Brazil, Greece, Israel and South Africa.

In a written report to the APA annual meeting, the Australian observer to the World Council, Mrs Cliffe6, wrote:

_The aims of OMEP may seem almost superhuman. We wish to promote in all countries the happiness of children and happy family life, thus contributing to world peace. This is an objective which may seem impossible and even slightly ridiculous. However, let us never forget that the progress of humanity always depends on the extent to which one has the courage to aim at achieving the impossible, to bring into existence that which is incredible … We are part of a great company. Let us strive to do great deeds._ (cited in Waters, 2007, p. 15).

The APA’s affiliation with OMEP kept the Australian preschool movement informed of international developments in early childhood education and the APA was particularly respected by OMEP members (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

In another example of the changing nature of the APA’s international connections, the eighth APA conference held in Sydney in 1958 was attended by visitors from the Asia-Pacific region. The Colombo Plan Special Visitor’s Award (Department of External Affairs), supported the attendance of Mrs Kannangara (Ceylon) and Mrs Ooh (Singapore). Visitors also came from the Philippines and New Zealand (Pendred, n.d.). After the Sydney Conference, the APA conferences became a triennial event for many years.

The post-war period was a time when those associated with AAPSCD, and later APA, revealed their tenacity and capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. Even in the face of funding uncertainty, the organisation took a broad view of its remit.

The flow of ideas across international bodies that gave rise to the kindergarten movement at the end of the nineteenth century was again evident in the establishment of international early childhood organisations such as OMEP in which AAPSCD played a part. The APA’s instigation of preschool as a focus of Australian Government aid through the Colombo Plan was also an expression of this international outlook. Further, post-war Australia was a very different society. As the Australian population in general became more prosperous, preschools were increasingly linked to middle-class aspirations for young children. This was, perhaps, a testament to how successful AAPSCD had become in advocating for the value of preschool education. Significantly, the nature of the Australian population also changed. Post-war migration to Australia created a much more culturally diverse population. The APA’s concern with the conditions for children in migrant hostels was an initial response to this shift, as was opening up the enrolment criteria of the Gowries. Over the ensuing decades, the APA was to address more fully the need for early childhood programs to be culturally responsive through resources and training.

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6 Mrs Cliffe was in Greece as the wife of Australia’s Consul-General in Greece.
CHAPTER 4

The 1960s

A period ‘ripe for reassessment’

The 1960s heralded a period of cultural, political and social renewal in Australia. Significantly, Australia was breaking away from its traditional affiliation with the ‘mother-country’ Britain, and forging new allegiances with the United States. It was an allegiance that ultimately led the country into the Vietnam War—and, for the first time, conscription of young men to fight overseas (Australian War Memorial Website, 2013).

At the same time, the population was increasing and diversifying, changing the social and cultural make-up of Australia.

Businesses such as milk bars and grocery shops, established by non-British migrants, began to introduce ‘exotic’ goods such as zucchinis and coffee to Australian high-streets. The economy, on the tail end of a ‘golden age’ (Dickey, 1980, p. 186) assisted by population growth from the post-war baby boom and increased migration, remained strong, with low unemployment. The middle class expanded and many young families moved away from crowded inner-city areas into newly established suburbs (which, however, often lacked amenities, facilities and services, such as sewerage and roads, schools and transport). It was largely a period of prosperity and affluence; children’s wellbeing improved and widespread malnutrition was a thing of the past. Nevertheless, poverty remained, especially among those living on the fringes of society—those partially

employed or unemployed, the elderly, those on pensions, Aboriginal people, and single-parent families. By the 1960s the disparity between the rich and the poor was becoming increasingly apparent and a topic of community concern.

Influenced by the rise of popular culture including the spread of ideas through television, coupled with the greater ease of travel, many from the large cohort of baby boomers, who were now coming of age, were highly politicised. They fiercely opposed the Vietnam War through civil unrest, and voiced concerns on matters such as Aboriginal rights and women's rights. Growing awareness of the social conditions experienced by many Aboriginal people—who often lived in abject poverty and were legally discriminated against—gave rise to political advocacy for the dismantling of existing assimilationist policies and the pursuit of land rights, self-determination and legal status (Dickey, 1980). Among some of the major achievements of this period were Aboriginal enfranchisement for Commonwealth elections (1962) and the success of the referendum for Constitutional reform in 1967, which removed two sections of the Constitution that actively discriminated against Aboriginal people.

The 1960s also gave rise to a second wave of feminism, and eventually the establishment of the Women's Electoral Lobby in 1972. In particular, women asserted their right to work—including married women who had previously been actively discriminated against. The number of women in the workforce increased substantially (from 717,165 in 1947 to 1,059,169 in 1961), particularly among married women (141,637 in 1947 to 444,680 in 1961; i.e. from 8 per cent to 18 per cent of married women) and was to do so for some time. Indeed, the Australian economy now depended on the participation of women—many of whom had children—in the workforce. Mothers’ workforce participation was, however, still regarded by some sections of the community as undesirable (Brennan, 1998). Childcare provision was inadequate and no government subsidy for child care existed, forcing many women to find alternative arrangements—friends, families and unlicensed ‘back-yard’ carers (Brennan, 1983).

It was within this context that the APA entered its third decade—an organisation striving to remain relevant and responsive to the rapid and extensive cultural, social and political changes.

A ‘changing of the guard’ at APA

During the 1960s the baton of leadership passed from President Bailey to Jean Denton in 1963.2 Sadly, shortly after announcing her well-earned retirement Pendred, who had been the Federal Officer since 1945, died ‘in-office’ in November 1964. Pendred was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1962, and several memorials were established in her honour. The Gladys Pendred Memorial Fund provided money for the Gowrie Centres to purchase books for staff, parents or children; a memorial library was developed in Melbourne LGCC; a street was named after her in Pearce, a suburb of Canberra; and a tree planted in commemoration of her work in a preschool in that street (APA, untitled document from ECA Archives, 1968a).

Despite sadness at the loss of Pendred, it was ‘with bright expectation’ (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 4) that the new Federal Officer, Mary Cheeseright, arrived in Australia in 1965 to commence her duties.3 Formerly an Inspector of Infant and Nursery schools in Sheffield, England, she brought a wealth of experience and knowledge. Concluding her first report to the Executive, Cheeseright (1966, p. 30) commented that APA had been built on ‘excellent foundations, such as can only be laid by those with real vision and foresight’. She continued, the nation was ‘on the threshold of great changes’ and that ‘rapid [was] the pace of change and life’ but that the APA will have the ‘brightest of futures offering services worthy of the best traditions of its past’ (Cheeseright, 1966, p. 30). Cheeseright was assisted to usher in these changes by Jean Ferguson, Assistant Federal Officer. A glance at the itinerary for Cheeseright’s first year in office (1966) demonstrates the degree to which these women travelled across Australia and the important function the APA served in developing a national perspective.

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2 However, due to Jean Denton’s ill-health her role was frequently filled by Nancy (later Lady) Fairfax, who eventually took over the Presidency in 1968 in her own right—a position she filled until 1977.

3 The hiatus between Gladys Pendred’s death and the arrival of Mary Cheeseright was filled by Loma Ruddock who later became Federal Officer herself in 1970.
Gladys Pendred

Gladys Pendred in her 20 years of serving first the AAPSCD and then the APA:

... travelled to every corner of the country to familiarise herself with the problems of each of the centres of the preschool movement generally in each state. She waged a constant battle for more funding from the Commonwealth Government, was extremely sympathetic towards underpaid kindergarten teachers who nevertheless preferred to work in the LGCCs than seek higher paid employment elsewhere, she kept a wary eye on the maintenance of the LGCC buildings, got personally involved in fundraising, took a personal hand in writing the regular Parents’ News Sheets published by APA, arranged Australian preschool exhibits for national and international exhibits, took care of overseas visitors, wrote speeches and lectures for use in Australia and overseas, saw senior preschool appointments, sat on frequent committees connected with the preschool activities (such as radio and television programs for preschool children), supported APA moves into link ups with overseas organisation, and initiated research for the centres. Yet her greatest pleasure was spending time with the children. (Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

She was a formidable woman and for some young teachers rather terrifying. Jennette Lavis, who met Pendred when a second-year student teacher on practicum at Brisbane Gowrie, recalls her encounter with Pendred more than half a century earlier:

Miss Pendred, she … put the fear of God into all of us except Jean Ferguson who could stand up to her. [Miss Pendred] was the National Officer out of Canberra for the Lady Gowrie Child Centres you see, who came round all the states to set the standards, she was a big-bosomed lady who was very authoritative and here was I a little second year student, I thought ‘what am I going to do?’ … I thought I have to have a quiet activity and hide. So I raided my … mother’s work basket. You know all our mothers—sewed. [And] the fashion at that time was to wear little [felt] brooches. So I decided I’d get all the felt, the quietest thing I could think of. So I got some children they were four-year-olds—you know you could give them a needle and thread as long as you were terribly careful, because they were the oldest group at the centre … And so I got there very early, I got my table and my six chairs, I thought—it’ll be the girls and I’ll have six of them because it’ll be very quiet and I’ll look as if I’m doing something. So I put that right down in the corner of Gowrie’s playground, there’s a cave at the back with a waterfall—and hid. I got everything out and none of the boys came—they took off to the jungle gym, it’s the climbing frame now but we always called it the ‘jungle gym’—that was good that good rid of them you see. And so I had the six girls and enough scissors and I’m helping them sew and I was careful that I didn’t have terribly sharp needles … So here I am down there, and round the corner came Miss Pendred, ‘Oh young lady, are you hiding there?’ I said, ‘No, Miss Pendred’ which was an utter lie!
Their work would not have been helped, however, by the conditions at the Canberra office. Being under the auspice of the Department of Health, the APA had been provided with offices that they shared with hospital staff. When the building was earmarked for demolition in 1965, the hospital staff left—leaving the APA staff with a promise that they would soon be relocated. Two years later they were still waiting. The Report of the Federal Officer in 1967 (p. 3) states rather forlornly:

*We are now the only occupants of a block of some size and there is little traffic to and fro, weeds and bushes grow around our doors and we feel ourselves somewhat isolated on darker days.*

Three major developments in early childhood education were to influence the APA during the 1960s: changing demographics in preschools; the rise of day care; and growing concerns with education for Aboriginal children.

A 1964 booklet titled *What is APA? What does it do?* states the APA’s aims as:

- to coordinate and strengthen preschool work and set standards recommended for the development of the work
- to act as an agent for the Commonwealth Department of Health in maintaining supervision of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres
- to promote research in child development
- to extend preschool activities within the Commonwealth
- to advise countries participating in the Colombo Plan
- to link Australian preschool work with international organisations.

Preschool for the middle class


In Australia, however, despite growing public awareness of the benefits of preschool, particularly amongst middle-class families who increasingly saw preschool as the first step on the educational ladder (Brennan, 1998), early childhood education attracted little public expenditure at the national level, and very great discrepancies were apparent across the states (Spearritt, 1980). In Western Australia and Tasmania, for instance, preschool education became part of the school system (Brennan, 1998) whereas in other states, preschool provision remained largely the domain of philanthropic organisations. Moreover, rising costs, particularly increases in teachers’ salaries, increased fees. By the late 1960s preschools were largely out of the reach of poorer families and mostly attracted middle-class families.

The rise of child care and concerns with quality

The APA, along with other voluntary organisations, was somewhat slow to respond to the rising demand for child care, associated with the increasing number of mothers in the workforce. Although some philanthropic organisations continued to provide long day care, much provision at this time was reliant upon small private operators. In NSW, the number of centres licensed by the Department of Child Welfare rose from 455 (licensed for 11 744 places) in 1960, to 521 (licensed for 16 586 places) in 1967—the majority of which were commercial enterprises (Clements, Fry & Bellamy, 1967, p. 68). As not all services caring for children were required to be licensed, however, the true number was likely to be far in excess of these figures (Clements et al., 1967, p. 68).

There is little doubt that the rise of child care posed ‘a dilemma for the preschool movement, which had to match need and demand against its own standards and philosophy’ (Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.). The APA at this time was an organisation concerned primarily with the provision of preschool education for children aged three–five years. Many in the organisation considered day care and the care of babies in particular, outside the organisation’s ambit. Further, many members believed in the primacy of
the mother-child relationship, and did not approve of care that enabled mothers to go out to work (Clements et al., 1967). Mary Cheeseright however, expressed in a letter to Joan Fry in May 1967, her doubt ‘about the wisdom of separating the two since both should be the concern of APA’ (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993 [emphasis in the original]).

By the mid-1960s, the APA began to respond to growing concerns about the quality of child care. While the quality of child care services no doubt varied, most were staffed by unqualified or unsuitably qualified people, had no educational component, and interactions and conditions in many were poor (Clements et al., 1967). Legislation, which had been slow to catch-up with the expansion of child care, varied greatly among jurisdictions—some (such as the Northern Territory Health [Child Minding] Act 1964) had introduced standards but others had little or no legislation to govern child care services, and where legislation did exist, there was often inadequate supervision of compliance. At the 1967 APA Conference, Dr Clements (now at the Department of Child Health, University of Sydney), Joan Fry (Principal, Nursery School Training College) and Allison Bellamy (Institute of Child Health, Sydney) presented a paper entitled The need and trends of day nurseries. Reporting on the conditions of nurseries in Sydney, they argued that:

The problems associated with the full day [sic] of these children must increasingly become the concern of this Association [APA]. Questions such as qualifications of the staff, the qualifications of inspectors from licensing authorities, who shall determine policy within an individual centre and others need to be considered (Clements et al., 1967, p. 70).

In response to concerns about the quality of day care and the APA’s underlying opposition to mothers of young children working, the NSW Branch of the APA proposed a motion that:

The Australian Pre-School Executive consider the possible implication of the increase in the need for full day care of young children in view of the growing practice to employ or re-employ married women as permanent staff members in business and professions. … while it may not be considered desirable for mothers of young children to work outside the home, the APA surely has a responsibility to see that harm does not come to children whose mothers choose to do so. (APA, 1967a, Report of Federal Officer, p. 18).

The motion was passed by the Executive and a ‘Sub-Committee on Full Day Care’ established to investigate day care provision. At its first meeting in 1967, the sub-committee, chaired by Joan Fry agreed that ‘day care has grown up to meet a need the community feels exists’ (APA, 1967b, Minutes of Meeting of Sub-Committee to Consider Child Care, p. 1). It recognised that ‘there has always been a need of the unmarried mother and the widows. Other mothers of young children feel for varying reasons that they should work’ (p. 1). The sub-committee first set about identifying ‘the demands for this care’ (p. 1) and ‘what facilities exist’ (p. 1). While the work of the sub-committee was hampered by ‘other pressures’ (APA, 1967, Report of Federal Officer, p. 5), and its progress was inhibited by ‘limited time’ (APA, 1968b, Report of Federal Officer, p. 3), it confirmed the need for child care services. Recognising the differences across states in terms of legislation and regulation, the APA argued for universal standards for
services and staff preparation. Further, it published guidelines for the provision and quality of preschools and child care in 1970 (APA, 1970a; APA 1970b). These documents included recommendations for staff qualifications, buildings, staff to child ratios and group sizes. The overriding message from the subcommittee was that without government subsidies it would be impossible to provide long day services of appropriate quality.

It was the considered opinion of several experts including the A.P.A. Sub-Committee, that it was not possible to run a Centre maintaining the standards APA considered necessary for the wellbeing of the children, and make a profit. APA must not lower standards, remembering the well-being of children, but campaign for subsidies and financial support from firms employing mothers of young children. (APA, Report of Federal Officer, 1969a)

The APA’s emphasis on the ‘quality’ of care, rather than its availability, was to bring it into conflict with the women’s rights’ movement for some time to come.

Recognising diversity

The 1960s also saw a growing awareness, among those in the field of early childhood, of the needs of non-British migrants and Aboriginal children and the need for appropriate services. In particular, the policies of the 1950s, which expected children and families to conform to the dominant Anglo-Australian way of life, began to give way to a more multicultural approach. This new approach was reflected by the APA, for example, in the publishing of parent newsletters in Italian and Greek, the two most prevalent languages other than English.

Ironically, it seems that the increased recognition of the needs of children and families from non-British migrants led also to rising awareness about the children of Australia’s first peoples. Greater recognition of the needs of Aboriginal children resulted in policies aimed at increasing access to education and improving educational outcomes. The provision of preschool was part of this process—but little was known about how to best provide these services.
In order to gain a better understanding of the issues concerning preschool for Aboriginal children, several APA members travelled to the Northern Territory. In 1966, Molly Walker, Principal of the Sydney KTC, after visiting Aboriginal preschools in the Northern Territory:

advised caution in attempting to extend pre-school education on aboriginal [sic] settlements until a better understanding of aboriginal [sic] pre-school children and the relevance of pre-school education to their particular need had been established. (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 22).

Walker argued for research to better understand Aboriginal children’s development, the best approaches to their education and the types of services most suitable for their needs. Likewise, Jean Ferguson (Assistant Federal Officer) visited the Aboriginal settlement at Papunya, missions at Millingimbi (where Beryl Edmunds—Creswick scholar—was Director of the preschool) and Elcho Island, and community preschools in Alice Springs, Darwin and Batchelor.

Reflecting the approach to working with Aboriginal people at the time, Ferguson stated in her 1966 report:

The pre-school years when mothers are very closely involved with their children seem vital in establishing a relationship of mutual respect and trust between the aboriginal [sic] and white Australians. Real interest and concern for these people can best be expressed through a desire to know more about the things that belong to their culture and a desire to share with them the things that are important in ours. The pre-school offers an ideal setting for this interchange and development of mutual understanding and appreciation as well as providing the right foundation for learning new concepts and another language. (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, pp. 22–23).

A lack of qualified teachers in remote settlements made this work extremely difficult.

Ferguson’s full report, although well intended, reflected the narrow and paternalistic attitude to Aboriginal Australia that was a dominant view in much of mainstream Australia.

These attitudes were also evident in the fact that the focus of the APA was on children living in remote areas of Northern Territory, rather than in inner city areas where most Aboriginal people lived. At that time, few non-Aboriginal Australians had first-hand relationships with Aboriginal people, or had an understanding of the impact of Australia’s colonisation upon the Aboriginal population. This tended to render Aboriginal people, including those living in urban settings, ‘invisible’ to many Australians. The APA demonstrated a desire to better understand and meet the needs of Aboriginal children through their advocacy for research and teachers in the Northern Territory (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 23), and the awarding of a Creswick scholarship to Edmonds, Director of the Aboriginal Preschool at Millingimbi Mission.

The Lady Gowrie Centres

The occasion of the Jubilee of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres in 1964 and the arrival of Cheeseright as Federal Officer a year later, engendered a period of reflection on the work and achievements of the Gowries. The Assistant Federal Officer, Ferguson noted it was a time ‘ripe for reassessment’ (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 6), and reported that:

… the Lady Gowrie Centres exist to be of service to pre-school children and promote good pre-school education. They will lose ground and never achieve their full potential unless faced with the challenge of high expectation. Any plan however good twenty five or even twelve years ago, will become sterile unless reshaped, maybe drastically, to serve pre-school children in a changing community with new conditions and needs. (p. 8).

The work of the Lady Gowrie Centres during this time continued to focus on their original threefold functions of:

- providing care and education
- demonstrating preschool education and disseminating knowledge about the health and behaviour of young children in the community
- studying growth, nutrition and bodily development and behaviour.
Although staff continued to monitor children’s physical development, a general improvement in children’s physical wellbeing shifted the focus of the centres to mental health. Informed by the ideas of Bowlby and attachment theory, staff began to pay more attention to the social and emotional wellbeing of children, as well as fostering child–parent and teacher–parent relationships. Parent support continued in the form of home visits, parent education classes and literature, and parent groups. However, the Minutes of the Meeting of Office Bearers in 1969 (1969b, p. 2) noted that many Directors began to question the value of the:

… information collected about children and families and the purposes for which it is used. Information from home visits in particular, was carefully examined and it was agreed that much information recorded in the past has little significance for teaching.

As a result, a new system was adopted under which all information was ‘recorded according to its use for clearly defined teaching purposes’ (APA, Minutes of the Meeting of Office Bearers in 1969b, p. 2). The Gowries continued to provide services such as dental clinics. Some increased their accessibility for children with disabilities, who were often referred to the centres by specialists (Waters, 2000). The APA continued to monitor the work at the Gowries through visits of the Federal Officers. These visits were major events—according to Elspeth Harley (Vice-President of the South Australian Branch and later National Vice-President), when the Federal Officers came on ‘a visitation, everyone got excited, and we had afternoon tea’ (Harley, 2013, personal communication).

The Melbourne Centre was destroyed by fire in 1962 (Waters, 2000). Undeterred, the staff continued to work through the renovations and rebuilding. Ever thrifty, with the assistance of parents and other volunteers, including the firefighters, they washed and repaired much of the damaged equipment. Sydney was similarly damaged by fire in 1965 but the damage was not as extensive as to close the centre.

Reflecting changing social conditions, the demographics of the areas in which the Gowries were originally built also changed (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer). By mid-1960s, Thebarton, the location of the Adelaide Centre had become more industrialised and less densely populated—but with increased numbers of migrants, mostly from Greece. Similarly, the area around the Brisbane Centre on St Paul’s Terrace had developed into a commercial zone with few houses. Likewise, Sydney’s Centre in Erskineville was situated in an area of increasing industrialisation. All three of these centres were struggling to maintain enrolments. In contrast, at Battery Point, the site of the Hobart Gowrie, living conditions were improving and enrolments were strong, forcing the centre to reintroduce the one-mile radius zone. Likewise, the Perth Centre in Victoria Park East experienced an increase in population due to increasing suburbanisation. Meanwhile Carlton, the site of Melbourne’s Centre, remained densely populated, however the population was now largely Italian migrants.

Visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the Lady Gowrie Centre in Perth.

A highlight for the LGCC was the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the Lady Gowrie Centre in Perth as part of the Royal Tour in 1963.

These changes, especially in Adelaide and Melbourne, made it difficult to maintain what had become a 50 per cent enrolment of ‘Australian children’ and the rules were relaxed (report of Melbourne LGCC, Report of the Federal Officer, 1966, p. 12). Moreover, the centres began to embrace and celebrate diversity. In Melbourne, for example, several staff began to learn Italian to aid communication with migrant families (Waters, 2000).

Demonstrating preschool education

The centres continued to demonstrate ‘best practice’ in preschool education. New pedagogical practices, such as the use of photography to observe and document children’s learning, were evaluated, and materials and equipment designed and trialled in the Gowries were often introduced in kindergartens across Australia (Waters, 2000). One such piece of equipment was the wooden climbing frame pioneered in Melbourne. Replacing the previous metal frames, the wooden frames allowed children to climb, swing, crawl and to incorporate them into their socio-dramatic play (Waters, 2000).
The Gowries hosted seminars and conferences and welcomed external visitors, offering opportunities to observe teaching practice, children’s development and play. Literally thousands of people visited the centres, including students from early childhood education; primary education; social studies; dentistry; medicine; nursing; speech and occupational therapy. In one year alone, the Melbourne Lady Gowrie Centre had 1694 visitors (Waters, 2000).

Much to the delight of those in the APA, the value of the Gowries was validated by Dr Lucile Lindberg, President of the Association for Childhood Education International in the United States and Professor of Education and Queen’s College, New York. In a keynote address at the 10th APA Conference, held in Brisbane in 1964 under the theme ‘The enrichment of childhood’, she referred to the Lady Gowrie Child Centres as:

… beacons in each State (that) say to each local community, ‘This is the type of pre-school education your child deserves’. They say to teachers, ‘These are some of the ways in which you can work’. The say to colleagues, ‘Here are approaches which are effective with young children’ (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

Dr Phyllis Scott

Dr Phyllis Scott was the recipient of the second APA Creswick Scholarship which funded her studies at Harvard University, where she gained a doctorate. On her return to Australia, she led research at Melbourne Gowrie. Scott championed a more scientific approach to the research on children’s development being conducted at the each of the Gowries, and argued for greater investigation of preschool education, and research on families and their children, including Aboriginal families and migrant families (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

However, insecure and limited funding did erode quality at the Gowries. Funding from the Commonwealth Government—which was always dependent on the goodwill of the relevant Minister (in the 1960s this was initially the Minister for Health but changed to the Minister of Education and Science in 1969)—rarely increased and so failed to keep up with inflation. With varying degrees of success, centres sourced additional funds from elsewhere—trusts, benevolent funds, local councils, patrons and fund-raising (Waters, 2000). But by the mid-1960s inadequate funding had begun to take a toll. Due to the poor salaries offered, centres were no longer able to attract or retain highly qualified staff, and they were struggling to maintain standards sufficient to retain their status as demonstration centres. At the same time, their value as research centres was also questioned.

Research at the Gowrie Centres

Research based at the Gowries was viewed by the APA as a way of demonstrating the value of preschool education. In her report to the APA Executive in 1965 (cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.), for example, Dr Phyllis Scott wrote:

It might be easier … to gain widespread support for pre-school education if we could communicate with the general public on the basis of accurate and up-to-date evidence of the positive effects on children, rather than pressing our claims on the basis of strong beliefs about children’s needs, the appeal of providing such opportunities for young children, and a few illustrations of cases where these seem to have been helpful.

However, their full potential for research had never been fully realised. The Assistant Federal Officer, Ferguson, wrote in her Report to the APA Executive Meeting (1966, p. 6) that the research component of the centres had never been ‘clearly conceived or adequately provided for’. Although Gowrie teachers found participation in research rewarding and stimulating, few had training in research methods or record taking—often recording information with little

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Ferguson went on to conduct a study of research in LGCCs. She summarised her findings in a report *An analysis of the work of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres for 1954–1967: present functions and possible future developments*. The report was subsequently considered by a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr F. W. Clements.
or no understanding of why they were doing it or how the information was to be used. Consequently, the quality of some of the data collected and the research conducted was rather dubious; leading Dr Clements and Ferguson to argue for greater collaboration between Gowrie staff and scholars with expertise in research as a way to improve the quality and appropriateness of the research conducted (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer). The lack of research was also undoubtedly affected by inadequate funding. Although the government was increasingly being informed by overseas research, there was little financial support for the ‘home-grown’ research being conducted at the Gowries.

The focus on research was given an enormous boost with the return from the United States of America of Scott to the Melbourne Gowrie in 1967. Jackson-Nakano (1993, n.p.) argues that Scott ‘ignited a fire of interest in research and teaching that would inflame the movement for some time to come’. However, it was a slow combustion rather than a blazing inferno! Scott was charged with the responsibility of carrying out research and building the capacity of staff through a Research Teaching Program. The idea was both to ensure teaching practice was informed by research, and to conduct research on teaching. Funded by the Creswick Foundation, Monash University and later by the Department of Education and Science, this work recorded children’s development and the ways educationalists went about supporting their growth and development.

Greater professionalisation

Since its inception, the APA had involved both lay and professional members5. According to Peter Spearritt (1979, p. 26) ‘[a]lthough in favour of professionalism both the AAPSCD and the APA were essentially lay bodies, with honorary office holders, where the interested (and often wealthy) laity met the professionals’. Lay people had, by and large, governed and been responsible for lobbying efforts. Professional Officers (such as the Federal Officer, the Assistant Federal Officer, and representatives from the KTCs) met regularly prior to Council meetings, and had for some years reported to the Executive, but were not an officially recognised group in the organisation’s structure.

In 1969, the Professional Officers became an officially constituted group able to make recommendations to the Executive.

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5 ‘Professional Officers’ were members of the Executive with early childhood qualifications working in paid employment in the field. Professional Officers included the Federal Officer, Assistant Federal Officer, and Principals of the Kindergarten Colleges. Lay members were volunteers. They were largely wealthy women concerned with children’s welfare.
Spearritt (1980, p. 4) writes that ‘the Executive comprised the President and Officer Bearers of the Association, four delegates from each state branch (two professional and two non-professional) and the Federal Officers. Professional Officers from all states also meet annually, usually prior to the National Executive meeting.’

Launch of the Australian Preschool Quarterly

Reflecting a shift to greater professionalism was the launch of the *Australian Preschool Quarterly* in 1960—a major milestone in the organisation’s publication history. The first two Alice Creswick Foundation Scholars (1957), Adamson and Scott both had travelled overseas on their scholarships and observed first-hand the benefits of a professional publication for preschool teachers.

Supported by a loan of £100 from the Brisbane Kindergarten College Graduate Association, Adamson and Scott produced Australia’s first early childhood professional journal—the *Australian Pre-School Quarterly*.

In the first edition, the Federal Officer, Pendred (n.d.) claimed ‘The publication of the *AUSTRALIAN PRE-SCHOOL QUARTERLY* is a most important and exciting step in the development of preschool work in this country’ (p. 3), and made a plea for 1000 subscribers.

The first greeting from the Editor’s desk came from Margaret Rasmussen on behalf of the Association for Childhood Education International (AECI). Heinig, who had been so influential in the initial years of the AAPSCD, was a member of the AECI and many Australian educators linked with the APA went to visit and study in America under the aegis of the AECI.

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* Jean Adamson later received a Carnegie Award to study in the US.
This first edition included articles from Benjamin Morris, Director of the Institute of Education, Bristol University; Margaret McFarland, Associate Professor University of Pittsburgh; David Jackson, Senior Lecturer in Pediatrics University of Queensland; and reports from Australian kindergarten teachers awarded scholarships and fellowships for overseas study. The journal sought to ‘support teachers in their professional growth, to explore various aspects of the teacher’s role, to introduce new areas for thinking, and to present viewpoints from other professions’ (Australian Pre-school Quarterly, August 1960, p. 36).

Each issue of the journal included topical articles, brief reports on preschool developments in the various states, book reviews, and reports of the work of OMEP. From issue 5—August 1961 (one year after its launch) the APA took financial responsibility for publishing the journal and a Standing Committee was established to act as liaison between the independent Editorial Committee7 and the APA Executive (Spearritt, 1980, p. 60).

By 1966 subscriptions had increased. Adamson, on behalf of the Editorial Committee, reported that:

… more and more unsolicited material, chiefly in the form of articles, is being received. This shows an increased interest in the journal as a vehicle for the expression of ideas and opinions (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 27).

The journal was a valuable and tangible outcome of APA’s ‘active publication policy’ (Spearritt, 1980, p. 55) that had begun in 1943 with the establishment of Parents’ News Sheets.

Parents’ News Sheets continued to be produced through the 1960s. Sold at a cost of 3c each they enjoyed wide circulation reaching 19,800 in 1968 (APA, untitled document, 1968a). Initially written and illustrated by teachers, in the 1960s they were prepared largely by other professionals such as doctors, college lecturers and dieticians. Reading through their titles reveals the emerging trends and concerns of the times—with examples from 1968 including, ‘Sex & Small Children’ (Dr. M. Wallner), and ‘The Single-Parent Family’ (Dr. J. Buchanan). Due to their popularity, a collection of news sheets was compiled into a book in 1969—Parents, children and pre-schools. From 1966 the Parents’ News Sheets were translated into Greek and Italian, with assistance from the Department of Immigration (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer).

The APA, teacher training and accreditation

The APA continued to be active in accrediting early childhood teacher education. The KTCs were all affiliated with the APA and their Principals attended the APA Executive Meetings. The APA set standards for the KTCs, to which the latter agreed to adhere—although there was no official assessment of compliance.

As in the past, greater demands for preschool and child care resulted in an increased demand for preschool teachers which the KTCs could not match. In response, the APA wrote to Senator Gorton (Minister in Charge of Commonwealth Activities) requesting the Commonwealth take responsibility for preschool teacher education. The Commonwealth was reluctant to become involved because it viewed teacher education as a state responsibility (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 21). Eventually, in 1968, the Commonwealth made $2,500,000 available for capital works to assist the KTCs expand their student intake. Additionally, 80 teacher training scholarships were funded.

The APA strove, with intermittent success, to have the qualifications gained by graduates at the KTCs recognised internationally (APA, 1968b, Report of Federal Officer, p. 5). Australian KTC diplomas were not generally recognised by education authorities in the United Kingdom (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer), which was especially problematic for Colombo Plan teachers who could not work in other Commonwealth countries. So important was this issue that it became a topic of discussion at the 9th APA Conference (1962), ‘Unity and continuity in the education of young children’. The idea of extending the early years period to eight years in

7 Members of the first Editorial Committee were Jean M. Adamson, Peggy Banff and Phyllis M. Scott.
2013 reflections from Adrienne Miles (nee Fountain)—Alice Creswick Scholarship recipient, 1966

When I was awarded an Alice Creswick Scholarship to undertake post-graduate study at the Melbourne Kindergarten Teacher’s College in 1966, I was excited and optimistic about the future. I was given the rare opportunity to live and study in the wonderful city of Melbourne for one year without the need to balance study with work.

I was 27 years old and working full time as the Director of a Community Preschool in St Ives. My teaching experience at that time had led me to seek further knowledge of child development and a desire to better understand the implications of the many cultural and social changes taking place in Australia.

Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers’ College introduced the Diploma of Advanced Studies in Education in 1965. It was the first early childhood post-diploma course in Australia. Applicants for the course were chosen from around Australia. The 1966 cohort were all experienced teachers, some already occupying positions of leadership in key organisations. I was the only student whose teaching experience had been mainly in long day care.

The one-year course was designed, taught and administered by Dr Gerald Ashby—whom I recall as a young charismatic individual with curly hair who smoked a pipe. He was an enthusiastic, knowledgeable educator, who led his students to think critically about the theories, research and ideas encountered through the course material.

I recall four main areas of study: Child Development, Theories of Teaching, Educational Philosophy and Research Methods. With such a small group the course was all tutorial/workshop based with a large part of each week spent in private study and discussion of required readings. There was a lot of emphasis on developing objective observational skills as a research method. These were practised through the collection of data for a major piece of work that had to be completed by the end of the course. Thus there were regular visits to a preschool as well as visits to other educational institutions around Melbourne.

At the end of the course I was appointed by the APA to teach at the Lady Gowrie Centre in Sydney. Here the program provided ample time for me to experiment with different approaches to programming and the assessment side of record keeping.

In 1969 I was appointed as a lecturer at the Nursery School Teachers’ College in Newtown. It was from this college that I had graduated 10 years earlier. Situated at Newtown, the college was owned and run by Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association [now known as SDN Children’s Services]. At the time I was awarded the Alice Creswick Scholarship, SDN had only recently been accepted as a member organisation of the APA. Inclusion meant that child care received a step up the ladder of respectability in the field throughout Australia and most importantly a voice and vote. I saw my award of the Alice Creswick Scholarship not only as an opportunity to improve my qualifications but also as further recognition of the needs of families in Australia for government-funded quality child care. Much of my later teaching, study and research interests remained in the area of the needs of children attending long day care programs.

The Alice Creswick Scholarship was without doubt a great honour for me and a small win in the long journey for community recognition of Quality Child Care.

Adrienne Miles (nee Fountain), Former Principal Lecturer, Institute of Early Childhood, Sydney College of Education.
order to integrate preschool teacher education with primary teacher education was discussed, as this was already the case in the United Kingdom. Tasmania and Western Australia were the first to experiment with combined courses, but getting these courses endorsed by the APA proved problematic, and some began to question the organisation’s authority to be an accrediting body.

Creswick Scholarships

Creswick Scholarships contributed to developing the knowledge, skills and leadership capacities of Australian early childhood educators. Funds provided through Creswick Scholarships in the early 1960s assisted two early childhood educators to travel overseas to undertake degrees and higher degrees—Olive McMahon and Mary Swift. Later in the decade, with the introduction of post-graduate courses at Melbourne KTC, three more Creswick scholars were able to study in Australia—Adrienne Fountain (Director of the St Ives Preschool, New South Wales), Beryl Edmonds (Preschool Director at the Aboriginal Preschool on the Methodist Mission at Millingimbi, Northern Territory) and Ruth Sansom (Teacher in Charge, St Albans Church of England Kindergarten, North Melbourne). On completion of their scholarships each went on to teach and lead in early years’ settings: Fountain taught at Sydney Gowrie and later became a lecturer at the Nursery School Teachers’ College (see breakout box); Edmonds returned to her position as Director (APA, 1967, Report of Federal Officer, p. 6); and Sansom took a post at the Brisbane KTC (APA, 1968c, Minutes of Meeting of Office Bearers, p. 3).

The APA also sought funds from other philanthropic organisations to fund scholarships—including the Myer Foundation, Churchill Fellowships, and the Carnegie Award. The Report of the Federal Officer, 1969 (APA, 1969a) noted that Miss Waibunai, an Indigenous teacher from Papua New Guinea, had been granted a Churchill Fellowship to study preschool education. A Myer Foundation grant enabled Mary Swift to visit Colombo Plan countries (Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Bangkok and Singapore) on her return journey from the United States where she had completed her Masters Degree with the support of a Creswick Scholarship (APA, 1966, Report of Federal Officer, p. 18). ‘In-service’ courses and ‘information services’ were among the ideas Swift gained from overseas that would be later implemented by the APA.

International relationships

The APA engaged in international work through its continued support of Colombo Plan student teachers and preschools, and through its affiliation with OMEP. APA’s President, Denton⁸, was Vice-President for the local OMEP region (made up of Australia, India, Ceylon, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, New Zealand and Fiji). The APA OMEP sub-committee was formed in 1961 and worked to make the international organisation known in Australia (APA, 1967, Report of Federal Officer). In addition to supporting the participation of APA state branches in research projects identified by OMEP (such as ‘the role of play’ in 1968–70), the OMEP sub-committee raised funds for subscription to OMEP and to cover a portion of the expenses for an Australian representative (already living abroad) to attend council meetings. For instance, Pat Roberts who was at the time studying at London University, represented Australia at the Oslo Council Meeting in 1967. Many of those involved in the APA attended the OMEP meetings. Joan Fry led an Australian delegation to the 1964 Stockholm Assembly; Frances Derham organised a display of Australian children’s art at the Paris Assembly in 1966; Hazel Harrison attended the Council Meeting in Rome in 1966 and Dr Isla Stamp led a delegation of six Australians to the World Assembly in Washington in 1968, taking with her literature and photographs of preschools in the ACT and Northern Territory. Of the Washington meeting, it was reported that ‘In spite of international tensions the meetings were very successful much was accomplished towards better understanding between nations through work for children’ (APA, 1968d, Minutes of Meeting of Office Bearers, p. 2).

The 1960s was certainly a period of review for the organisation and in particular a time when its traditional focus on preschool education came under scrutiny. The 1970s, however, proved to be a far more turbulent time for the APA.

⁸ June Denton was awarded an OBE for her work with OMEP, and the preschool movement in South Australia in 1968.
CHAPTER 5

The 1970s
‘a time for soul searching’

‘... there is now the greatest opportunity for expansion in the history of early childhood education in this country’ (Fairfax, Opening Remarks, Minutes of Executive Meeting, APA, 1973a, p. 3).

Social political context

The 1970s was a colourful period for Australian politics, and possibly the most turbulent era in early childhood education and care’s (ECEC) history. The election of Whitlam’s Labor Government in December 1972 ended 23 years of Liberal-Country Party government. Whitlam—an eloquent intellectual and passionate speaker—‘dreamt a great dream’ (Clark, 1995, p. 324) of a socially just Australia, based on principles of individual dignity and self-determination. He was voted in on a platform of sweeping reform in the arts, health, welfare, education, Aboriginal land rights and independence for Papua New Guinea (Megalogenis, 2012). One of his first acts as Prime Minister was to end military intervention in Vietnam and abolish conscription.

Although the Whitlam Government was short lived, post-Whitlam Australia was a very different country. The government achieved many reforms; however, its reform agenda was severely hampered by global economic events (in particular the Middle-East oil crisis) that led to high inflation and unemployment, accompanied by high levels of industrial action. By 1975 the country was in deep recession. A series of events, including an attempt by key government ministers to raise loans for the Government from the Middle East (the Khemlani Loans Affair) which

1 Harley (2013, personal communication).
led to their dismissal, gave the opposition a majority in the Senate which it used to block the budget (Megalogenis, 2012). This effectively prevented the government from governing and ultimately led to its dismissal by the Governor-General Sir John Kerr on Remembrance Day, 11 November, 1975. Subsequently, the Liberal-Country Party Coalition was elected to government with a clear majority.

Change and adaptation

‘A change of Government in December 1972 has accelerated the pace of change which the Association must face’. (Loma Ruddock, 1973, Report to the Executive, p. 6).

The 1970s was a period of rapid and significant change in the organisation and ‘noted for its bitterness, its feuds, its confusion, its controversies and the suddenness of its social change’ (Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.).

The Child Care Act 1972

In 1969, after some debate, the APA made a submission to the Federal Government’s Department of Health arguing for an inquiry into day care. The organisation was concerned that of the small number of childcare centres that did exist, most were commercially operated and not all states required such services to be licensed (Brennan, 1998). In response to the work of the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labour and National Service, the agitation of women’s rights groups, such as the Women’s Electoral Lobby, and the demands of industry for greater access to women’s labour, the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics conducted the first-ever inquiry into the workforce participation of women with children (Brennan, 1998) — to which the APA submitted a response. The report identified that 22 per cent of mothers with preschool-aged children and 42 per cent of mothers with school-aged children were in the workforce (Brennan, 1998, p. 62). However, child care was only available to 7 per cent of working mothers and single parents (Burns, 1976).

The agitation for child care eventually led to the introduction to Parliament of the Child Care Bill (1972) on 10 October 1972, by Phillip Lynch, Minister for Labour and National Service in the McMahon Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government. Commending the Bill, Lynch called it ‘a tangible expression of our real and proper concern for the welfare of children’ (House of Representatives Hansard, 10 October, 1972, cited in Jackson-Nakano, 1993, n.p.), noting the rapid increase in female workforce participation, the inadequacy of existing services in terms of both quantity and quality, and their prohibitive costs for many families. Lynch stated that the scale of the issue and its importance to the nation meant that child care could only be addressed by government.

The proclamation of The Child Care Act 1972 was a watershed in the history of early childhood education and care in Australia. It enabled the Commonwealth to provide grants for the establishment of childcare centres run by non-profit organisations, subsidies for the salaries of suitably qualified teachers, and funds for research and evaluation of child care (Ruddock, 1973, Report of the Federal Officer).

Although a conservative government had introduced the Act, it was the newly elected Whitlam Government that had responsibility for enacting it. Shortly after his appointment as Minister for Education, Kim Beazley (Snr) announced the establishment of three Committees under the Act. The APA was represented on each of these and was therefore very much at the forefront of these developments.

The ‘Child Care Standards Committee’ advised on the standards of services in receipt of government grants and APA representatives Peggy Banff, Margaret Chase and Loma Ruddock were members. Florence Kendall was the APA’s representative on the ‘Advisory Committee for Child Care Research’. The ‘Australian Pre-Schools Committee’ was charged with the responsibility of developing a plan for one year of free preschool education for all Australian children. This committee was chaired by Joan Fry, an APA member and former principal of the Sydney Day Nursery Teachers’ College (Ruddock, 1973).

2 The APA’s Patron at the time.
By the time the Australian Pre-Schools Committee's report (also known as the Fry Report) was released, the tide had turned against the expansion of preschools. Under continued pressure from feminist groups the government's aim of universal access to preschool shifted to one of provision of child care. The Fry Report (1974), which emphasised preschool and the need for qualified teachers, was fiercely and broadly criticised as inadequate for addressing the needs of working women (APA, 1974, Report of Federal Officer to Executive). Largely due to the widespread dissatisfaction with the Fry Report, the Australian Pre-schools Committee was disbanded by Beazley in 1974. In its place an Interim Committee for the Children's Commission was established to oversee The Child Care Act, pending the establishment of a Children's Commission. The interim committee was chaired by Tony Ayers and Fry served as one of its full-time members (APA, 1975, Report of Federal Officer to Executive, p. 7).

A broadening focus and membership

The furore associated with Fry Report reflected the deep divisions and intense animosity that had developed between advocates for preschool and advocates for child care (Spearritt, 1980). Preschool advocates emphasised the need for professionally staffed, high-quality preschool services. Many childcare advocates sought the rapid expansion of services that would enable women's greater participation in the workforce and higher education. There were also feminist advocates for the provision of child care whose advocacy was linked to the creation of opportunities for women, children and communities (Brennan, 1998). What might work best for children was often a contested ideal. These tensions also played out within the APA causing its President, Lady Nancy Fairfax, in her Opening Remarks to the Executive Meeting 1973, to express concern:

... that confusion appears to exist about preschool education in some peoples [sic] thinking. The worrying part about this is that instead of unifying those who basically have the same ideals, it is causing some harsh divisions of feeling.

In a rebuke to those professionals who were insistent on the need for qualifications for those working in the rapidly expanding day care field, she cautioned that:

... the Association could not sit with its head in the clouds or in the sand ... Now that the Association has this opportunity it must be co-operative and hold to its ideals, but not to the point of rigidity. ... Rigid insistence on high staff standards could paradoxically cause

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3 The Act creating the Children's Commission was never proclaimed; instead an Office of Childcare was established within the Department of Social Security.
By the end of the decade, following a change in the APA’s Constitution, each state sent two ‘lay’ and two ‘professional’ delegates with voting rights to Council Meetings. States were also permitted to send several ‘observers’ without voting rights.

It appears that some APA branches brought fixed views to the table. Some were eager to embrace the new reality of day care, whereas others wanted APA to continue its traditional focus, and ‘Each state [was] inclined to ride its own hobby horse’ (Fairfax, 1973, p. 3).

Within the APA there was also a deepening rift between the ‘professional’ and ‘lay’ members of the Association that had begun in the 1960s. Up until this time, the APA had remained primarily a voluntary organisation that called ‘on the services of professionally trained people’ (Spearritt, 1980, p. 114) to advocate for children and preschool education. However, in the 1970s, the professional officers within APA were being called on increasingly for their expertise to inform government initiatives and to work on Standing Committees. Speaking out about this, Fry, as Principal of the Sydney Nursery School Teachers’ College, a professional member of APA, complained about the lay members’ ‘preoccupation … with benevolence and making ends meet [which] often led to interference in what should have been professional decisions’ (Fry, 1971, cited in Spearritt, 1980, p. 114–115).

Reflecting on this growing rift, Fairfax is recorded as observing:

One of the hardest things to achieve in this country is a feeling of nationalist unity in a group of voluntary and professional people with similar ideals and objectives. … professionals are inclined to become antagonistic in their approach to non-professionals and vice versa. (Fairfax, 1972, p. 3).

Another contentious issue, much debated during the 1970s, was the issue of membership. From its earliest days, the APA had been primarily concerned with preschool education and had been slow to respond to the expansion of day care. By the early 1970s, it was clear that if the APA did not become more inclusive, it ran the risk of becoming irrelevant. In 1975 Tony Ayers took the Association to task, observing that ‘people in the day care field have been regarded as lepers and pagans’ and he:

… wondered whether APA could not broaden its membership charter to include a lot of the new people who will be coming on the scene, so as to speak with a wider voice. (APA, 1975, Report of Federal Officer).

In fact, some state branches had already become more inclusive by independently introducing individual and associate memberships for organisations actively involved in the early childhood field but outside of early childhood education. For instance, the NSW Branch included the Karitane Mothercraft Society, the NSW Family Day Care Association, the Playgroup Association of NSW; and the Association of Child Care Centres of NSW (Spearritt, 1980). Thus by the end of the seventies, some state branches had become more broadly representative in their membership.

Despite the APA’s broadening base, at the national level, an application for organisational membership from the Australian Federation of Child Care Associations—a national body representing private childcare providers—was refused in 1979, because of concerns about standards in these services, and philosophical differences about the provision of early childhood services ‘for-profit’ (APA, 1979, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, 1979).

Working with government

During the 1970s the APA was represented on all the major committees of the day concerned with early childhood education. In addition, the Child Care Act 1972 named the APA as the authority for accrediting staff eligible for funding under the Act (Spearritt, 1980, p. 51). The APA was a little surprised at being named as the statutory body. It was intended to be a temporary measure until this responsibility could be handed over to the Children’s Commission.
However, as the Children’s Commission was never established, the APA was still performing this role a decade later. Initially, the APA received no additional funding to cover the costs of this role. Accrediting teachers’ qualifications—especially those from overseas—was time consuming. In addition, the APA had the onerous task of having to uphold standards for teacher qualifications on the one hand, and on the other, accrediting staff with lesser qualifications to ensure struggling early childhood services could access government funds.

As well as these functions, the APA continued to make submissions and raise concerns in areas germane to children’s welfare. For instance, in 1972 the Executive wrote to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and OMEP protesting at the explosion of nuclear bombs in the Pacific (APA, November, 1972, Minutes of Meeting of the Office Bearers) and in 1973 it provided a submission to the Henderson Poverty Inquiry. By the end of the 1970s the lobbying function of the APA was formalised through its Government Relations Committee (APA, 1978, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council). Its terms of reference were:

- To influence Federal Government decisions on children’s services, using the APA policy statement on children’s services as the basis for action.
- To make Federal parliamentarians more aware of the APA philosophies and purposes of children’s services.
- To influence the allocation of funds for children’s services by the Federal Government to a figure thought appropriate by the APA.
- To refer to the executive for discussion, any proposed action which the committee feels may be of a controversial nature or which may potentially have far-reaching effects on the affairs of the Association.

In 1976, the Fraser Government abandoned the plan for the Children’s Commission and established instead the Office of Child Care within the Department of Social Security. This move heralded a new approach to funding. Much to the disappointment of the APA, the Federal Government would no longer provide funding directly to preschools, which it regarded as properly the responsibility of the states. Rather, funds were directed to child care, and within child care were more likely to go to family day care and general child and family support schemes than centre-based childcare services (Brennan, 1998). The director of the Office of Childcare, Marie Coleman, attended parts of the APA Annual Meetings to address issues of concern to the APA—but the minutes record that her responses rarely favoured the organisation’s requests (see for example: APA, 1978 and 1979, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council).

Unabated, the APA used a variety of means to advocate for improved standards in early childhood services. A major tool in its advocacy was the APA Policy Statement on children’s services—General principles and guidelines for the care and education of young children—recommended by the Australian Pre-School Association (1979). This policy, produced with monies from the Gladys Pendred Fund, replaced the Standards and general principles for day nurseries and family care centres published in 1970.

The 1979 policy broadened its ambit to cover a diverse range of issues relevant to children’s health, education and welfare pertinent to the times. It included sections on parent involvement; how to address needs on new housing estates and growth centres; issues relevant to ethnicity; children with handicaps [sic]; isolated children; research and the exploitation of children (Spearritt, 1980).

Kindergarten Training Colleges

Another significant relationship that was to change during the 1970s was that of the APA and the Kindergarten Training Colleges (KTCs). In 1972, the Cohen Committee Report of the Australian Commission on Advanced Education Colleges recommended that teacher education colleges be supported by the Commonwealth rather than voluntary bodies, such as the Kindergarten Unions and student fees (Spearritt, 1980). For the first time the Commonwealth substantially funded early education institutions.

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7 See previous chapter.
childhood teacher education and each KTC became an autonomous College of Advanced Education (CAE). In addition, scholarships and (in 1974) non-means tested allowances for teacher education were introduced, increasing the intake and number of student teachers graduating.

It is ironic that the CAE’s independence came at the same time as the APA’s statutory role in relation to teacher accreditation. Nevertheless, the relationship between the Colleges and the APA remained close. College principals continued to attend APA professional officer meetings and the APA provided advice and suggestions on the provision and standards of early childhood teacher education. In 1973, Loma Ruddock, concerned with the shortage of appropriately qualified teachers, suggested that the CAEs provide a range of specialised and supplementary courses. The types of courses she suggested reflected the concerns of the times. Preschool teachers (qualified to work with children aged three–eight years) needed additional skills to work with younger children; all teachers needed to understand administration and how to work effectively with social welfare, local government and community groups; teachers’ aides needed some specialised training. She also argued that ‘a determined effort should be made to attract back’ (Ruddock, 1973, p. 19) qualified teachers who were not currently teaching, by providing refresher courses.

The APA also provided advice on early childhood teacher education courses within other institutions such as technical colleges, institutes of technology and universities which were now beginning to offer early childhood teacher education courses (Spearritt, 1980). The APA was concerned about the quality of a number of these courses as many of the people responsible for their provision had little or no experience in early years’ education or understanding about the philosophies underpinning its practice. Their concern was exacerbated at the end of 1970s, when several of the smaller colleges were forced to amalgamate, raising fears that the CAEs ‘would probably lose their identity and much of their quality if they became a small part of a larger institute’ (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council, p. 18).

**Early education meeting diverse needs**

Ever since Gladys Pendred had been requested by the Commonwealth to undertake a survey of the child-minding facilities that migrants had established in migrant hostels in 1952, the Association had been concerned for the needs of child migrants and their families. That concern escalated through the 1960s with the increase in migration and attempts were made by the association to better meet the needs of migrant families. By the 1970s, the APA was advocating a number of measures: for teachers with specialist knowledge to support preschools working with high migrant populations; the inclusion of second language learning, sociology, culture and ‘ethnology’ in preschool teachers’ education (APA, 1973, Minutes of the Executive; APA, 1974, Federal Officers’ Report to Executive).

In regards to education for Aboriginal children, it was noted in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Office-Bearers, in March 1971 (p. 9) that ‘it is vital for APA to look at the needs of the Aboriginal community and plan to meet them both on long and short terms bases’. Members of the Executive attended and presented at several forums on Aboriginal education and frequently took the opportunity to bring the needs of Aboriginal children and families to the attention of Government. Whilst much of the focus continued to be on Aboriginal children living in remote contexts, there was a growing recognition of the needs of the ‘urbanizing aboriginal’ [sic] (Report of the Federal Officer to the Executive, 1974, p. 22) those living in the cities. In particular, Joyce Gilbert, who, in view of her ‘unique experience and long contact with preschool for aboriginal [sic] children and remote areas’, had been asked to write a report on Aboriginal Education, provided a succinct description of the types of services existing for Aboriginal children, contemporary understandings about their needs and of the needs of teachers of Aboriginal children (APA, 1974, Report of Federal Officer to Executive).
The Lady Gowrie Child Centres

The changing ideological positioning of early childhood education and care was reflected in the shifting location of government responsibility for the Lady Gowrie Child Centre Programme:


While some of the Gowrie centres continued to provide only preschool education, others expanded to include services for younger children and babies.

In 1976, a new APA preschool—Narrabundah Early Childhood Education Centre—was established in the ACT. Though not a Lady Gowrie Child Centre, the APA was involved in its planning and policy development, and its evaluation (Spearritt, 1980). The Gowries continued to act as demonstration centres for early childhood students.

However, increasing numbers of students placed great demands on their limited number of experienced and qualified staff.

Research continued to be a focus, some funded by the Commonwealth via the Advisory Committee on Child Care, which also developed guidelines on the ethics of research with children. Each centre had a particular research focus. For instance, the Adelaide Gowrie had an emphasis on community, including how information related to young children was shared in the community; and research in Melbourne Gowrie focused on the best ways to support parents who chose to stay at home (APA, 1978, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council).

Each of the Gowrie centres also introduced a range of ‘special programs’ to support the inclusion of marginalised groups. For instance, Brisbane Gowrie held ‘welcoming sessions’ for Aboriginal families; Sydney Gowrie worked in close liaison with an Aboriginal Welfare Officer; Adelaide Gowrie worked with Greek members of the community to provide Greek storytelling; and Perth Gowrie worked collaboratively with the Speech Therapy Department of Princess Margaret Hospital to establish a group for toddlers with language delay (APA, 1974, Report of the Federal Officer to the Executive; Spearritt, 1980).

The APA’s relationship with the Gowries was becoming increasingly muddied, however. Moreover, difficulties in attracting an Assistant Federal Officer had meant there had been little supervision of the centres from the National Office (APA, 1974, Report of the Federal Officer to the Executive) and during the 1970s a number of reports canvassed the roles of the Gowries and the APA.9

By the end of the decade the Gowries had become more autonomous. In 1977, three centres became incorporated businesses and drew up new constitutions. Each Gowrie began to investigate ownership of the land and building, with a view to transfer titles into their own names (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council).

Growth in publications

The expansion of APA’s publications during this decade was designed ‘to disseminate knowledge of child development and human relationships to parents, students and workers in children’s services in ways that are easily obtainable and within a realistic price range’ (APA, 1975, Report of the Federal Officer to the Executive, p. 19). Of particular significance was the change to the APA journal.

By the 1970s, the Australian Pre-School Quarterly had encountered difficulties including ‘a lack of available copy for publication, changes and controversy in the preschool field, practical problems associated with the voluntary nature of the enterprise and problems with the publishing operation’ (Spearritt, 1980, p. 60). The journal was

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8 This funding was separate from the general block-grant for preschools given to the states by the Commonwealth.

9 Report by the Committee on Lady Gowrie Child Centres (Kramer, 1972); Care and Education of Young Children (Australian Pre-School Committee Report [Fry Report], 1973); Report of Directors and Education Committee of APA to the Interim Committee of the Children’s Commission (Kendall, 1975); and Young children in perspective: A review of thirty-five years of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres in partnership with the Australian Pre-school Association (Dr Isla Stamp, 1975); Project Care: Children, Parents, Community (Social Welfare Committee, Marie Coleman, 1974).
widely criticised, not least for its waning relevance to the broadening early childhood field and its failure to publish controversial ideas. In the face of such criticism, the Editorial and Standing Committee decided to cease publication in 1974 (APA, 1974, Report of Federal Officer to Executive). In 1976, the newly constituted Publications Sub-Committee (chaired initially by Dr Stewart Houston and then by Anne Murray in 1977) took a proactive stance, reconsidering existing publications, identifying gaps in the literature, commissioning work, and establishing a new journal—the Australian Journal of Early Childhood (AJEC) (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council).

**The Australian Journal of Early Childhood (AJEC)**

The first edition of AJEC was published in March 1976 with the support of funds ($6800) from the Bushell Trust. It was vastly different from its predecessor. Whilst APQ had focused on preschool teachers, AJEC’s intended audience was wider in scope. It was also more critical and political. Three of the first articles in the first issue were opinion pieces on the provision of early childhood education. AJEC soon exceeded the expected circulation of 1500 (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council), becoming financially independent in 1979 with 3000 subscribers (Spearritt, 1980).

One of APA’s most successful publications was Frances Derham’s *Art for the Child*—by the late 1970s in its fifth edition. A staggering 25 000 copies of this book were sold. The Parents’ News Sheets were also profitable. Available in English and also translated into languages other than English, they were distributed widely. In 1979—the year in which the 300th title was published—they had a circulation of 22 733. Some of the best Parents’ News Sheets were published as a book, *Understanding Young Children* (Ruddock, 1979). After 1979, the Parents’ News Sheets were renamed *Today’s Child*. The simple line drawing illustrations of the past were replaced with much more professional presentations and photographs and its audience broadened to include people working in the field. In 1978, the APA established the Resource Information Service (RIS) which collected and analysed material related to young children from Australia and overseas. Through the RIS Early Childhood Resource Booklets were produced for parents. *The Australian Women’s Weekly* reproduced one of these booklets, *An ABC of children’s needs*, in October 1979. An *Early Childhood Up-Date Service* was also made available to subscribers. The latter provided relevant extracts from *Hansard* and press releases; a newsletter; and resource information bulletins.

By the end of the decade the APA was one of the largest publishers of early childhood material in the country. This was a major feat, achieved on a shoestring budget and with only a small team of dedicated staff. As Spearritt (1980) notes, ECA’s active publication policy ‘has exerted a considerable influence on the thinking of people in the field and the direction of services provided for young children and their families in Australia’ (p. 65).

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10 Pincus and Shipley (Women’s Electoral Lobby), 1976; Grimes (Senator and spokesman for Social Security), 1976; Olsson (Chairman of the Children’s Services Council of South Australia), 1976.
Changing personnel and organisational structure

Mary Cheeseright ended her term as Federal Officer in 1970, and Loma Ruddock was subsequently appointed to the position she had temporarily held in the 1960s (APA, March, 1970, Meeting Minutes of Office Bearers, p. 5). Ruddock was initially given the title of Chief Administration Officer in recognition of the need for a full-time professional with ‘wide administrative experience’.11 Curiously, with no explanation, it was noted in the Minutes of the Meeting of Office-Bearers, in March 1971 (p. 5) that the title was to revert to Federal Officer—perhaps revealing that the change in title had been controversial. Supervision of the Lady Gowrie Centres continued to be undertaken by the Assistant Federal Officer, then Mary Swift, until her resignation in 1973.

Ruddock steered the organisation through a turbulent time in its history. It was navigating a rapidly changing and complex political context, upholding its statutory responsibilities, trying to remain relevant to an expanding and divided early childhood field, and at the same time seeking to mend internal rivalries that unchecked would have threatened the existence of the organisation. Concluding her final Report to the Executive in 1975, Ruddock reaffirmed the organisation’s role in being a ‘voice’ for the early years’ field and reiterated the necessity for the organisation to be inclusive of a wide range of people:

In the wider area of ‘Children’s Services’ this association must be an innovator, a summarizer of the thought that is generated by cross-disciplinary groups and then a disseminator of this information in ways that are appropriate to the wider cross-section of different people. The network this Association has spun throughout the years is based on just such a premise but the goal is wholesome and fulfilled development of young children and their families (p. 25).

When Ruddock resigned in 1975, the positions of Federal Officer and Assistant Federal Officer proved difficult to staff. Dr Isla Stamp ‘stepped into the breach’ until a replacement was found in the person of Alan Holmes (formerly an administrator within the YMCA (Jackson-Nakano, 1993). Holmes was the first male Federal Officer, the first without an early childhood background, and the first to hold the title ‘Executive Director’. Rosemary Brown was appointed as ‘Education Director’ (replacing Mary Swift). In 1977 Brown was replaced by Dr Sandra (Sandi) Plummer (formerly of the University of Kansas). She, in turn, was replaced in 1979 by Joan Langhan. In 1977, Lady Fairfax (OBE—awarded in 1976) resigned as President, and Lady Thomson (OBE) was elected in her place. Lady Fairfax was acknowledged by the APA Executive for her ‘outstanding leadership … elegance of phrase and of person’ (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council, pp. 20–21). That year also saw the retirement of longstanding APA Secretary, Lorna Bailey.

Holmes soon saw a need for the organisation to review its aims and objectives, arguing that it must ‘examine itself, its name, and the way it operated in the new context of development … in early childhood services in Australia’ (APA, 1976, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council12, p. 7).

At this time, the APA was funded through a grant-in-aid from the Office of Childcare, membership fees and donations (Spearritt, 1980). The grant-in-aid, which had not increased in 10 years despite the expansion of the APA’s responsibilities to the early childhood field, was meant to cover costs associated with the national coordination of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres. Holmes, ‘analysing the range of responsibilities with which National Office could and should be concerned’ (APA, 1975, p. 22), concluded that the demands upon the organisation were far greater than its capacity to meet them. His subsequent submission to Senator Guilfoyle (the Minister responsible for the Office of Childcare) for increased funding to cover the cost of National Office staff and for a variety of specific projects was unsuccessful. However, one of his proposed projects, the Resource Information Service, was eventually supported directly by APA using funds from the Gladys Pendred Fund and Lush Bequest.13

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11 In 1970, Lady Fairfax was forced to circulate a memo to members explaining why the title had been chosen (Minutes of Meeting of Office Bearers, October 1970a).

12 There was a change of name from ‘Executive’ to ‘Council’ in 1976 following the APA becoming an incorporated body in 1974.

13 Mary Lush was a pioneer and generous benefactor of kindergartens in Victoria, and served as Vice-President on the APA Executive. The Lush Bequest provided funds for the organisation’s activities including the development of publications (Minutes of the APA Annual Meeting of the Council, 1977).
Although funding was short, Holmes remained optimistic. In 1978, he looked ‘to the future with much hope and enthusiasm’ (APA, 1978, Minutes of the annual meeting of the Council, p. 4). A year later, despite the Association being in severe financial difficulties, and receiving an admonition from one delegate at the Annual Meeting that the APA should ‘live within its means’ (APA, 1979, Annual Meeting, p. 15), Holmes noted that the Association was:

… in a strong position to enter the new decade, and if the financial problems could be overcome, would be able to have considerable influence on services provided for children and their families during the 1980s. (APA, 1979, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council, p. 3).

A change of name?
The changing nature of the times was also reflected in the contentious question of whether the APA should change its name. In 1976, the Canberra Preschool Association, APA’s ACT Branch, was reformed as the Association for Early Childhood Development (AECD)—a name more inclusive of those now involved in early years services. Following a similar trajectory, Holmes argued that despite there being ‘many complications, no doubt a lot of emotional involvement, and lots of agonising one way or another’ (1976, p. 8) a name change for the APA was necessary to better reflect the organisation’s growing diversity.

The 1977 Annual Council Meeting considered the case for a change of name but the vote was lost. The following year, the South Australia Branch was unsuccessful in its proposition for a change of name, despite its argument that:

… the name of the Association no longer adequately reflected the aims and function of the organization, and in particular its concern with the wider age group of children from birth to eight years. (APA, 1978, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council, p. 17).

Holmes persisted and a year later at Council, after much discussion, there was ‘general agreement that a change of name was necessary, as the present name tended to give a restrictive view of the Association’s activities to those unfamiliar with its work’ (1979, p. 13). At the National Council Meeting in May 1979, two new names were put to the vote:

- Australian Early Childhood Association
- Australian Association for Young Children.

Failing to achieve a two-thirds majority, however, neither name was accepted—it wasn’t until the new decade that a new name would be chosen (Jackson-Nakano, 1993).

Changing organisational structure
A major area of focus for the APA internally during the 1970s was its structure. Each branch drew together a range of organisations (and associate members) concerned with the wellbeing of young children. The state branches were the conduit between the organisations and the national body. Communication between the National office and state branches occurred through newsletter, circulation of resources and personal communication and visits, as well through the Annual Council meeting when state branches tabled reports. Each state branch also set its own priorities.

At the national level the organisation operated through a committee structure. Over the decade several reviews examined the committee structure, their terms of reference, how these fitted with the overall aims of the organisation, rules about committee membership, record keeping and so forth.14

By the end of the 1970s, the APA nationally had been restructured to form a National Council comprising of four delegates from each state, two lay members and two professional members (Spearritt, 1980).15 This body met annually and from it the Executive was elected.

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14 (National Committees Structure Report, 1976 [Thomson], later the Committee on the Review of National Committees, 1979 [Farrance]).

15 Professional members were defined in the Constitution as ‘a person currently employed in a professional capacity in the field of Early Childhood Development’ (APA, 1978, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council, p. 15).
The Annual Council meeting was the forum for sharing ideas and for the state branches to bring particular state-based concerns. It was at this meeting that organisational decisions were made and policies endorsed and commissioned. The Executive met more frequently than the Council, to consider policy that, once endorsed, was then implemented by the National Office (see breakout box 2). Leading the work of the National Office in Canberra were the Executive Director and Education Director.

Prior to each Annual Council Meeting, a ‘Professional Meeting’ was held. Convened and chaired by the Education Director, the Professional Meetings, which included invited delegates, had originally been established as a ‘grace and favour’ (Spearritt, 1980, p. 109) by the largely ‘lay’ Executive to placate the ‘professional’ arm of the Association. However, by the end of the 1970s discussions of professional matters arising from these meetings became increasingly influential in informing decisions at the National Council.

National Conferences and branch seminars continued to provide an opportunity for those interested in the care and education of young children to gather and share ideas. Writing of her time as Chair of the Committee of the 14th Triennial National Conference held in Melbourne titled ‘The young child in focus’, Agnes Farrance wrote—‘We have had our times of fun, despair, delight, anticipation and sometimes sheer agony, but throughout it all a warm feeling of comradeship and goodwill’ (APA, 1976, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, Appendix B, p. 3). This conference attracted 1500 delegates and was, at the time, argued to be the ‘largest gathering ever held in Australia of people involved in the early childhood area’ (APA, 1977, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, p. 7).

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16 Delegates included Principals of the Colleges of Advanced Education (formerly Kindergarten Teachers’ Colleges); senior advisory staff from member voluntary organisations (or associate membership at state branches) or government departments or other statutory bodies; Directors and representatives of the Education Committees of Gowries; and graduate representatives of the Kindergarten Training Colleges.

17 Because of the ‘benefits afforded by contact with their colleagues’ (Report of the Federal Officer to the Executive, 1973, p. 5), the Professional Officers of the APA formed a federal professional association called The Australian Association of Early Childhood Educators which was inaugurated in 1974—but it was short lived.
Alice Creswick Scholarship

The Creswick Scholarships continued to fund overseas study as a way of maintaining and adequately preparing a core of mature, experienced teachers (Spearritt, 1980, p. 112). Barbara Mathews was awarded the scholarship in 1972, Judy McDonell in 1974, and Anne Perrett in 1975. In 1977, the scholarship went to Janette Stanford to fund a study tour in the US investigating education for children with vision impairment. Also in that year, Pat Keillor was awarded a scholarship to supplement her award of the Australian/America Education Foundation Grant for a study focused on nursery nurses and hospital play specialists.

In 1978, the scholarship as awarded to its first male recipient, Allan Kendall, Executive Producer of the Early Childhood Unit of the ABC to investigate the impact of television on the developing child.

In her history of APA, which concluded in 1980, Jean Spearritt argued that the APA:

... managed to keep preschool education in the forefront of the public mind. It has always spoken out on behalf of its members.

As a national network it has established influential contacts in all States. It has coordinated the preschool movement, and provided a focus for its ideas and objectives. There have been differences in points of view, but this Association has been consistent in its overall thrust and purpose. (Spearritt, pp.115–116).

By the end of the decade, earlier fears amongst some of those in APA about the potential threat day care posed to family life and the wellbeing of children had given way to a pragmatic focus in the organisation on the quality of services that children received—rather than whether they should be available or not. This focus on quality would be a significant feature in the operations of the APA throughout the 1980s.
Have the efforts of our forebears in the work, the leading educationalists who formed the Free Kindergarten Union at the beginning of the century, been forgotten, when in the light of the 1980s their efforts in recognising the special needs of early childhood are being denied? (Moorhead, cited in Mellor, 2009a).

Despite all setbacks, child care in the 1980s is an established area of public policy, an entrenched political issue and a focus of organised activity by many groups. Constant pressure will need to be maintained, however, to secure the gains that have been made and to move closer towards a national commitment to caring for Australia’s children. (Brennan and O’Donnell, 1986).

During the first few years of the 1980s the organisation was concerned with internal review. In 1980, the Australian Pre-school Association (APA) did eventually change to the Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA). This new title was to signal a more inclusive organisation, one that was visibly concerned with a greater range of children’s services than its previously traditional constituency of preschool.

Within the AECA, the decade commenced with a review of the National Office. Government funding for children’s services had increased the number and scope of such services and AECA’s National Office was now expected to resource a much expanded early childhood sector. However, financial constraints, multiple demands upon the National Office staff, and divergent expectations of what the work should involve, eventually led to a formal review of its work in relation to the organisation’s aims and objectives. This was headed by a retired senior public servant and educationalist, Mr William John (Jock) Weedon. Although the Review appears
to have been an attempt to address longstanding difficulties, two key staff, Alan Holmes and Joan Langham, resigned during the course of Weedon’s consultations. Unsurprisingly, the review echoed Holmes previous assertion that overall, the AECA had been faced with increased demand to resource a greater range of children’s services and accredit early childhood personnel, but did not have the human and financial resources to do so effectively. Weedon argued that work demands needed to be rationalised and prioritised and staff with experience and expertise in early childhood development employed in the positions of Federal Officer and Assistant Federal Officer. Further recommendations were made regarding the employment of administrative staff to support the work of the organisation. It is evident from this review that publications for the early childhood field had become an important component of the AECA’s work, but improvements in financial records were needed to accurately assess their impact on revenue and expenditure (Weedon, 1980).

Social and political context

In Australian society more generally, economic and social conditions were to play their part in shaping the role of the AECA. The Australian economy at the beginning of the 1980s was characterised by high unemployment and high inflation. Pusey describes Australia at this time as being:

... second only to the United Kingdom among the leading OECD member countries on the so-called ‘misery index’ (the sum of annual unemployment rates and the annual average increases in consumer prices).


Family structure was changing. By 1986, women in their twenties were more likely to be in a de facto relationship than married. A series of reforms gave de facto relationships almost the same legal status as married relationships and in 1986 the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognised childless heterosexual couples under its definition of family. Women were having children later in life and far fewer identified motherhood as being their primary path to fulfilment. Two-child, single-child and childless families became more common. The proportion of children who were born outside marriage rose from 10 per cent in 1976 to 19 per cent in 1988. Divorce rates, which had risen markedly in the seventies, stabilised in the 1980s but were still quite high. As a result, more children were living in single-parent households (predominantly with their mothers) or in blended families (Gilding, 1991). Throughout this decade, early childhood organisations such as the AECA had to come to grips with new family structures and patterns of family life.

Child care’s role in economic policy

Australia’s poor economic performance at the beginning of this decade was to influence the future of early childhood education in two ways. Initially, it gave rise to the expansion of public childcare places, as the provision of child care became an integral component of reform measures designed to improve economic performance. Later in the decade, the encroachment of economic rationalism into public policy was to fundamentally alter the nature of childcare provision (Press, 1999).

A hint of what was to come at the end of the eighties was evident in the 1981 Spender Report, established by the Fraser Government to review and contain government expenditure on child care. This review of the children’s services program favoured stronger Commonwealth control of expenditure rather than devolution of power to the states. It recommended abolishing the salary subsidy to services which had been designed to support the employment of qualified staff within services. It further recommended, on the grounds of cost-effectiveness, directing funding to family day care rather than centre-based child care and the funding of commercial childcare centres. A groundswell of opposition to the funding of for-profit services, even within conservative ranks, prevented the latter from being implemented at this time (Brennan & O’Donnell, 1986). Although many of the Spender Report recommendations were not implemented, it did succeed in making the income tests for parent fee rebates more stringent. In part, this was a response to research indicating that child care, where it was available, was mostly used for work-related purposes, and mostly by higher income families with both parents working (Jamrozik & Sweeney, 1996). However, reducing access to fee subsidies effectively cut funding to many services as many middle-income families could no longer afford to use child care.
Brennan and O'Donnell (1986) paint a bleak picture of the Australian children’s services sector during this period. Funding had been reduced and hundreds of submissions for new childcare projects were rejected, leaving a shortage of childcare places in many areas.

Against this backdrop, the Institute of Family Studies produced Towards a national child care policy (Brennan, 1983). This policy background paper outlined the mismatch between the realities of family formation and family life, and the configuration of care and education services for children. It pointed out that nearly 50 per cent of mothers with dependent children were in the workforce and 13 per cent of households were single-parent households. Yet there were over 4000 sessional preschools in Australia and only 512 day care centres. The Child Care Act 1972 had provided a legislative base for funding long day care and, although services such as preschools were funded under ‘special arrangements’, the submission-based funding model favoured organised middle-class groups, such as those associated with preschool organisations. Hence preschools had been more successful at getting capital funding, prompting Brennan (1983, p. 12) to write at the time:

… services continue to be based on the assumption that all mothers are at home during the day, are able and willing to perform regular unpaid duties and can make do with three or four half sessions of care a week.

It is hardly surprising therefore, that child care was to become an election issue. In the lead up to the subsequent Federal election, Grimes (1982, cited in Sweeney 1985) described the Labor Party’s approach to funding child care thus:

A Children’s Services Program under a Federal Labor Government will provide services for children 0–15 years which complement the care they receive from parents. Access to community childcare is a right, and the aim of such care is to provide all children with developmental and social activities in safe surroundings provided by skilled and caring people for the range of hours which meets the children’s needs and those of their parents/carers.

Child care ‘a matter of high priority’

In 1983, the Australian Labor Party, under the leadership of Bob Hawke, won a landslide victory after a little over seven years of conservative government led by Malcolm Fraser. A key policy instrument for the newly elected Labor Government was the Prices and Incomes Accord (more commonly, the Accord). This was an agreement between the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Labor Party, through which unions undertook to exercise wage restraint in return for expenditure on the ‘social wage’. The social wage, broadly defined, included government expenditure on social benefits and social services. It gave rise to significant policy reforms such as Medicare, the extension of superannuation, and increased childcare subsidies. The Accord was renegotiated several times during this period of ALP Government and increases in childcare provision were consistently put forward as part of social wage claims (Pusey, 1991; Brennan, 1998). Hence, the 1980s marked a new era in early childhood education and care, one in which child care became entrenched as an area of public policy.

According to Brennan (1998):

No longer was child care an isolated policy issue of interest mainly to feminists on the one hand and traditional early childhood organisations on the other. Instead it was becoming integral to a number of the government’s social and economic policies and of interest to a far broader range of community groups, trade unions, policy-makers and government ministers than ever before (p. 169).

A analysis of ABS data from 1980 showed that ‘the higher the income of families the greater their use of child care arrangements, formal and informal’ (Sweeney, 1985, p. 202). Tension about whether child care should be available for all, or restricted to the ‘needy’ was a recurring debate. During the 1980s, however, ‘need’ became increasingly defined in relation to the workforce participation of parents (Jamrozik & Sweeney, 1996).

The new Federal Government lived up to its election commitment and the number of childcare places expanded.
Between 1983 and 1985 an additional 5000 places in long day care and 1120 in outside-school-hours care were funded. In 1984, a needs-based planning approach was adopted to replace the previous submission-based model, which had proved ineffective in targeting new services to areas of highest need. Between 1985 and 1987 over 10,000 new places were funded in centre-based long day care, 2400 places in occasional care centres, and over 5000 places in family day care, as well as additional places in outside-school-hours services. In 1988, the National Childcare Strategy aimed to establish an extra 30,000 childcare places through cost-sharing agreements with the states and territories (Gifford, 1992; McIntosh & Phillips, 2002).

In the early 1980s in particular, the emphasis on funding child care rather than preschool continued to be problematic for some of the traditional affiliates of the AECA. The aforementioned equation of ‘need’ with parental employment rather than the needs of children was one source of disquiet. Another was a perceived reduction in the AECA’s role in providing advice to government on early childhood matters. Mellor writes that certain policy decisions of the government at the time, including appointing a public servant rather an early childhood specialist as the Director of the Preschool Child Development Division (Victoria):

… indicated all too clearly just how far the influence of early childhood organisations on both Federal and State Government had diminished … It was a far cry from days when the Australian Pre-school Association advised the Federal Government on all matters relating to early childhood. (2009, p. 43).

Irrespective, the AECA increasingly provided resources for long day care in both centre-based and home-based environments as well as preschools. The Handbook for day care was produced in 1984. In its introduction, Anne Murray, National President of the AECA, describes the prime objective of child care as ‘providing effective opportunities for children to develop in relaxed and caring environments.’ (AECA, 1984, p. iii). A 1985 Report to Council affirmed the role of the National Director as being to ‘act as a resource and disseminate information about aspects and trends in children’s services throughout Australia and overseas.’ (AECA, 1985, n.p.).

Amendments to The Child Care Act

In the light of the added expenditure incurred by such expansion, The Child Care Act 1972 was amended in 1985 to change the basis of operational funding for services. Centres were no longer funded for 75 per cent of approved staff salaries. The salary subsidy was replaced with operational funding allocated on the basis of child places.
Effectively, operational subsidies for long day care centres were reduced by half. This had a significant detrimental impact upon the quality of childcare centres, a concern which was to shape the work of AECA for some time to come (Gifford, 1992). In addition, The Child Care Act 1972 amendments removed the specific mention of the AECA from the Act.

The impact of funding cuts generated a great deal of concern about the quality of the care and education being provided to young children. These concerns appear to have provided the impetus for the Minister for Community Services, Senator Don Grimes, to fund the AECA to provide ‘a professional and independent perspective on quality in Child Care Act funded day care services’ (AECA President speech 1986). The Association was to: identify the determinants of quality in day care; monitor trends in the quality of existing services; provide additional information services nationally; and report annually to the government on trends in long day care. As part of this role, the AECA conducted a national survey of 150 Commonwealth-funded day care services using determinants of quality based on childcare accreditation, the system developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United States.

Thus in March 1986 the AECA National President, Anne Murray, conducted a six-week national consultative tour. This tour was designed to gather information for AECA’s advisory/monitoring role in the area of day care quality. Consultations were held in the capital cities of each state and territory and included, among others, the relevant state/territory Minister, AECA members, trade union officials, day care staff, parents, women’s groups, and local government representatives. The president listened as participants raised their concerns about the impact of funding changes: including increasing reliance on casual, part-time, and junior staff; a shift from qualified to unqualified staff; poor staff working conditions; a lack of preparation time for children’s programs; high staff turnover; and ill-prepared management committees.

Consultations indicated general support for the introduction of national standards for childcare programs and there was some endorsement of the idea of the AECA undertaking an accreditation role in relation to early childhood education and care programs similar to that of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United States. By the end of the year, the AECA had produced Quality of long day care in Australia: Report to the Minister for Community Services (Murray, December 1986) and had developed a policy statement on recommended standards (AECA, 1986). The following year, the Melbourne Lady Gowrie Child Centre, produced Aspects of quality day care: An evaluative summary of recent literature (1987).

Leading the charge for quality: Getting the accreditation of children’s services on the policy agenda

The AECA’s concern with improving the quality of long day care programs was to focus its attention on the possibility of introducing an Australian accreditation system for child care. This was taken up with a great deal of enthusiasm at the branch level. The Narrabundah Early Childhood Education Centre in the Australian Capital Territory developed and trialled a self-evaluation instrument (Murray, 1986). In 1988, the Victorian Branch of the AECA developed an accreditation tool adapted from the NAEYC, a Play room observation schedule (Mellor, 2009b). In Queensland, Barbara Piscitelli and Nadine McCrea produced Voluntary accreditation of early childhood programs in Queensland: A report to the Minister for Family Services (May 1989). In New South Wales, the branch was successful in obtaining funding from the NSW Government to bring to Australia early childhood accreditation expert Sue Bredekamp from the NAEYC. Bredekamp ran a series of training courses for accreditation validators so that the NSW Branch could trial the full NAEYC accreditation system. Tonia Godhard recalls of the Bredekamp visit:

_We had a huge amount of goodwill and commitment to do that with no support really, except the field establishing its own support groups. The passion and commitment to having a quality improvement process was fantastic at that time._ (NCAC, 2011, p. 20).
Initially, the AECA was strongly supportive of the introduction of a voluntary accreditation system. The Deputy National Director, Jean Gifford wrote:

> AECA was pushing for accreditation to be entirely voluntary because we were looking for real, long lasting changes in thinking and professional growth to come out of a system of self evaluation … we gradually shifted in our thinking about what was desirable. By the September meeting 1990, AECA was comfortable with the concept of an introductory module within a voluntary Accreditation system which would prescribe a standards of quality necessary for fee relief. (1992, p. 5).

The AECA’s background work in researching and piloting childcare accreditation in Australia, and its engagement in policy discussions about possible models of implementation, were important in informing the key debates about ensuring childcare quality in the ensuing decade.

The Lady Gowrie Child Centres

The AECA and the Gowries had been intertwined since their inceptions. However, the changing nature of early childhood provision, expanding demands upon the AECA’s National Office, and increasingly blurred lines of accountability and autonomy between the organisations meant that their relationship was to be renegotiated several times over this decade.

In September 1982, a report entitled The LGCC and Commonwealth policy was produced jointly by the Commonwealth Office of Child Care and the AECA. This report established guidelines for assessment of Gowrie programs to support AECA’s recently acquired responsibility to recommend to the Office of Child Care the allocation of the Commonwealth’s ‘global’ grant to the Gowrie Centres. In 1984, the AECA commenced another review of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, the report of which was presented to the AECA Council in August 1985. Under its constitution, the AECA national body had a number of responsibilities for the centres including coordinating their work, being responsible for their child development and educational policies, and preparing budget submissions. A condition of funding to the AECA from the Office of Child Care was that it:

> … enable the employment of a highly qualified, professional officer for the purpose of assisting Lady Gowrie Centres to carry out their functions and to assist them to remain in contact with overseas developments in the field of education and welfare services for children in the 0–6 age range. (cited in AECA, 1985, p. 20).

This latest review was instigated because of confusion regarding the extent and nature of the AECA’s responsibility for the functioning of the Gowries. The AECA national organisation had a Lady Gowrie Standing Committee and a (Lady Gowrie) Coordination and Assessment Committee. The AECA National Director was to ensure the Gowries implement AECA policy, yet each Gowrie had its own management committee. In addition, the nature of the relationship between the AECA branches and the Gowrie in their state was unclear. The Review recommended measures which appear to have strengthened the overseeing role of the National Office of the AECA. The Report recommended that the constitution of each Gowrie be amended to contain clauses specifically referencing the AECA. In addition, it recommended that proposals for research and publications were to come to National Office; and the Gowrie Centres were to advise National Office if they were making bids for additional government funding. The 1985 Review further declared:

> The responsibility of the [Lady Gowrie] Management Committee is to implement national Lady Gowrie Child Centre Policy as agreed to by the Federal Government and AECA and administered by AECA.

The Review also recommended that the AECA National Director continue regularly visiting each Gowrie Centre to provide advice and support, ensure the implementation of policy, and to act as an advocate for the National Lady Gowrie Child Centre Program.

Commonwealth funding to the AECA continued to emphasise its role in coordinating the ‘National Lady Gowrie Resource and Demonstration Programme’. In turn, each Gowrie was expected to continue its demonstration and advisory function with the Commonwealth Office of Child Care providing funding under the following terms of reference:
1. To act as a resource and advisory centre to agencies concerned with the provision and/or planning of education and welfare services for children in the 0–6 years age range.

2. To carry out research into and evaluation of professional methodology in use in education and welfare services for children in the 0–6 years age range, and to publish results.

3. To demonstrate new and/or improved professional methodology to personnel involved in the provision of education and welfare services for children in the 0–6 years age range.

A 1986 Annual Report from the WA Lady Gowrie Child Centre cites the AECA's objectives for the Gowrie Program as being:

1. To maintain quality services to the community by continuing appropriate present services and responding to other existing and developing needs, with an evaluation component.

2. To resource other service providers through the most appropriate means where the centre has the skills and resource to do this.

3. To develop a management style characterised by equitable employment conditions and democratic management.

4. To have influence and impact on policy for children’s services.


In 1982, the Commonwealth made it a requirement of their funding that all the Gowrie Centres offer long day care programs, not just preschool (Murnane cited in Watts & Patterson, 1984).

In keeping with previously noted misgivings about child care from some sections of the AECA, Isla Stamp wrote:

“If the Lady Gowrie Child Centres were to have children in peer groups all day and every day, they would do the best that can be done in such groups. But they would be demonstrating a program that educators cannot believe is the most beneficial to children whose home life is disrupted. (cited in Waters, 2000, p. 114).

However, this was not a universal attitude. Beth Stubbs, chair of the Gowrie Centre in Victoria, is reported to have said, in response to the imperative to provide long day care, ‘Change, though painful, can give fresh life and vigour to an establishment’ (Waters, 2000, p. 114). In her introduction to the AECA resource booklet, Integrated Children’s Services, Jill Cameron (1983), the then Director of Lady Gowrie in Western Australia, wrote of the artificial divisions between the different services for children and families:

The divisions, which have related to funding arrangements, to the method of operation of government departments, and to the training of people who work in children’s services, have resulted in individual services operating in a fragmented way, quite independently of each other, frequently without regard to the real needs of the families they were set up to serve. (p. 2).

And so the Lady Gowrie Child Centres did change. By 1983, for example, the Western Australian centre at Karawa provided full day care and regular part-time care, outside-school-hours care, vacation care, a weekly Child Health Clinic, a toy library and playgroups (Cameron, 1983); and the Brisbane Gowrie offered sessional preschool, day care, family day care, part-time and occasional care, vacation care and parent sessions.

The centres continued their research function. In 1984, the Brisbane Lady Gowrie Child Centre was funded by the Office of Child Care to conduct research on the quality of day care. The research was conducted by Emeritus Professor Watts, who had been Professor of Special Education at the University of Queensland and Foundation Professor of the University’s Schonell Educational Research Centre, and Mrs Patterson, Deputy-Director of the Brisbane Lady Gowrie Child Centre. The report of the research project, In search of quality: Home and day care centre, complementary environments for the growing child (Watts & Patterson, 1985), declared its goal as being to:

... make a contribution to knowledge about quality day care as it might operate in centres in Australia and to identify areas which might require action if the goal of excellence is to be achieved. (p. 2).
This report was a precursor to many over the next decade produced by the AECA to generate awareness about the importance of quality in long day care.

The role of the Gowries in producing innovative resources for the field continued to expand and reflected the social movements of the time and, by the last years of the 1980s, their support for the childcare sector was much more prominent. For example, in 1988, Perth Lady Gowrie Child Centre produced *Towards a Non-sexist Daycare Environment: A Checklist for Caregivers*. In 1989, the Melbourne Gowrie produced, in conjunction with the AECA, a series of videos addressing the particular concerns of day care: *Routines From Lunch to Bed; Group Care; Difficult Moments; and Separation* (Waters, 2000). Concern that existing practices within children’s services tended to ‘perpetuate the cultural exclusion of migrants and Aboriginal people’ (Brennan, 1983, p. 16) had also caused the Gowries to become very active in resourcing services to address issues facing migrant families in children’s services.

However, by the end of the decade, the special formal relationship enjoyed between the AECA and Gowries was ‘beginning to show strain’ (Waters, 2000, p. 128). As the national organisation broadened its remit, its focus upon the Gowrie Centres was diluted. The amount of time that the National Director should devote to the Gowries was the subject of debate, as was the question of whether the Gowries should be represented on the AECA Executive.

It appears that the AECA was seeking a broader role, and the special focus on the LGCCs had been lost. (Waters, 2000, p. 129).

### Developments in Teacher Accreditation

In 1982, the AECA decided to automatically accredit as teachers those holding a Child Care Certificate, which required two years full-time study. *The Child Care Act 1972* required the employment of teachers in child care. However, long hours and poorer working conditions relative to preschool, meant that qualified preschool teachers were not taking up this option in the numbers required. The decision of the AECA to accredit staff with a Child Care Certificate appears to have been driven by two main factors. Firstly, it was an expedient response to the pressing problem of teacher shortages. Secondly, the training for the Child Care Certificate was more directly focused on the particular demands of childcare centres, including a focus on infants and toddlers, and in some respects produced graduates more suited to child care. However, the AECA’s decision was to have far-reaching consequences, reopening the split between care and education because certificate holders were only recognised as teachers in day care, not in preschools (Brennan & O’Donnell, 1986; Kelly, 1994).

### The further amalgamation of teacher training

The AECA’s aim of influencing the content of early childhood teacher training was made more difficult by the Commonwealth Government’s decision to amalgamate small teacher training institutions into multi-purpose Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE). In the early 1980s, the Institute of Early Child Development (IECD) (born from the Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers’ College) was amalgamated into the Melbourne CAE and many early childhood activists were against the amalgamation. Although Victorian protests opposing the move were unsuccessful in preventing amalgamation, they may have been the reason Director of the Free Kindergarten Union, Heather Moorhead, was appointed to the Council of the newly established Melbourne College of Advanced Education—IECD (Mellor, 2009a). In 1982, the two Sydney-based early childhood training colleges, the Kindergarten Teachers Training College at Waverley and the Nursery School Teachers’ College at Newtown, were amalgamated to become an autonomous institute within the Sydney College of Advanced Education (the Institute of Early Childhood Studies). In 1984 an article in the *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* asserted that only three early childhood institutes had autonomy over their courses: Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane (Brennan, 1986). Late in the decade (1989), the Sydney CAE was dissolved and the Institute of Early Childhood became a school of Macquarie University, illustrative of a move across the country of teaching courses moving into the university sector in the late 1980s (Institute of Early Childhood, n.d.).
OMEP Australia

Since the establishment of OMEP Australia in the 1950s, the AECA at the branch level and to some extent within the national organisation, had continued to sponsor OMEP activities. The AECA’s work with OMEP was often most evident within AECA branches. However, the exact nature of the relationship between the Australian branch of OMEP and the AECA was a source of confusion. When the registration brochure of the AECA Conference in Hobart in 1982 included an invitation to an OMEP dinner for OMEP members only, an AECA branch member asked ‘exactly who is a member’ of OMEP? In reply, Ellie Pullin, long-time convenor of the AECA OMEP Standing Committee, wrote:

Because AECA is an ‘organisation of organisations’ it is [sic] always been assumed that members of any organisation affiliated with any state branch of AECA are automatically entitled to be seen as members of OMEP. AECA is the National Committee of OMEP and has been so recognised since the foundation of OMEP. (cited in Waters, 2007, p. 62).

Later that year, Ellie Pullin resigned as convener of the AECA OMEP committee after 21 years (Waters 2007). This prompted the question of whether OMEP should become independent of AECA. At the next AECA Council meeting it was suggested that AECA branches should encourage individual membership to OMEP. A working party was formed to make recommendations on the matter but it appears that getting recommendations discussed and approved was somewhat problematic. Records from the OMEP working party are possibly illustrative of the difficulties in governance that had given rise the 1980 review of the National Office some years before.

Communication with AECA was … such a lengthy process—the working party's correspondence had to go to the president of AECA, then on to the convenor of the Standing Committee. Answers to our correspondence arrive [sic] here well after our meetings and too late for discussion and reply. (cited in Waters, 2007, p. 73).

Eventually, a national OMEP committee was formed with representation from every state and territory. This committee met four times a year and operated under the auspice of the AECA. The Australian Report to the World Council of OMEP in 1987 refers to the headquarters of OMEP being located in Canberra ‘with the work of OMEP being incorporated into the work of the Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA)’ (Dau, 1987, n.p.). Two years later, the 1989 Australian Report to the OMEP World Council signalled a planned restructure for the management of the Australian Branch (Murray, 1989). By 1994, a new constitution for OMEP Australia had been formulated and accepted, making it independent of the AECA, with Marcia Fleming becoming the first National Convenor of the new OMEP Australia.

Throughout this time, OMEP branches (albeit intimately connected to AECA branches) continued to support projects throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

For instance, in 1986 the ACT Branch provided resources to Nabou preschool in Fiji, and the Victorian Branch sponsored two preschool teachers from Papua New Guinea to attend the AECA conference in Brisbane and donated money to the Save the Children Fund for their Ethiopian/Sudanese camp (Dixon, Report to Israel World Congress, 1986). In 1988, branch fundraising supported the attendance of delegates from the Asia-Pacific region to the OMEP seminar in Australia. In the early 1990s, the Queensland Branch provided play materials and books for the children of prisoners at the Brisbane Women’s Gaol; the Tasmanian Branch supported a kindergarten in Vanuatu and the Victorian Branch supported a Child Watch environmental project. Later, the New South Wales and Victorian Branches cooperated to produce a leaflet providing advice to teachers and carers working with the children of Bosnian refugees (Waters, 2007).

Child Watch is established

‘Child Watch aims, though inquiry and publicity, to obtain a better deal for the nation’s most valuable resource—our children’. (Vasey, 1984, p. 4).

The Child Watch Project, sponsored by the AECA, was launched by Minister Grimes (Minister for Social Security) in 1984. As part of its advocacy role, the AECA regarded Child Watch as a ‘community involvement project designed to identify the needs of
parents and their children’ (AECA, Murray, February 1984). ‘Who Cares for the Under 2’s?’ was its first project. Through interviews with parents and others responsible for administering programs to young children with regard to the question ‘Who Cares for the under 2’s?’ this project aimed to:

... promote and increase public involvement in matters concerning young children and their families, to increase government sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of families with young children and to promote the rights of young children. (Lavis, 1984).

Through its activities at this time, Child Watch successfully lobbied around issues as diverse as the installation of a pedestrian crossing in Hobart, and the extension of Child Health Clinic Hours in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Child Watch committees provided input into the proposed ABS National Survey of Child Care Arrangements (1987), and Outside School Hours Care Programs (Lavis, 1984.). Child Watch conducted a myriad of projects and produced resources in response to the perceived needs of children in the community, including a series of videos targeted to preventing child abuse, Count to ten, the latter coordinated by long-time ECA member and Child Watch advocate Jennette Lavis.

Branch activity

As is evident through the accounts of activities related to OMEP and Child Watch, the work of the AECA was not confined to the activities of the National Office. There is ample evidence of research, resource and consultative activity at the branch level and at each Lady Gowrie Centre. For example, in 1981 the NSW Branch of the AECA and the Sydney Lady Gowrie Centre held a series of six high-profile seminars, on the theme ‘Consumer Needs in Early Education’. These seminars canvassed issues concerning the child care needs of ‘working parents’, ‘children under three’, ‘handicapped children and their families’, as well as health issues, children’s rights and ‘politics, policies and funding’ (AECA & Sydney LGCC, 1981). Similar series were held in other states, culminating in a National Seminar in Canberra in August of that year. In 1985, the NSW Branch initiated an evaluation of multi-purpose child centres (AECA NSW Branch, 1986). In a 1986 report, the AECA noted that Brisbane Lady Gowrie had run 46 early childhood training sessions and the Adelaide Centre 28 (AECA, December 1986). Helen Clarke, a member of the NT Branch recalls the NT Branch being revitalised though a local campaign against a move by its government to increase the existing child to staff ratio for all children in child care from 8:1 to 12:1 (personal communication, 2013).

The Alice Creswick and Sheila Kimpton Foundation is formed

After 17 recipients had benefited from opportunities provided by the Creswick Foundation, the money in this fund was beginning to diminish. Mawdsley (2011) recounts that a chance meeting on a bus in London between Anne Murray (then President of AECA) and Sheila Kimpton, the daughter of Alice Creswick, revived the fortunes of the Foundation. A generous donation from Kimpton enabled the Alice Creswick and Sheila Kimpton Foundation is formed.
Creswick Scholarship to be re-established as the 
Alice Creswick and Sheila Kimpton Foundation. The 
administration of the foundation was in the hands of 
a trust upon which the AECA was represented and 
the AECA was active in advertising for and selecting 
scholarship holders.

Advocacy through publications

Throughout this decade, the *Australian Journal of 
Early Childhood* (AJEC) played an important role 
in resourcing the early childhood sector. As well as 
continuing to publish research and new thought on 
issues pertaining to child development, programming 
and planning in early childhood services, it provided 
an avenue for the early childhood community to 
consider important questions of policy. In December 
1984, it published a series of articles on, and 
alyses of, children’s services policy. Written by 
politicians of various persuasions, academics and 
Labor Council of NSW Child Care Project Officers, 
these policy pieces brought to the early childhood 
sector a range of well-considered views that provided 
insights into the key policy considerations of the day.

In 1985, AJEC produced a somewhat controversial 
themed edition on Peace Education (Waniganayake, 
2001). Rosemary Milne, from the Free Kindergarten 
Association (FKA) in Melbourne also wrote a 
pamphlet *Education for Peace* which became the 
Australian contribution to OMEP, for the International 
Year of Peace (personal communication Priscilla 
Clarke, 2013)1. In 1986, AJEC published an edition 
on Human Rights, and in 1989, dedicated an edition 
to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the 
Child* (UNCRC). This latter contained contributions 
from organisations outside the traditional early 
childhood field, including the Federal Human 
Rights Commission, the Australian Council of Social 
Services, the Youth Affairs Council, the Federation of 
Ethnic Communities Council and the Secretariat for 
National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care.

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1 FKA went on to publish a book by Milne also called *Education for Peace* (1986). This was revised in 1997 as *Peace Education in Early Childhood* and is still available from FKA.
At the conclusion of the decade

In a fitting end to the decade, in 1989 Australia signed the UNCRC and ratified it in 1990. According to the AJEC Committee minutes of December 1989, Hazel Hawke, wife of the then Prime Minister, publicly acknowledged the AECA's role as a key non-government agency which played a significant part in the public’s acceptance of the Convention (cited in Waniganayake, 2001). In 1993, the AECA was to publish a booklet on children's rights, *Children's rights: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Greenwood, 1993) as part of its resource book series.

Within the AECA other changes occurring at the end of the eighties were to shape the future of the organisation. Anne Murray ended her role as president after six years (1983–1989). Described as ‘diplomatic and tactful in her efforts to bridge the “old” ways of being with the “new” way of operating with an expanded National Office and Executive’ (Harley, 2013, personal communication), Murray was replaced by Anne Stonehouse. After some instability in the position of National Director, Pam Cahir was appointed in 1988 and was to remain in this position (later as CEO) for 24 years.

This chapter concludes with a quote from Stonehouse from her 1989 keynote address to the National Conference of the Australian Association of Early Childhood Educators. This keynote, in modified form, was reprinted in the *Australian Journal of Early Childhood Education* as ‘An Open Letter to Australian Early Childhood Professionals’ and ended with the following words:

*Our profession has always had women with tremendous professional strength, foresight and courage. That has not changed but the methods for advocacy have. It would not be so bad if sometime in the near future we were not seen as nice ladies who love children, but rather, strong, caring people who fight effectively for children. Their future, and the future of our profession, depend upon it.* (Stonehouse, 1990, p. 10).
CHAPTER 7

The 1990s

‘Advocacy ... is strengthened when the sector as a whole works collaboratively towards this end’.

We recognise that if women are to have a real choice, they need to have access to child care ... That is why we have established what is already one of the best systems of child care in the world, and why we will make it even better—more places and more affordable access to them. (Prime Minister Hawke, 1990).

Child care services have now become widely, if not quite universally, accepted as an important social provision which enhances children’s development and enables parents to perform the many tasks that are necessary for the family to remain a viable social and economic unit. (Jamrozik & Sweeney, 1996, p. 115).

Policy context

A number of the significant shifts in policy and practice affecting the field of early childhood education and care that were to mark the 1990s had their beginnings in the late eighties. At the broader level of national politics and policy, these shifts included the decision of the Federal Government to move to a mixed market of childcare provision. As will become evident, this had significant ramifications for the work of the AECA, which had to contend with a rapidly expanding and altered childcare sector and even greater pressures on the quality of early childhood education and care, as well as the professionalism and professional identity of the field.

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1 National Children’s Services Forum (NCSF).
Significantly, in March 1990, Australia ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities. This international treaty committed signatories to enact measures to enable workers with family responsibilities to work ‘without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities’ (Article 3). Article 5 (b) of the Convention called for the development or promotion of child care and the provision of other family services. Jean Gifford, then Deputy National Director of the AECA, wrote that Australia’s ratification of the Convention placed child care out of the ‘arena of women’s issues into the mainstream industrial and legal spheres in ways which have not yet been fully appreciated’ (Gifford, 1992, p. 2).

The Code of Ethics

In September 1988, the AECA established a working party to develop the first Code of Ethics for the Australian early childhood profession. Convened by Anne Stonehouse and strongly supported by the Northern Territory Branch of which she was a member, the working party included Margaret Clyde (Victoria), Barbara Creaser (Northern Territory), Lyn Fasoli (Northern Territory), Barbara Piscatelli (Queensland) and Christine Woodrow (Northern Territory). According to Woodrow (2001, p. 26) the Code was ‘a bold and timely move that provided leadership and direction when the field was struggling with questions of professionalism and professional identity’.

It emerged in a context of rapidly expanding early childhood programs with resultant pressures on training and qualifications. Services were often put into the position of having to employ inexperienced, untrained and/or minimally qualified staff. The Code of Ethics was designed, in part, to support practitioners who could find themselves struggling in isolation with issues that had an ethical dimension for which often they were ill prepared (Woodrow, 2001).

The Code of Ethics was drafted using a highly consultative process with workshops and seminars held throughout Australia. At the end of 1989, a draft Code was published in the December edition of AJEC and broadly distributed to the field for feedback with a view to having the final Code endorsed at the 1990 National Council (Stonehouse, 1989).

This was achieved in September 1990 at the AECA National Council in Sydney. Adoption of the Code by early childhood staff was well supported by the AECA with copies distributed throughout Australia and additional written materials, workshops and seminars provided to support its enactment. In March 1991, AJEC ran a themed issue on Professional Ethics featuring the new Code, and the third publication in the newly established resource book series was Getting Ethical: A Resource Book for Workshop Leaders (Fasoli & Woodrow, 1991).

A decade after the code was released Woodrow (2001) wrote ‘As a nationally coordinated project, the AECA Code of Ethics has been the most tangible and public aspect of the field’s engagement with ethics over the past 10 years’. (p. 27).

The privatisation and accreditation of Australian long day care

Towards the end of 1989, the Minister for the Children’s Services Program, Dr Blewett, flagged his intention to expand childcare provision by extending government support to the commercial sector. This was a significant turning point in policy. Until 1987, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) (a key player in government policy because of the Prices and Income Accord), and many other childcare advocates, strongly opposed funding going
to the private sector. Yet, by the end of the decade, the ACTU argued that it was unfair to its members that those who were using private childcare centres should be denied the same level of support as those using not-for-profit services (Logan, unpublished). Increasingly, the extension of fee subsidies to the private sector was regarded by the Federal Government as a cost effective means of addressing the ongoing shortage of childcare places.

Perhaps this approach staved off the implementation of measures put forward by those within the Government that childcare provision should become fully commercial, with subsidies only available to those on low incomes (Mellor, 2009b). However, Brennan asserts that support for commercial child care was also a strategy that enabled the government to ‘contain the small advances that had been made towards increasing the qualifications of workers in child care and improving their professional status’ (November, 2008, n.p.). Within the government, opponents of publicly funded child care, such as Labor’s Finance Minister, Peter Walsh:

... were scathing about the employment of trained teachers in early childhood. They argued that efforts to extend the employment of teachers were intended ‘to make even softer the nests of bachelors of early childhood education and their middle-class well-feathered friends’ and they accused childcare workers of crippling the system with ‘creeping credentialism’. (Brennan, 2008, n.p.).

In March 1990, the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke promised in an election speech to extend fee subsidies to the private sector (Gifford, 1992; Kelly, 1992). This move was designed to ‘stimulate supply of additional child care places’ (Blewett, cited in Gifford, 1992, p. 13) and in this, it was highly successful. The National Childcare Strategy was expanded so as to allow for additional 50,000 places by the end of 1996–1997 (McIntosh & Phillips, 2002). The long day care sector quickly became the fastest growing ‘industry’ in Australia. By 1996, 75 per cent of LDC was run by for-profit providers (Loane, 1997).

Widespread protest and concern about the quality of care that might result from a private, for-profit system, gave rise to the Government introducing a national system of childcare accreditation (Brennan, 1998). According to Prime Minister Hawke (1990):

Parents are entitled to be confident they are getting quality attention for their kids whether they are using government funded or commercial centres. So we will work with all key interests in child care to develop a system of accreditation. (cited in Wangmann, 1992, p. 47).

To plan the development of the accreditation system, a Committee of Child Care Representatives was established and chaired by Labor backbencher Mary Crawford. This committee recommended that an independent national council be established to oversee the development of an industry based, two-tiered accreditation process. The first component would be compulsory and necessary for parents using these centres to receive fee relief. The second tier would be voluntary. The new Council was to take into consideration the findings of the work undertaken by the AECA branches in trialling accreditation systems in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. In 1991, the Interim National Accreditation Council was formed, and Jane Singleton (a media consultant and former ABC journalist) was appointed as Chair (Kelly, 1992). The Interim Council consisted of 20 members, some of whom held strongly divergent views. Although there was widespread consultation ‘the detail of the recommendations and the cumbersome nature of some of the suggested procedures’ (Mellor, 2009b, p. 22) are testament to the unwieldy nature of this committee. The AECA continued to actively contribute to the development of the system, producing a number of working papers and submissions, both to resource the field and to provide advice directly to the interim Council. In 1993, the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) was formed under the leadership of Quentin Bryce, a feminist and lawyer and former Sex Discrimination Commissioner. The NCAC was to play a key role in monitoring and supporting the quality of early childhood programs for over a decade.
The introduction of an accreditation system for child care was contested and controversial. At each stage of its development, the compulsory tying of accreditation to funding met with strident opposition from elements (though not all) of the commercial childcare sector (Wangmann, 1995). June Wangmann, who was intimately involved in the development of the system describes this time ‘as the most challenging period in the history of children’s services in this country’. However, she also observes that those involved on the early committees and Council, ‘were prepared to work together and to make compromises to make a difference for Australia’s children’ (NCAC, 2011, p. 17). In September 1994, the first NCAC review visit was conducted at A.P.I. Little Cribb Street Child Care Centre in Brisbane (NCAC, 2011).

The AECA constitutional review: Gowries and membership

The 1990s was also a time of constitutional review for the AECA. Revisiting and revising the constitution was driven by a need to take into account the AECA’s changing relationship with the Lady Gowrie Centres, a need to examine the distinction made in the existing constitution between lay and professional members and an extremely complex voting structure (Cahir, April 1991). In addition, it became important to discuss the voting rights of Honorary Life Vice-Presidents. The conferring of Life memberships and the role of Honorary Life Vice-Presidents was designed to acknowledge and honour the work of long-time active AECA members (refer to Appendix 5). However, these positions were granted voting rights at National Council and collectively, under the Constitution of the time, Life Vice-Presidents had the voting strength of one and a half branches (Henderson, Paper on Constitutional Review, 1991).

By the end of 1991, Waters (2000) reports that the ‘special relationship’ that had existed for so long between the Lady Gowrie Child Centres and the AECA had come to an end. The 1991 review of the AECA Constitution raised the question of whether the Constitution still needed to make special mention of the Gowrie Centres (Henderson, Paper of the review of the AECA Constitution, 1991). This must have been a difficult question to ask and answer after such a long formal association, despite the fact that the Lady Gowrie Child Centres themselves had effectively become much more independent of the AECA. Nevertheless, the revised constitutions from this time until the constitutional amendments of 2002 continued to refer to the Gowries. The 1991 review removed reference to the AECA’s responsibility for the Lady Gowrie Child Centres’ budget submissions and programs. However, the responsibility of the AECA under the Constitution remained, ‘To promote the recognition … of the value of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres in contributing to the optimum development of the Young Child.’ (Clause 4(j), AECA Constitution).

In 1993 the Gowrie-RAP Consortium4 was established and received funding independent of the AECA to support childcare services through the new accreditation process. Now operating independently of the AECA, the Gowries continue to produce resources and provide training targeted to improving the quality of care and education for young children.

The 1993 National Council voted to change the way membership was offered to enable members to take out comprehensive membership. Comprehensive membership gave members the opportunity to claim a discount on AECA books and subscriptions. Although members were members of their branch, not the national organisation, the voluntary nature of AECA branches led to difficulty in administering this type of membership. Eventually, AECA membership came to be administered out of National Office (1994 Council papers), a practice that still occurs today. Members remain however, members of their state/territory branch.

The National Children’s Services Forum

The break between the Lady Gowrie Child Centres and the AECA was more than symbolically significant. It reflected the changing expectations of government about the AECA’s role and changed the AECA’s funding base.

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4 In 2000 the Consortium changed its name to Gowrie Australia.
In 1993 the Federal Government’s Department of Human Services and Health reviewed the role of national peak representative organisations. In the light of this review, the AECA was urged to change the way it acted as a nationally representative children’s services organisation. In response, in 1994, the AECA proposed and was funded to convene a national meeting of organisations that represented specific sectors within early childhood to establish protocols for the AECA around this function (1994 Council Papers). This meeting led to the birth of the National Children’s Services Forum (NCSF) to ‘advocate for high quality children’s services to meet the diverse needs of all children while reflecting the range of policies, positions and perspectives of its member organisations.’ (Mission Statement, November 1994).

The original NCSF membership consisted of the National Association of Community Based Children’s Services; the National Family Day Care Council of Australia; the National Outside School Hours Care Association; the National Association of Mobile Services for Rural and Remote Families and Children; the Occasional Child Care Association of NSW and naturally, the AECA. Since that time the NCSF has expanded its membership to include representation from a broader range of organisations. It meets regularly to discuss issues of policy, from time to time presenting joint positions to government, and raising issues of concern to its member organisations.

Today, the NCSF declares that it ‘recognises that advocacy for high-quality children’s services, which meet the needs of all children and families, is strengthened when the sector as a whole works collaboratively towards this end’.

Although it has not always been possible for such a diverse range of organisations to agree on common policy positions, the NCSF is credited with creating better understanding across sectors (personal communication, Godhard 2013; personal communication, Cahir, 2013).

A plethora of reviews

As if foreshadowing the decade ahead, the final edition of AJEC in 1991 contained the following comment in its editorial:

> Historically there has been a degree of tension between those who formulate policies and those whose task it is to implement them … The tragedy arises when the two faces of policy become polarised, compartmentalised, each mutually suspicious of the other … one of the more successful ways of preventing such tension is to facilitate communication between policy makers and those at the ‘coalface’ … AJEC is an ideal forum for such an exchange of ideas in the field of early childhood.

(Kilham & Knight, 1991).

As well as the major shift to funding a mixed market of childcare provision, the 1990s produced a seemingly relentless series of reviews of childcare funding and administrative arrangements, leading eventually to the removal of operational funding from community-based children’s services. The decade commenced with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments undertaking a Functional Review of Child Care. This review included preschool provision within its scope and in 1991 produced a report with recommendations to streamline the various government arrangements for child care and preschool provision (Wangmann, 1995).

In 1992, the Government produced an issues paper reviewing funding arrangements for child care (Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, 1992). In 1993, the Administrative Review Council conducted a Review of Programs under

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**Membership of the National Children’s Services Forum (NCSF)**

Current members of the NCSF are Early Childhood Australia (ECA); the National In-Home Childcare Association (NICA); the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA); the Australian Community Children’s Services (ACCS); the National Association of Mobile Services for Rural and Remote Families and Children; the National Association of Community Based Children’s Services (NAMS); Family Day Care Australia (FDCA); National Out of School Hours Services Association (NOSHSA); National Association of Mobile Services for Rural and Remote Families and Children; Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC); Playgroup Australia (PA); National Association of Multicultural and Ethnic Children’s Services (NAMECS) and National Disability Alliance in Children’s Services (NDACS).
Health, Housing and Community Services. In 1994, the Law Reform Commission (LRC) reviewed childcare-related legislation and produced the report, *Child Care for Kids*. Cahir, the National Director of the AECA, was a consultant to this review. This report recommended that the primary purpose of the Government’s Children’s Services Program be the wellbeing of children and also recommended the establishment of a Children’s Commissioner—echoing recommendations first made by the AECA’s predecessor, the AAPSCD, in the 1940s (LRC, 1994).

The International Year of the Family (1994) provided the impetus for a series of national consultations on family policy, convened by Professor Bettina Cass, chair of the National Council for the International Year of the Family. This National Council was ‘charged with the responsibility of making recommendations [about] the development of a sustainable and long-term framework of family policies …’ (National Council for the International Year of the Family, 1994, p. 1). Not surprisingly, the Council made a number of recommendations relating to the provision of child care. In 1995, the Economic Planning Advisory Commission (EPAC) Child Care Task Force commenced a review on:

... future demand for child care, how to make the provision of childcare efficient, effective and equitable, and the links between the provision of childcare and other children’s and family services. (1996, p. iii).

In 1996, the Commonwealth Children’s Services Programme released a number of discussion papers on Future Directions for Childcare.

The AECA, at both branch and National Office level, were kept busy responding to the issues raised by these consultations as well as providing input into the various consultations and iterations of the development of the accreditation process. This prompted some criticism that prior-to-school services were being favoured by the organisation at the expense of the early years of school (personal communication, Riedl, 2013).
However, there is some evidence of school-based issues being addressed, for instance the Schools Council commissioned the AECA National Office to produce a working paper, Early Childhood in Australian Schools (Gifford, 1992).[^5]

The Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council was established in 1998 by the Minister for Family Services. Although the Minister appointed individuals and not organisational representatives to this council, the then President of the AECA, Susan Whittaker, was appointed as a member. One of the first tasks of this Council was to review the NCAC’s Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS). This resulted in a somewhat simplified system. Accreditation systems were the developed and introduced for family day care and outside-school-hours care.

**National conferences**

National conferences were held across the country throughout this period: Adelaide (1991), Perth (1994), Melbourne (1997) and, for the first time, in Darwin (1999). Organised by the branch of the state or territory in which they were held, conferences could pose some unexpected challenges. Helen Clarke, for instance, recalled the withdrawal of the venue for the Darwin Conference a fortnight before the conference date (personal communication, 2013). However they also revived interest in the branch’s work as well as interest in the national organisation and provided a trigger for issues concerning early childhood education and care to be covered in a public arena. Elspeth Harley recalls of the Adelaide Conference, the impact of Jim Greenman, a keynote speaker at conference:

> And he stood up and said – I’ll never forget it. “Some children will spend more hours in child care, than they will in the rest of their schooling.” And from then on, there was this amazing interest … for the whole 5 days of that conference, there was information in the paper, on page 3 every day. And not just one little bit, but different speakers.

CHAPTER 8

A new millennium and a new early childhood agenda

ECA’s relationship with the early childhood profession is important but it is critical that our role as advocates for children remain paramount. (Pam Cahir, National Council Meeting Minutes, 2008, p. 9).

Australia entered this new decade under a Liberal-National Party Coalition Government, elected in 1996 under the leadership of John Howard. The 2007 election brought a new Labor Government, under the leadership of Kevin Rudd. The election of the latter heralded a period of major reform for Australian early childhood education and care.

A number of significant cultural and political events marked the new millennium, commencing with the hosting of the Olympics Games in Sydney in 2000. The opening ceremony vividly celebrated Australia’s cultural diversity. In contrast, in August of the following year (2001), the Australian Government refused permission for the Norwegian cargo ship MV Tampa to enter Australian waters.

The Tampa had rescued 433 mostly Afghan and Iraqi asylum seekers from a sinking boat in the Indian Ocean and sought to land them at Christmas Island, an Australian Territory. The Australian Government’s increasingly hard line against asylum seekers arriving by boat over the subsequent decade and beyond, led to widespread concern about the treatment of children in Australian immigration detention centres among many organisations concerned with human rights, welfare and early childhood, including the AECA.

In September 2001, the two towers of New York City’s World Trade Centre were demolished as part of a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks across the United States of America by al-Qaeda. The resulting devastation (almost 3000 people died) led to the United States Government declaring a ‘war on terror’. In response, the AECA published Our part in peace as part of its Research and Practice Series (2002).
Later in the decade, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, made a formal apology to the Stolen Generations of Australia’s Indigenous people. Paralleling this move, ECA made reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a priority for early childhood policy and action.

In the national organisation of AECA/ECA

Whittaker stepped down as president in 2000 with Judy Radich taking up the reins until 2006. Margaret Young became president at that time until 2012, at which time the position was filled by Ros Cornish. 2012 was also the year that Cahir retired as CEO after 24 years of service and Samantha Page was appointed.

Signalling the transition to a more streamlined and professional governance structure for the organisation, the Constitution was reviewed twice over the next few years, 2002 and 2006. The 2002 Constitution adopted the new name, Early Childhood Australia (ECA). However, the new name was not officially launched until the National Conference in Hobart in 2003. Notably, despite the previous decade’s debates and concerns, the positions of Life Members continued to be included and Life Vice-Presidents still held a vote. These were to remain until the 2006 Constitutional amendments.

The change of title from AECA to Early Childhood Australia was an important symbolic shift. As with its previous name changes, this reflected the organisation’s widening reach to a more broadly based early childhood field and was chosen, in part, to emphasise early childhood—rather than Australia. In keeping with this intention for an expanded reach and remit, the objectives for ECA in the 2006 Constitution were amended. The first three now read:

- To promote the interests and wellbeing of young children, their families and the people who work with them as broadly and in as informed and effective a way as possible (3 [p. i]).
- To maintain and promote a body of knowledge and informed views on issues to do with young children and their families (3 [p. ii]).

Pam Cahir

Upon Pam Cahir’s retirement, Alison Elliott, long-time editor of Every Child, wrote:

Her 25 years at the helm have seen ECA grow from a small professional organisation for preschool teachers to a major peak body with input into major policy-making decisions in the early childhood arena and the wider children’s services and education sector.

Pam has presided over the greatest period of growth in the early childhood arena and her sure hand has guided the organisation’s transition from relative obscurity to one of educational sector eminence, with a sound business model and strong governance structure. She has been exceptionally successful in expanding ECA’s membership and reach, building the publishing arm, generating business, attracting government funding for various projects, raising ECA’s profile and building its reputation.
Chapter 8: A new millennium and a new early childhood agenda

- To promote high standards of practice and understanding in those who are responsible for supporting the development and learning of young children. (3 [p. iii]).

This broad remit has been in evidence since, with ECA voicing its position on a range of issues related to the care and welfare of young children, beyond its traditional focus upon formal early childhood care and education institutions. A review of the annual National Council minutes from this period reveal ECA’s determination to put issues concerning the wellbeing of children on the political agenda, and in turn, actively engage with the many early childhood review processes instigated by government.

Such changes also reflect the many years of work CEO Cahir and various board members put into addressing issues of governance. ECA had developed as a representative body led by input from branches. At times the representation of branch interests seemed to override the capacity of the national organisation to plan and move forward. This was not unique to ECA. It was a common issue facing many such representative bodies at the time. As with similar organisations, the issue of how to implement an effective national governance structure came to the fore. This included the requirement for Board members to ensure the effective functioning of the national body while having the capacity to put forward the views and interests of their branches. As the governance of the national body became more professional, communication between the National Board and the branches of each state and territory improved. National Council meetings became more inclusive of branches, regular teleconferences between board and branch representatives were instituted, and an annual ‘leadership meeting’ of National Board and branch presidents instigated. Additionally, the organisation developed a strategic planning process involving branch consultation, reviews and ratification at meetings of National Council.

As well as these developments vis-à-vis the internal functioning of the organisation, ECA continued to look to ways to better resource the early childhood profession and support families. It increased its repertoire of publications, and successfully forged partnerships with an array of organisations, to support better outcomes for children in a diverse range of environments. Many of these publications support the work of staff in early childhood education and care, and the early years of school. The introduction of the *Everyday Learning Series* revived ECA’s tradition of providing information targeted to families.

Developments in early childhood education and care

In a now familiar story, the new millennium commenced with yet another round of reviews and reforms of the early childhood sector in Australia.

In May 1999, the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council was given new terms of reference by the Minister of Family and Community Services (Warwick Smith). Through a process of consultation with the community and the early childhood sector, the Advisory Council was charged with exploring and reporting on the ‘nature of child care in 2001 and beyond’ (CCCAC, 2001, p. 161). This culminated in a report: *Child Care Beyond 2001*. One of the key recommendations of the committee’s report was the development of a National Children’s Agenda. This Agenda would ‘put the best interests of children as a central focus of Australian society (CCCAC, 2001, p. 6) and contribute to improving the status and standing of children, and those working in the children’s services profession. The report also made a number of recommendations concerning improved child care flexibility and access, especially for children with additional needs.

The decade also commenced with Australia’s participation in the OECD’s international Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Previous government reviews within Australia had often focused on only one aspect of ECEC, for instance, child care or preschool. The OECD review brought together representatives of all levels of Australian Government to provide a comprehensive picture of early childhood education and care policy and provision throughout the country. The subsequent *Background report* (Press & Hayes 2000) and *Country note* (OECD, 2001) highlighted the lack of national coherence in early childhood policy, and similarly to the subsequent recommendations of the CCCAC, emphasised that such policy should be grounded in a commitment to children.
The *Australian background report* was launched at the ECA Conference, ‘Excellence for Children’, held in Sydney in 2001.

In a heartening response to issues such as those raised in these reviews, Australia’s first Minister for Children (Larry Anthony) was appointed in 2001. In addition, a Commonwealth Task Force on Child Development, Health and Wellbeing was established to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to early childhood issues. This task force prepared a discussion paper *Towards the Development of a National Agenda for Early Childhood* which was released in early 2003. The paper was designed to generate discussion about the development of a National Agenda for Early Childhood. It outlined three broad action areas for national attention—early child and maternal health; early learning and care; and child-friendly communities.

In response to this consultation paper, ECA wrote:

> ... a further reason for the development of a national agenda for children arises from the recognition of children as citizens.

As citizens children have a value as human beings in the here and now, not simply for what they might become. As citizens, they have an entitlement, independent of their parent’s capacity to pay and shared by all other citizens, to the resources, that is policies, programs and funds necessary to ensure:

- Their wellbeing in the here and now experience of childhood.
- Their increasing capacity to participate as full and responsible citizens in the social, economic and political life of the society.
- That they can and will exercise their responsibility as adults for future generations of children (Towards a National Agenda for Early Childhood, ECA website).

In April 2003, the Minister convened a Child Care Workforce Think Tank to develop recommendations to address ongoing shortages of qualified staff.

This pressing issue had been raised in both the CCCAC and OECD reviews and had been a focus of campaigning by the AECA for some time. The Think Tank involved key government and early childhood representatives, including the AECA, and generated a range of recommendations related to the attraction and retention of staff such as improving remuneration, working conditions and the status of the profession. While broadly supportive of the recommendations, the Government’s response fell short of action to address wages and conditions asserting that ‘it is not up to governments to determine … what the remuneration should be’ (Department of Family and Community Services, 2003, p. 75).

Disappointingly, the promise of early childhood policy reform evident during these first years of the decade soon dissipated. After Minister Anthony lost his seat of Richmond in the 2004 Federal Election, the position of Minister for Children was abandoned. Despite widespread support for a National Agenda for Children, this too disappeared from the official policy landscape.

This was also a decade when childcare corporations flourished in Australia. In particular, a company called ABC Learning grew to own a substantial piece of the long day care market in Australia and then became one of the largest publicly listed childcare operators in the world (Press & Woodrow, 2009). The impact of the corporatisation of child care on early childhood policy and the quality and nature of children’s experiences was the subject of much analysis and debate within Australia and overseas but it was an issue upon which ECA remained largely silent.

*Early Childhood Australia is not taking a position on who should own or manage childcare services, because this takes us away from the fundamental question of how to ensure high-levels of quality regardless of ownership* (Cahir, 2008).

In 2008, ABC Learning collapsed threatening the availability of child care for large numbers of families.

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1 See for instance, Brennan, 2008; Harris 2007; Press & Woodrow 2009.
In response, a number of ECA branches (for example, Western Australia and New South Wales) did make submissions to the resultant Senate Committee Inquiry into Child Care advising caution in relation to the provision of child care by corporations. Throughout this time, ECA played an active role, monitoring and evaluating proposed and actual policy changes and advocating for improvements in policy for early childhood education and care. The latter years of the 2000s and the commencement of the new decade were to be a period of major policy focus and action, with the introduction and implementation of wide-ranging national reform in early childhood education and care.

National Reform Agenda for Early Childhood Education

In 2007, the election of the Rudd Labor Government ended over 10 years of Liberal-National Party Coalition Federal Government. One of the first acts of the Labor Government was to introduce national early childhood reform addressing many of the issues of fragmentation and unequal access to early childhood education raised in previous reports. The achievement of such reform depended upon the Australian Government being able garner the agreement of each state and territory government. The National Partnership Agreement for the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care was reached in 2008. This broad-ranging reform sought to improve access to, and the quality of, early education and care services. The reform agenda introduced Australia’s first national early childhood curriculum—the Early Years Learning Framework. It sought to improve access to early childhood education and care, especially to preschool in the year prior to school. Amid some controversy, the National Child Care Accreditation Council was replaced by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The ACECQA administers the National Quality Framework (NQF) which establishes baseline and aspirational standards for early childhood program quality.

During the roll-out of the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda, ECA has been broadly supportive of the reforms and vocal on matters such as professional qualifications and standards, teacher qualifications, teacher shortage, and evidence-based quality. In 2009 it launched a major lobbying strategy designed to encourage heads of government to sign-off on the round of reform agreements relating to staff to child ratios and educator qualifications. The ‘Hands Up for Quality’ campaign as it was known, was highly successful in showcasing broad sector support for the reforms and inter-governmental agreement was achieved (See ‘Hands up for Quality’ campaign letter).

Throughout the process it has invited senior figures concerned with the implementation of the Reform Agenda to address National Council and has reported on the progress governments have made in implementing key reforms through publishing reports such as Keeping the early childhood education and care reforms on track.

In 2011, ECA was commissioned to prepare a discussion paper for the European Union-Australia Policy Dialogue, in April of that year. This discussion paper provided an overview of Australian early childhood education and care commentary on issues arising from the Reform Agenda.

Creating an election agenda for children

Both preceding and subsequent to the Early Childhood Reform Agenda, ECA advocated on behalf of children in the political arena in the lead-up to government elections. In the 2000s, aided by the accessibility of digital technology, ECA adopted the strategy of creating short pre-election statements in order to make children a focus of government policy.

In 2002, the AECA developed an Agenda for Children. Among its recommendations, this Agenda called for a Commissioner for Children, action on children in detention, and a whole-of-government approach to children’s policy. Sent to all political parties and 15 000 early childhood services, schools, organisations and individuals (including all AECA members), it was published on a number of e-groups and discussed with the Ministers and senior officers from relevant departments such as Family and Community Services; and Science, Education and Training; and the National Office of the Information Economy (President’s Report, AECA Council Minutes, 2002).
A message to Australia's Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers

‘Argue for evidence based quality in early childhood education and care in COAG on 7 December!’

As organisations with broad experience in working with and for the wellbeing of families and children we call on COAG, at the meeting on 7 December 2009, to endorse Options 3 & 4 in the COAG Consultation Regulation Impact Statement, with an immediate move to Option 3 and a commitment to implement Option 4 over the longer term.

We represent organisations from across the nation, and are well informed about relevant research and evidence. We know the great significance of experiences in the early years of life for early brain development and providing the foundation for a wide range of developmental outcomes that shape self confidence, mental health, learning, achievement, self control and conflict resolution, friendships and intimate relationships and, ultimately, parenting skills.

As the Heads of Australia’s Governments you have recognised this in the COAG vision for 2020, which states that ‘all children get the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation’.

How children are educated and cared for in their first five years has a profound impact on their later life. For many babies and young children, early childhood education and care services are an important part of this early experience. Evidence says that high quality early education and care means that these children will do better on all measures in the future – including learning, education, and less participation in the criminal justice and social security systems.

COAG's own National Quality Agenda recognises that standards in many of our early childhood education and care services need to be improved to achieve the desired outcomes – and we certainly agree with this.

We are therefore calling on COAG to move to improve standards in early childhood education and care services to the levels indicated in the evidence by:

- setting immediate standards at the level of ratios specified in Option 3 of the COAG Consultation Regulation Impact Statement
- improving staff qualifications so that services have well-trained and qualified staff including degree-qualified early childhood teachers
- implementing a national quality rating system (‘accreditation’) that specifies standards for ratios and qualifications for all services

and

- committing to a longer term goal of staff:child ratios for babies and children under two at 1:3, for two- to three-year-olds at 1:5, and for three- to five-year-olds at 1:10. These ratios are as per Option 4 in the COAG Consultation Regulation Impact Statement.

We know that these improvements cannot be achieved overnight, and therefore we urge COAG to consult with service providers and families to implement a staged, achievable and affordable plan for the improvements and to make regular reports on progress to Parliament.
The Hon Kate Ellis MP
Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth
Minister for Sport

Ms Margaret Young and Ms Pam Cahir
National President and CEO
Early Childhood Australia
PO BOX 86
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Dear Margaret and Pam

I am writing to thank you for your personal support of the National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and child care, and more broadly the support of Early Childhood Australia.

Without the hard work and advocacy of Early-Childhood-Australia over a number of years, I don’t believe we would have achieved the important quality reforms that the Council of Australian Governments agreed to on the 7 December 2009.

In particular can I thank Early Childhood Australia for organising the ‘Hands up for Quality’ campaign, and coordinating the thousands of emails from the community, parents and child care professionals urging all Governments to adopt quality improvements.

This demonstration of community support played an important role in convincing all Australian Governments of the value of quality changes.

I look forward to working with Early Childhood Australia to implement these important reforms in the coming years, and to continue to improve early childhood education and care so we can give all Australian children the best start to life.

Yours sincerely

Kate Ellis

2.3 DEC 2009
In the lead-up to the 2004 election, ECA launched the statement: *Making Your Vote Count for Children*. This asked voters to consider a range of issues concerning children when casting their vote. The pre-election agenda (ECA, 2004, n.p.) called for commitments to parenting support; leadership ‘to ensure the conditions that are necessary to foster the trusting and secure relationships that children depend upon’ in both school and prior-to-school settings; progress in staff wages and conditions; improved access in early childhood services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; no mandatory detention for children; and the establishment of an independent Children’s Commissioner. As the decade progressed, a more sophisticated online presence for ECA gave rise to the development of an election e-card for the 2007 election. This gave voters the opportunity to send to politicians an electronic message—*Put your hand up for children*—which read:

To Australia’s politicians

*I am part of a growing number of people willing to make children’s issues count at the upcoming federal election.*

*In particular, I would like to know how you and your party will make a positive impact on the following issues:*

1. **Climate change and sustainability**—creating a safe and secure future for every child.

2. **Indigenous young children and families**—delivering culturally safe children’s services which build capacity into the future for Indigenous Australians.

3. **Parenting support**—a commitment to paid parental leave for all parents and flexible, family-friendly work environments.

4. **Investment in early childhood**—a long-term strategy for early childhood services which reflects the evidence about what’s necessary to deliver quality outcomes for children.

5. **Children’s rights**—a commitment to establishing an Office of the Commissioner for Children.

In 2010, ECA once more made an election e-card available and produced a scorecard whereby each major party’s policies were assessed against the priority areas established by the ECA election agenda. In this most recent election campaign (2013) ECA *Voice* has provided a forum for spokespeople from all major parties to state their policies in relation to early childhood.

**Other ECA developments**

**The Code of Ethics revisited**

In 2003 a working group, led by Lennie Barblett, was formed to update the ECA *Code of Ethics*. ECA’s new *Code of Ethics* was endorsed by Council in 2006, with Council noting that the *Code of Ethics* had ‘provided inspiration and leadership to the early childhood profession [and] generated enthusiasm, interest and reflection across the early childhood profession’ (National Council Minutes, 2006, n.p.). As with the previous iteration of the Code, ECA supported its adoption through its publications including *The Code of Ethics: A guide for everyday practice* (Barblett, Hydon & Kennedy, 2008) and articles in *Every Child* and *AJEC*.

**Policy development and policy revision**

The development of policy was a significant activity for ECA over many years, providing a framework for the organisation’s advocacy and a reference point for others wishing to determine appropriate professional standards. ECA policies were researched mainly in the branches and debated at National Council before being ratified and adopted. National Council minutes show the keen interest that branches and their delegates took in this process.

Over time, the process of development and ratification became increasingly demanding and slow.

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2 Christine Woodrow, Lois Pollinitz, Linda Newman, Catharine Hydon, Anne Kennedy, Margaret Clyde, Jenny Humffray and Elizabeth Dau.
In 2009, National Council decided to embark on a new approach and endorsed the development of position statements rather than policies. At the time of writing, ECA has a number of position statements. These include: Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care; Children of Asylum Seekers; and a Statement of Regret and Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families. In addition, ECA supports the position statements originating from other sources. A current supported position is Early Childhood Mathematics—a position paper from the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers.

**A commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Since 2000 there has been concerted activity within the organisation to further more culturally responsive pedagogies across the early childhood field and to further reconciliation with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

The push to more directly address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues was driven by individuals within the branches and the National Office as well as ECA’s relationship with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). For instance, during her time on the AECA executive during the 1990s, the then Northern Territory representative Margaret Riedl recalls drawing attention to the ECA Executive of an issue of an ECA publication where every photo was of a white child.

Riedl recalled that the organisation responded very quickly to this observation. Many of those within National Office were conscious of how children and families were depicted in its publications and looked to ensure more effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation (Riedl personal communication, 14 July, 2013). In 2002, ECA launched *Building Bridges—Literacy Development in Indigenous Young Children*. This book and video kit explored the significance of family and culture for early learning in Aboriginal culture.

In 2004 ECA National Council adopted a Statement of Regret to Aboriginal Families. Each branch undertook to affirm their commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by taking action in line with this statement of regret. One such action was a resource produced by the Victorian Branch, *Walking respectfully: Exploring Indigenous culture and reconciliation in early childhood practice* (Fisher, Hydon, Jewell & Nyland 2008).

In January 2005, ECA published the following *Statement of respect and commitment to Indigenous children and families*:

> Early Childhood Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the original inhabitants of Australia and recognises their culture as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians.
We acknowledge and regret the loss of family, cultural identity, lands and waters, languages and communities by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that resulted from the invasion of Australia by peoples from other places. In particular we acknowledge the findings and support the recommendations of Bringing Them Home, the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Inquiry into the Stolen Generation.

We are sorry for the ongoing suffering, loss and continued hardships faced by Indigenous children, families and communities today.

In 2006, ECA resolved to commence Council meetings with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land ‘… as this is a necessary recognition of our role in the collective work of promoting human rights, social justice and reconciliation in Australia’ (National Council Minutes, 2006, p. 2).

On the commencement day of Parliament, 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the Stolen Generations on behalf of the Australian Government. The Stolen Generations were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who, as children, were forcibly taken from their families as a result of official government policy from 1909 to 1969. A formal apology from Government for this act was a key recommendation of the 1997 Bringing Them Home report which had documented these actions and the ongoing trauma that resulted. The apology was a highly significant and symbolic political event which provided further impetus for ECA to take action.

The 2008 National Council resolved that ECA should adopt a more activist approach and develop a Reconciliation Action Plan. Eventually a working group was established and led by Catharine Hydon. Its members were Tracey Simpson, Stephanie Jackiewicz, Alison Breheny and Margaret Young. In 2012, Fred Chaney, Director for Reconciliation Australia, addressed ECA’s National Council and ECA endorsed the Respect, Connect, Enact: Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (2012–2016) which articulated the values and principles ‘from which ECA as an organisation can help advance Reconciliation in our communities, and provide leadership and support to the ECEC professionals it represents’ (ECA website). The RAP was launched by Professor Colleen Hayward at ECA’s National Conference in October 2012 and endorsed by the acclaim of all present. The RAP’s introduction contains the following statement:

For Early Childhood Australia, Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community is about transformation—transformation that moves us from ignorance and racism to respect, from inequity and prejudice to justice, and from inaction and fear to hope. It is in this transformation, both personal and organisational, that the promise of a strong future for every Australian child is realised. (2012, p. 3).
Reconciliation Action Plan cover

**Action on children in detention**

Australia’s mandatory immigration detention policy was introduced in 1992 and over the subsequent decades became an increasingly entrenched and visible policy, especially for ‘boat people’. This policy, requiring adults and children to stay in detention until their asylum claims were finalised or bridging visas issued, resulted in children being detained for months and sometimes for years, often in remote areas of Australia.

At the beginning of the decade, the AECA identified the position of children in immigration and detention centres as a key focus. Dr Sev Ozdowski, the Human Rights Commissioner and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, was invited to the 2002 National Council to discuss the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the effects of detention on children and parenting. When the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission conducted an Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention, AECA branches in South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory all made submissions to the Inquiry. In a speech to the fourth annual World Forum in Auckland (2002), AECA’s President Radich stated that:

> Australia’s current mandatory detention policy for on-shore arrivals, including the children of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors is a scar on Australia’s humanitarian record. That policy: denies fundamental human rights to all the children of a particular social group; locks up, behind razor wire, children who have committed no crime; and fails to recognise the vulnerability and special needs of these children. (Radich, 2002, n.p.).

Several times throughout this decade the organisation voiced its concern for children in immigration detention. In March 2011, ECA endorsed a Position statement on the children of asylum seekers. The position statement was developed with close reference to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Its recommendations include placing families with children and unaccompanied minors in the community while their claims are assessed; and ensuring that such children have access to the full range of health and children’s services available to all children in the community. In June that year it called (once more) for the establishment of a Children’s Commissioner, in part for the protection for children in detention centres ‘to ensure children’s best interests are put first’ (June 2011, ECA media release). This continues to be a focus of ECA’s work.

**Making the most of the digital era**

The AECA purchased its first electronic typewriter in the 1980s. Twenty years later the proliferation of digital technology provided a new platform for ECA. Through the development of a strong online presence, ECA has used technology to increase its reach in providing information and professional support. The first iteration of the ECA website was launched in 2003, along with the organisation’s new name, at the Hobart Conference. In November 2005, a revamped ECA website was launched. Developed with Federal Government funding, this new website was developed to provide the early childhood community with access to a more extensive range of early childhood information and resources.
As well as publications in ‘hard copy’ ECA has expanded its repertoire of information and support media by producing a range of online material including a fortnightly e-newsletter, WebWatch; a regular update for members Early Childhood News; and the Supporting Best Practice series. In 2008, AJEC went ‘online’, becoming available in both hard-copy and electronic form.

Significantly, ECA has made available a range of online professional support through the Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program (EYLF PLP). Funded by the Federal Government, this program provides access to free online support for educators and is geared to helping services improve the quality of pedagogy and practice in line with the intent of the quality reform agenda. The Learning Program is designed to increase access to a range of professional learning materials, including interactive online forums and access to the online audio-visual materials, such as the Talking About Practice online video series; Connecting with practice learning vignettes; and access to publications.

Importantly, the digital publications have also enabled a speedy response to topical issues. For example, after the publicity following the Cronulla riots\(^3\), which were fuelled by racism and racial tensions, WebWatch provided information on teaching children tolerance.

Conferences, consultancy and publication

Since the National Conference in Sydney in 2001, conferences have been held in nearly every capital city except Darwin (held in 1999) and Melbourne (planned for 2014). ECA conferences are well-attended events, bringing together early childhood professionals from across the country to hear and discuss research and ideas from Australia and across the globe. Conferences appear to have gone from strength to strength attracting large numbers of delegates each year.

As the conferences have become larger they have become more complex to organise and sometimes present unexpected challenges. Yet those involved in organising conferences recall with pride their state/territory hosting of such successful national events (personal communication, Clarke, 2013; personal communication, Cornish, 2013; personal communication, Stamopolous, 2013). Further, the conferences appear to generate especially heightened interest in ECA within the hosting state and territory.

As mentioned previously, over the past decade ECA has actively forged partnerships with a range of other organisations to produce resources pertinent to children’s wellbeing. ECA’s partnership with the Australian Primary Principals Association resulted in

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\(^3\) In 2005 racist rioting occurred at Sydney’s Cronulla beach in which young men of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’ (so-called) were the target of racist attacks.
over 13,000 copies of *Your child’s first year at school: A book for parents* being distributed to parents in its first year of publication. A partnership with the Defence Community Organisation enabled ECA to publish a series of books for Defence Force families and their children.

Information targeting families expanded with the introduction of the *Learning at Home* series which commenced in 2002. In 2003 this was renamed the *Everyday Learning Series*. By 2007, over 60,000 copies of the *Everyday Learning Series* had been sold (Minutes of Council Meeting, 2007, Attachment A).

A consortium with ECA, Monash University, the University of Melbourne, and the Curriculum Corporation resulted in the *Early Childhood Learning Resources Project*. This produced literacy and numeracy materials for early childhood educators.

Another important partnership initiative for children’s wellbeing has been the *KidsMatter Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative*. Developed in collaboration with beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society and ECA, and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The *KidsMatter Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative* supports children’s mental health and wellbeing and aims to reduce mental health difficulties. It provides a framework for ECEC services to plan and implement evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention strategies.

ECA has continued to adapt and respond to new challenges. It has modernised its structure, broadened its membership base and looked to new ways to advocate for young children. It has maintained its role of resourcing high-quality practices in early childhood education and care, using new technologies and traditional formats. Its role as an advocate for a better deal for children wherever they may be remains unabated:

*Infants and young children are citizens with the same rights as everyone in our society and should have access to its protections and benefits to help them have the best possible start in life. The wellbeing of young children is Early Childhood Australia’s prime focus* (ECA Values Statement, 2010).
2013 marks the 75th anniversary of Early Childhood Australia. Did the founders of the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD) in 1938 imagine the organisation would still exist three-quarters of a century later? The fact that it has done so is a testament to the commitment and tenacity of its members and supporters.

ECA has faced many challenges throughout its history. Its financial position has often been uncertain. It has weathered many divisive debates about its function and the best strategies to adopt to support young children. There is no doubt that, at various times, the organisation has provoked both frustration and loyalty. It has been criticised for focusing too much on preschool, and criticised for focusing too much on child care. It has been criticised for not focusing enough on the early years of school. It has been lauded for being innovative and forward thinking and censured for being conservative and slow to change. Throughout the years, the meetings of its National Council have been the site of many feisty and intelligent debates. For first-time attendees, these events could be both intimidating and inspiring. Yet many of the people we interviewed for this book spoke of being welcomed, mentored, informed and emboldened to themselves become feisty, outspoken advocates for children through their involvement with ECA.

From its inception to today, ECA has had many tangible achievements. In its early years it established the Lady Gowrie Child Centres as
demonstration preschool centres and then went on to successfully support the establishment of many preschools throughout Australia. It has been active in international early childhood developments such as the OMEP. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s it supported early childhood education in the Asia-Pacific region through the Colombo Plan. During this time, the Australian Preschool Association (as it had become) also concerned itself with conditions for children in migrant hostels. Today ECA continues its focus on new arrivals to Australia by lobbying for the rights of children in detention. Through its involvement in the administration of scholarships, the organisation has helped many keep abreast of national and international developments in the field of ECEC, and has nurtured early childhood leadership.

While this history has focused on ECA nationally, a great deal of ECA’s work occurs through branches. Branches have tackled issues specific to their jurisdiction as well as fostering discussion, inspiration and alliance building to address issues facing early childhood professionals nationally. The palpable child care and preschool split of the seventies and eighties, for example, necessitated grass-roots action at the branch level to bring the staff of these services together. Strategies such as local soup and discussion nights and weekend lunches brought together early childhood staff from different sectors to help forge a sense of common purpose. Throughout the years, branches have conducted research, organised seminars and forums, and piloted strategies to support better experiences for children in ECEC. They have been catalysts for developments with national applicability, such as the ECA Code of Ethics, the piloting of childcare accreditation processes, and action for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation.

Its national conferences have become a feature of the Australian early childhood landscape. To have held 28 national conferences since 1938 is no small feat! The conferences provide a forum for the discussion of research and ideas, bringing together academics, early childhood professionals, government and service providers.

The organisation has always advocated for strong standards for children’s services. ECA and its predecessors have sought to positively influence early childhood policy and practice through the dissemination of information, the development of policy statements, conducting research and delivering training. In recent years, it has played a key role in generating support for the Early Childhood Quality Reform Agenda and enabling its implementation within early childhood programs through the provision of professional resources and training.

Over the years, ECA has developed a suite of publications and online resources. The AAPSCD’s first foray into published material for the general public involved the production of parent information sheets. These were popular and circulated widely, even reaching New Zealand. When the APA first published the Australian Pre-School Quarterly in 1960, it was the first and only journal for those working in the preschool field in Australia. Its contemporary counterpart, the peer-reviewed Australasian Journal of Early Childhood provides a forum for the dissemination of research findings and the discussion of ideas. Every Child magazine provides accessible information in everyday language to support early childhood professionals in their work. Research in Practice Series booklets bring to practical application, the findings of research. In more recent years, ECA has extended its reach through its strong digital presence including WebWatch, its free fortnightly e-newsletter. Through such means, ECA reaches experienced and novice professionals, academics and students and has the capacity to reach a broadly based audience interested in issues pertinent to early childhood. (For a list of the publications, please refer to Appendix 7).

The AAPSCD was formed from an alliance of early childhood advocates. These advocates were philanthropists, ‘lay’ citizens interested in early childhood education and social reform as well as early childhood educators. From 1938 until today, countless members have generously given untold voluntary hours to support ECA’s mission—at the national and branch level—attending meetings, developing resources, organising events, discussing, writing, consulting and advocating.

ECA has proven itself resilient and adaptable. Although its structure, membership and activities have changed over time, ECA has maintained its primary commitment to the rights and interests of young children: to be ‘a voice for children’.
### Frequently used acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPSCD</td>
<td>Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACECQA</td>
<td>Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECA</td>
<td>Australian Early Childhood Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECIA</td>
<td>Association for Early Childhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECEI</td>
<td>Association for Childhood Education International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJEC</td>
<td><em>Australian Journal of Early Childhood/Australasian Journal of Early Childhood</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Australian Pre-school Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQ</td>
<td><em>Australian Preschool Quarterly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>College of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYLF</td>
<td><em>Early Years Learning Framework</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKA</td>
<td>Free Kindergarten Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IECD</td>
<td>Institute of Early Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTC</td>
<td>Kindergarten Teachers’ College/Kindergarten Training College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGCC</td>
<td>Lady Gowrie Child Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEYC</td>
<td>National Association for the Education of Young Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAC</td>
<td>National Childcare Accreditation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSF</td>
<td>National Children’s Services Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEF</td>
<td>New Education Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health &amp; Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.p.</td>
<td>no page number available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>no date available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td><em>National Quality Framework</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMEP</td>
<td>Organisation Mondiale Pour l’Education Prescolaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QIAS</td>
<td>Quality Improvement and Accreditation System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Reconciliation Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIS</td>
<td>Resource Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDN &amp; NSA</td>
<td>Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

Appendix 1

**Establishment of Kindergarten Unions, Day Nurseries and Crèches, and Kindergarten Colleges in Australia**

(Adapted from Brennan, 1998, p. 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>First Free Kindergarten/Day nursery</th>
<th>At the establishment of AAPSCD in 1938¹</th>
<th>Teachers' college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>1895: Kindergarten of New South Wales</td>
<td>1896: Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>16 Free Kindergartens 1 nursery school</td>
<td>1896: Sydney Kindergarten Teachers' College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1908: Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria</td>
<td>1901: Carlton</td>
<td>30 Free Kindergartens 5 nursery schools</td>
<td>1922: Kindergarten Training College (later Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1910: Victorian Association of Crèches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1905: Kindergarten of South Australia</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>10 Free Kindergartens 1 nursery school</td>
<td>1907: Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1907: Crèche and Kindergarten Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Free Kindergartens 3 crèches</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1910: Hobart Free Kindergarten Association</td>
<td>1910 Hobart 1910 Launceston</td>
<td>5 Free Kindergartens</td>
<td>No Kindergarten Training College was established in Tasmania. In 1967 a Training Course commenced at Hobart Teachers' College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1911: Kindergarten Union of Western Australia</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>9 Free Kindergartens 1 nursery school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2

Names of the organisation

THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILD DEVELOPMENT

1938–1954: Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development

1954–1980: Australian Pre-School Association


2002–2011: Early Childhood Australia

2012–present: Early Childhood Australia

Appendix 3

Presidents

Ada a’Beckett 1938–1947
Yseult (Lady) Bailey 1947–1962
Jean Denton 1962–1966
Nancy (Lady Vincent) Fairfax 1966–1976
(Moving from 1965 due to ill-health of Mrs Denton)
Mary (Lady) Thompson 1976–1983
Anne Murray AM 1983–1989
Anne Stonehouse AM 1989–1992
Tonia Godhard AM 1992–1995
Susan Whittaker 1995–2000
Judith Radich 2000–2006
Margaret Young 2006–2012
Ros Cornish 2012–present
## Appendix 4

### Federal Officers, Executive Directors, National Directors and Chief Executive Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christine Heinig</td>
<td>1939–1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Cooper</td>
<td>(Acting 1939 while Heinig was overseas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladys Pendred</td>
<td>1945–1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loma Ruddock</td>
<td>(Acting until November 1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Cheeseright</td>
<td>October 1965–1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loma Ruddock</td>
<td>1971–1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Isla Stamp</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name change to Executive Director**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Holmes</td>
<td>1976–1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loma Ruddock and Florence Kendall</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name change to Early Childhood Development Officer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Clyde</td>
<td>1980–1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalma Dixon</td>
<td>1981–1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name change to National Director**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalma Dixon</td>
<td>1983–1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Dau</td>
<td>1986–1987 (Acting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleen Enright</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Cahir</td>
<td>1988–2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name change to CEO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pam Cahir</td>
<td>2007–2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Page</td>
<td>2012–present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

Honorary life members (1938–2006)*
Lady Bailey
Alice Creswick
Lady Bonython
Mrs K.P.M. Jones
Christine Heinig
Florence Shulman
Ethleen King

Life members (2012–onwards)**
Margaret Young

*In 2006 honorary life members were removed from the Constitution of the National Organisation.

**Recently, ECA has looked to reinstitute life membership. This membership confers individual voting rights but not at National Council.

In 2012, Margaret Young was awarded life membership under the new system.

Appendix 6

ECA Conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Due to war it was held in each state (Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Perth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued on next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Title of Conference/Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Childhood and mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>The community plans for its children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Unity and continuity in the education of young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>The enrichment of childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Children and their families (included OMEP Annual Assembly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Children in a changing world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>A new look at the first eight years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>The young child in focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Children, the Community’s Concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Being and Becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Early Childhood: ideals/realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Looking forward, looking back: Young children’s place in modern society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>‘Ardla witey’ to kindle the fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Good beginnings never end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Children in the balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>Children at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Excellence for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Children—the core of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope: Changing images of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Children a nation’s capital: Investing in our children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>‘Garla Bauondi’: Fuelling the fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Consulting the compass: Defining directions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7

Publications

The Publications Committee is responsible for the professional quality and content of ECA’s periodicals and journals. As well as an overseeing role, committee members often edit ECA journals and publications, and are generous and highly professional writers for ECA. It has not been possible to name all committee members here, nevertheless their work has been invaluable.

Editors

Australasian Journal of Early Childhood
- Margaret Sims (Acting Editor 2009. Editor 2010–current)

Australian Journal of Early Childhood
- Marilyn Fleer (September 2002–2008)
- Margaret Clyde (1979–1990)
- Stewart Houston (AJEC Founding Editor) (1976–1979)

Australian Preschool Quarterly
- Jean Adamson (1960–1974)

Every Child
- Alison Elliott (2006–current)

Every Child Editorial Board Chair
- Pam Linke (2006–current)

Publication titles

The list of publications is as complete as was possible from the records and we apologise for any omissions. Ongoing series, such as the Research in Practice Series, are named as a series. Each title within the series is not named. Individual titles are given of series of short duration.

Periodicals
- AECA National Update (dates unknown)
- Early Childhood Voice (2002–ongoing, quarterly)

Magazines
- Every Child (quarterly)
Journals

- Australian Pre-School Quarterly (1960–1974)

News sheets

- Parents’ News Sheets (1943) for parents—Brisbane from 1943–1944 then national
- Today’s Child (1979) for parent and professionals

Early childhood update service

- Early childhood newsletter (dates unknown)
- Resource information bulletin/Early Childhood in the news (dates unknown)
- Excerpts from Hansard related to ECE (dates unknown)

Series

- Early Childhood Resource Booklets (1978–1992). Published five times each year
- Research in Practice Series (1991–ongoing, quarterly)
- Everyday Learning Series/Learning at home (2003–ongoing, quarterly)

Accreditation and Being series


Publications for Defence Force families

- Sapper Pat—Life in the Army
- Sapper Pat—A visit from Morris
- Sapper Pat—Time for a holiday
- AB Pepper Penguin—Life in Navy
Books

- A first analysis of Case history records of children attending the Lady Gowrie Child Centres (1949).
- Roberts, M. J. (1958). *Play the program in a pre-school centre*.
- APA. (1973). *Pre-school centres in Australia*.
• Fleer, M. (Ed.) (1997). Grandma why are bats so ugly?
• Integrating children with disabilities into childcare services: Using supplementary service grants.
• Connor, J., & Linke, P. (2011; 2012). Your child’s first year at school: Getting off to a good start.

Videos

• Building bridges: Literacy development in young Indigenous children.
Appendix 8

Scholarships and awards

ECA has awarded many scholarships and awards over the years to recognise and encourage the work of early childhood educators and others concerned with issues of early childhood.

The list of award recipients is as complete as we could make it from the records available to us. We understand that there may be gaps and we apologise to those recipients we have inadvertently omitted.

Creswick Scholars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Heather Lyons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Jean Adamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Phyllis Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Olive McMahon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Norma Campbell-Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Mary Swift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Beryl Edmunds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Adrienne Fountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Ruth Sanson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Barbara Matthews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Judy McDonnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Anne Perrett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Pat Keillor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Janette Stanford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Allan Kendall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Rita Kino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mary Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Anne Stonehouse</td>
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Alice Creswick/Sheila Kimpton Fellowships

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Margaret Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Judith Croll, Gay Ochiltree and Dawn Butterworth (part Fellowships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Patricia Sebastian-Nickell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Jane Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>June Wangmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Tracey Simpson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Kerry Mallam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Kym Irving, Donna Berthelsen, Jo Brownlee and Gillian Boulton-Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Lysa Lyttle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sue Lancaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Stefania Giamminuti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Jen Skattebol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barbara Creaser Memorial Lecture Fund

The Barbara Creaser Memorial Lecture Fund was established in honour of early childhood activist, Barbara Creaser. Barbara was a founding member of the Australian Association of Early Childhood Educators (AAECE) established in 1974 and served for 12 years on the Executive of the South Australian Chapter, as well as serving as National Vice-President and subsequently National President. After Barbara’s death in 1995, the South Australian Chapter of AAECE (renamed the Institute of Early Childhood Educators) established the Barbara Creaser Memorial Lecture Fund as a way of celebrating Barbara’s contribution to the early childhood profession. When the Institute of Early Childhood Educators folded, the Institute transferred the funds to AECA so the lectures could continue. Barbara had also been on the Executive of AECA.

Award recipients since the fund has been under the auspice of AECA/ECA include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Glenda McNaughton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Pam Linke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Karen Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Pam Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tracy Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Anne Kennedy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barbara Creaser Young Advocates Award

The Barbara Creaser Young Advocates Award supports the development of a young early childhood advocate and to encourage them to participate in ECA’s advocacy work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Catharine Hydon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Lynne Rutherford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Melissa Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Jason Triggs</td>
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</table>

The following two scholarships are funded by McArthur and supported by Early Childhood Australia under the advice of the ECA Scholarship Committee.

Early Childhood Leadership Development Scholarship

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Miriam Giugni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jenny Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Anna-Luisa Franca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early Childhood Student Encouragement Award

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Karen Schneider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Ruth Bowlder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Julie Kemp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doctoral Thesis Award

The award was established by Early Childhood Australia and funded for one year by Telstra in 1995. Since then it has been funded by Early Childhood Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Joy Goodfellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Susan Danby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Louise Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Kerry Daly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Michelle Ortlipp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Faye Hadley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Margaret Anne Sellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Gillian Busch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


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Community Child Care NSW • Curtin University • Deakin University • ECA Tasmania Branch
Gowrie Australia • SDN Children’s Services • The Department of Education WA • University of Queensland
Since its inception 75 years ago, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has played a pivotal role in the development and support of early childhood education and care services in Australia. Always taking a broad view of its remit, the organisation has a history of engagement in national and international dialogue and advocacy concerning the rights and wellbeing of young children.

This brief history traces the development of the organisation from its birth as the Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development (AAPSCD) to its contemporary presence as ECA. This history canvasses the changing context of care and education for young children and traces the way in which early childhood advocates, through ECA and its predecessors, have shaped and responded to the social and political changes affecting children and families.

This history tells of an adaptable and resilient organisation, predominantly led by passionate and persistent women, who have had a tangible impact on services and programs for young children.