



**AGECS**

The Association of Graduates  
in Early Childhood Studies

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**Audax**

*(Latin) courageous, bold, daring*

**Audax 83 -November 2011**

Journal of the Association of Graduates In Early Childhood Studies  
PO Box 12163, 58 Franklin Street, Melbourne VIC 8006

## **Council Members 2011**

**President:** Judy Dunn  
**Vice President:** Kevin Fell  
**Treasurer:** Pat Jewell

Alan Angwin (PhD)  
Wendy Grenfell  
Carolyn Lunt  
Janet McLean  
Avril McHugh  
Kay Margetts (Assoc Prof)  
Martel Menz  
Anne-Marie Morrissey (PhD)  
Beverley Murray  
Sophie Patitsas  
Sarah Rakich

## **Council members 2012**

Judy Dunn  
  
Pat Jewell

Kevin Fell  
Wendy Grenfell  
  
Avril McHugh  
Kay Margetts (A.P.)  
  
Anne-Marie Morrissey  
  
Sophie Patitsas  
Sarah Rakich  
Maree Wiggins

## **Administration**

Tracy Bell

## **Bookkeeper**

Dianne Burgess



# INVITATION

On Thursday 24th November we have booked tables in the Garden Room at the Observatory Cafe at The Royal Botanical Gardens from 3.30 - 5 p.m.

**At 5.15 p.m.** we will be joined by an education officer who will, as a free service, escort us around the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

**After 6 p.m.** you may wish to arrange to have a meal with colleagues in one of the many cafes on Domain Road.

We are hoping this time slot will encourage some of our retired members to come into the park for an early catch up with friends and former colleagues as well as to meet up with some of the non working Council members for afternoon tea.

RSVP to [info@agecs.org.au](mailto:info@agecs.org.au) or call the AGECS office and leave a message on 83440990

Judy Dunn, President

# AGECS Highlight Event 1

**May 2011**

An Evening with Anthony Semann and Kathy Walker  
Law Institute, Melbourne University.  
MC was George McEnroe

Sarah Rakich and Sophie Patitsas introduced these two learned advocates for the Early Years to a capacity audience of 90 people. We had over 160 people register! What a strong interest from the current sector of educators who wanted to hear a stimulating discussion from Anthony, Kathy and the audience. They were not disappointed! Those who were unable to attend were privileged to hear the discussion on line through the AGECS website. **A first for us** to be able to provide the audio link of the forum.

Educators were welcomed to voice their opinions, comments and responses to Anthony and Kathy's views on the EYLF , VEYLDF, NQF and the workload of the sector in 2011 and into the future without political bias.

The survey from the audience confirmed it a resounding success and whet the appetite of our members and peers alike.

We are planning more forums in 2012.

Anthony Semann  
Director  
[anthony@semannslattery.com](mailto:anthony@semannslattery.com)

Early Life Foundations  
(Incorporating Kathy Walker & Associates)  
[www.earlylife.com.au](http://www.earlylife.com.au)

# **AGECS highlight Event 2**

**August 2011.**

## **SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING**

This conference generously sponsored by The Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies successfully attracted 200 registrations. Dr Louise Porter as keynote presenter was a major draw card, along with a diverse range of inspiring presenters on engaging topics. Interactive workshops covered:

- Behaviour guidance with Dr. Louise Porter, Psychologist
- Children with sensory processing difficulties with Rebecca Pell, Occupational Therapist
- Language and communication with Claire Boling, Speech Pathologist
- Family centred practice with Pat Jewell. Educator and Author
- Interactive music and movement with Hilary Henshaw, Music Specialist
- Autism spectrum disorder with Sally Rigley
- Planned outdoor play: not just an exercise yard with Ros Patterson
- High Expectations For Every Child with Di Chandler
- Understanding Transition to School with Dr Kay Margetts
- Conversation Hour with Dr Kay Margetts and Di Chandler

The \$60.00 registration fee was a great bonus. The Warrawong Committee had proposed the idea to the Foundation, with the view that planning an affordable conference, would enable attendance from a diverse range of educators. Educators, who might not normally have the opportunity for such an experience. The Warrawong committee then sought expressions of interest for organising the conference and Gowrie Victoria's proposal was accepted.

The idea worked! What was to be a conference catering for 150 educators, soon required a decision to increase the capacity to 200. The conference was booked out two months in advance, and had a waiting list escalating day by day. This meant many were unfortunately unable to register. Registrations received were from educators studying or working in a diverse range of early childhood settings. These included kindergarten, long day care, primary school, early Intervention, family day care, OSHC and also TAFE organisations. We were also thrilled that a number of participants travelled from rural areas.

We thank the Trustees of the Foundation for sponsoring the conference. We also thank Joan Waters and Sophie Patitsas for their opening addresses, and the presenters and volunteers who kindly assisted us to facilitate workshops. There is always a band of hardworking people behind the scenes of such an event. Their support enables such a day to progress smoothly.

We believe the day was an outstanding success, despite some participants being disappointed in not being able to attend Dr Louise Porter's second session for the day. The demand to hear Louise was overwhelming and informs us that educators need increased support in guiding children's positive behaviours. Therefore we've been inspired to consider planning such an event again, so watch this space!

All conference presenter material can now be accessed at [www.foresthillecf.org.au](http://www.foresthillecf.org.au) and [www.agecs.org.au](http://www.agecs.org.au)

**Anne Houghton**  
**Warrawong Committee Convenor**

*(Everyone also enjoyed the delicious morning tea and lunch with a magnificent view over Albert Park Lake from the windows of Sebel Hotel, Queens Rd, Melbourne)*

## ***Notes from:***

### **The Field of Parenting in The Early Years.....**

#### **PARENTS BIG ON SMALL TALK, taken from Inspire DEECD**

The Smalltalk program aims to help parents provide their young children (0-3) with the best foundation for success in later life.

The Government aims to support 2000 families across Victoria through the Early Home Learning Study which is being conducted by the Parenting Research Centre. 21 local councils are participating through two parenting support platforms – supported playgroups and Maternal and Child Health services.

Smalltalk recognises parents as our children's first and most important teachers. It supports them in this most important role by helping create a home environment in which their children can get off to the best start in life.

The program recognises compelling evidence that intervening early to improve the home learning environment greatly benefits children's life chances through social, emotional, interpersonal and literacy skills.

[www.earlyhomelearningstudy.net.au](http://www.earlyhomelearningstudy.net.au)

#### **PLAYGROUPS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Growing up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children is a major study following the development of 10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia. The study investigates the contribution of children's social, economic and cultural environments to their adjustment and wellbeing. A major aim is to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families and for early intervention and prevention strategies.

Growing Up in Australia and Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children conference is in Melbourne in November 2011.

[www.aifs.gov.au/growingup](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup)

## ***Interesting articles for educators.....***

### **Don't dumb girls down** (from The Age)



**The next time you want to tell a little girl how cute she is, try something else instead.**

***From Sunday Life Lisa Bloom***

I went to a dinner party at a friend's home last weekend, and met her five-year-old daughter for the first time. Little Maya was all curly brown hair and doe-like dark eyes, and adorable in her shiny pink nightgown. I wanted to squeal, "Maya, you're so cute! Look at you! Turn around and model that pretty ruffled gown, you gorgeous thing!" But I didn't. I squelched myself. I always bite my tongue when I meet little girls, restraining myself from my first impulse, which is to tell them how darn cute/pretty/beautiful/well-dressed/well-manicured/well-coiffed they are.

What's wrong with that? It's our culture's standard talking-to-little-girls icebreaker, isn't it? And why not give them a sincere compliment to boost their self-esteem? Because they are so darling I just want to burst when I meet them, honestly.

Teaching girls that their appearance is the first thing you notice tells them that looks are more important than anything. It sets them up for dieting at age five and foundation at age 11 and boob jobs at 17 and



Botox at 23. As our cultural imperative for girls to be hot 24/7 has become the new normal, women have become increasingly unhappy. What's missing? A life of meaning, a life of ideas and reading books and being valued for our thoughts and accomplishments. That's why I force myself to talk to little girls as follows. "Maya," I said, crouching down at her level, looking into her eyes, "very nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you, too," she said in that trained, polite, talking-to-adults good-girl voice.

"Hey, what are you reading?" I asked; a twinkle in my eyes. I love books. I'm nuts for them. I let that show.

Her eyes got bigger, and the practised, polite facial expression gave way to genuine excitement over this topic. She paused, though, a little shy of me, a stranger.

"I love books," I said. "Do you?"

Most kids do.

"Yes," she said. "And I can read them all by myself!"

"Wow, amazing!" I said. And it is, for a five-year-old. You go on with your bad self, Maya.

"What's your favourite book?" I asked.

"I'll go get it! Can I read it to you?"

*Purplicious* was Maya's pick and a new one to me, as Maya snuggled next to me on the sofa and proudly read aloud every word about our heroine who loves pink but is tormented by a group of girls at school who only wear black. Alas, it was about girls and what they wore, and how their wardrobe choices defined their identity.

But after Maya closed the final page, I steered the conversation to the deeper issues in the book: mean girls and peer pressure and not going along with the

group. I told her my favourite colour in the world is green, because I love nature, and she was down with that. Not once did we discuss clothes or hair or bodies or who was pretty. It's surprising how hard it is to stay away from those topics with little girls, but I'm stubborn.

I told her that I'd just written a book, and that I hoped she'd write one, too, one day. She was fairly psyched about that idea. We were both sad when Maya had to go to bed, but I told her next time to choose another book and we'd read it and talk about it. Oops. That got her too amped up to sleep, and she came down from her bedroom a few times, all hyped up.

So, one tiny bit of opposition to a culture that sends all the wrong messages to our girls. One tiny nudge towards valuing female brains. One brief moment of intentional role modelling. Will my few minutes with Maya change our multibillion-dollar beauty industry, reality shows that demean women, our celebrity-manic culture? No. But I did change Maya's perspective for at least that evening.

Try this the next time you meet a little girl. She may be surprised and unsure at first because few ask her about her mind, but be patient and stick with it. Ask her what she's reading. What does she like and dislike, and why? There are no wrong answers. You're just generating an intelligent conversation that respects her brain.

For older girls, ask her about current issues: pollution, wars, school budgets slashed. What bothers her out there in the world? How would she fix it if she had a magic wand? You may get some intriguing answers. Tell her about your ideas and accomplishments and your favourite books. Model for her what a thinking woman says and does .

# Chattering classes point way to language skill success

Elisabeth Tarica

*August 29, 2011*

**Talk may be cheap but it is also essential - especially for young children as they develop their language skills.**

JOHN Munro likes to draw on a fairytale image to explain the plight of many young children who struggle to read and write. Talking and listening, he says, are literacy's ugly sisters.

This Cinderella metaphor highlights a serious issue. A simple inability to talk fluently is now recognised as a major factor in children underachieving, often with consequences that last a lifetime.

"Good language skills and the ability to communicate effectively are key foundations to students' capacity to learn," says Associate Professor Munro, head of exceptional learning and gifted education studies at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education. He says a fifth of children start primary school with weak verbal skills, putting them at higher risk of poor performance. Yet little attention has been paid to the oral language skills of young students. Speaking and listening have not been accorded the same significance as reading, writing, spelling and counting. These shortcomings in oral language can have a long-term influence - affecting friendships, social behaviour, self-confidence and identity.

Sharon Goldfeld, a paediatrician and senior research fellow at the centre for community child health at the Royal Children's Hospital, says the language experiences children have before the age of six help to form powerful brain connections used for language and thinking.

Young children need to develop the foundations for literacy - the ability to speak, listen, understand and watch - before they can learn to read and write, she says.

"Brain development research suggests that the first few years of life is when there is a rapid amount of brain wiring happening and we know that it occurs in response to your DNA make-up as well as the environment you are growing up in, so it makes sense that if you are being spoken to more often and if you're in an environment where there's a lot of reading that it is going to improve your language," Dr Goldfeld says.

Talking, singing and reading help the brain to develop this network of connections. Professor Munro believes children starting school need to be able to recognise different sentence types, communicate effectively in different social situations, express their intentions and feelings and develop the "self-talk" necessary to guide learning.

"If they don't have these skills, the further they progress through school, the more they are going to fall behind unless the school has an explicit oral language program," he says.

"People assume that children have these skills but there is great variation ... some enter school using only restrictive sentence types, are not able to generate questions very effectively or even know how to do that."

Improving the ability of teachers to recognise students with poor oral language skills and then intervene can produce remarkable results.

Professor Munro, who details the program in his recent book *Teaching Oral Language: Building a Firm Foundation*, had similar results at Bairnsdale West Primary School in East Gippsland.

"A third of the children are indigenous and for the first time ever in 2010 every indigenous child achieved at or above state benchmarks in literacy. "

It is evidence, he says, that educational disadvantage can be overcome by teaching oral language knowledge in a systemic way.

"We often think of educational disadvantage from the perspective of children's postcodes or the socio-economic status of their parents," he says. "It is time we started to look at educational disadvantage from the perspective of the children's oral language capacity because there's not much else they bring to school that really is going to impact to the same extent on their ability to learn."

However, teachers need to be trained to recognise students with poor oral language skills and deliver targeted intervention. "A lot of discussion about educational disadvantage really targets things that I can't do anything about. I can't change a family's postcode and I can't change a family's socio-economic status, but I can make sure that, as a teacher, I put in place the appropriate oral language learning experiences for the students in my class."

Parents of preschool children also have a crucial role to play in building oral language knowledge by offering rich encounters with books and other language experiences before school.

This can be done by reading to young children and encouraging them to experiment with sound patterns, rhymes, songs and talk in sentences about their world, which will support reading comprehension and writing. Professor Munro says parents should encourage their children to build a richer vocabulary at every opportunity. When reading stories, they could ask children to talk about the ideas, predict what's coming up and name items.

"We know there is a really strong correlation between children's vocabulary and their reading comprehension but also their listening comprehension," he says. Research here and overseas, shows the home environment is vital to success at school.

"What parents do in their home is really important and the home learning environment can be modified regardless of your socio-economic status," says Dr Goldfeld, an advisory board member on literacy for the Raising Children website.

"You don't have to have lots of really shiny lovely books, or lots of money to buy them. There are lots of really basic things to do."

Reading to children, which can start as early as three months, helps to spark their imagination, stimulate curiosity and fire brain development. "Letting your baby hear your voice by sharing stories and talking will set her up for success later in life when she is learning to read."

<http://raisingchildren.net.au>  
<http://online.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/selage>.

## **Delayed Primary School Entry**

New research from the Australian Institute of Public Affairs explores the many factors that influence delaying enrolment for Preps. Delayed enrolment is becoming more common in the developed world, 14.5% of Australian school entrants in 2005 had been delayed. Delayed entry usually occurs to enable children to develop cognitively and emotionally so that they are more 'school ready'. The data comes from The Longitudinal study of Australian Children. <http://publicpolicy.anu.edu.au>

## **Rated G for Garbage,** by Patricia Edgar.....From **The Age,** (Chairwoman of the World Summit on Media for Children Foundation)

*Why our children refuse to watch the local TV shows made just for them.*



The policy initiatives that rocketed Australia to prominence as an international children's television producer in the '80s are still in place, yet today's children prefer to watch *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Bewitched*, *Happy Days*. So why, as Screen Australia's Convergence 2011 report points out, don't Australian children want to watch the Australian programs that are being produced for them?

The Children's Program Classification system under the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal began as a vigorous public process that emphasised innovation, creativity and quality.

Over the years, three regulatory bodies bureaucratised the process to make it easier for the networks, which went about making programs focusing on political correctness rather than originality. The authorities also bent the rules to allow animation series to qualify, which diluted the cultural intention of the quota by allowing networks to buy cheap program packages that, though made in Australia, were often the product of multinational producers and could have been made anywhere.

The Film Finance Corporation aided this dumbing down of children's programs by accepting reduced licence fees and turning a blind eye to the projects initiated or controlled overseas. Some Australian producers even help outsiders tap into funds intended for authentic Australian productions.

The children's media lobbyists who were so active in the '70s and '80s, are missed. In part they have been conned. The Children's Television Foundation has become a funder and distributor for independent producers rather than a producer. It acted as a lobbyist for the ABC's third channel and is silent on any vision for the future of children's programs.

ABC3 had the appearance of a win. A Children's Channel would help drive digital TV take-up; it was an action flowing from the 2020 Summit (of which there were few); it was a win for the ABC's digital strategy and it appeared to be a win for children. But no one who understood the economics of children's programming and the dramatically changing media milieu of children believed the spin.

What we got is a clone of the commercial channels that emerged in the 1990s when the idea was new. The quality programs touted are few and far between. To fill the endless hours and reach the promised target of 50 per cent Australian, the ABC has sent out calls for programs that will be high volume, low cost, and made fast. They ask for good ideas but good ideas are the product of intense work. The programs we see on the ABC's digital channels add little of value.

Meanwhile, the most outstanding program produced in my 20 years as director of the Children's Television Foundation languishes on the shelf. Lift Off, an early childhood program made mostly with public funds, cost \$19 million in the '90s. The ABC killed it by taking it off air and won't screen it now because they say it is dated. It competes with that other even more dated show, Play School. And kids are voting with their eyeballs, watching, as Screen Australia's research reveals, other very dated shows.

When we began to fight for children's programs 35 years ago our aim was to protect and promote quality. Today the challenge of convergence with the resulting global, highly competitive and commercialised marketplace is changing the assumptions that have



long underpinned broadcasting systems and their content development.

Young people are leading the media revolution. Older kids with internet access are leaving television behind altogether; they have moved on to gaming, chat rooms, instant messaging and the joys of online content they create themselves.

We need independent, new, innovative multi-platform services to deliver children's programs. They should have a global reach for interaction with other cultures and engage with the education revolution. **Media policy should reflect education policy with its emphasis on the early childhood curriculum.**

## ***Entertainment for Educators.....***



### **At the Movies**

**‘Oranges and Sunshine’**. A true story about the children in Britain brought out to Australia post world war two.

**‘Tree of Life’**. A film looking at family life in the 1960’s who experience the tragedy of losing a child.

**‘The Black Balloon’**, starring Toni Collette

A teenager starting a new school, his mother is due to have a baby, and his older brother has Autism. (Out on DVD)

**‘Babies’**. A series on the relationships that is important for the learning and development of children. (Out on DVD)



### **Books**

**‘The Forgotten Garden’** by Kate Morton.

Fiction story about a 4 year old girl seemingly abandoned in Australia in 1913 from England. The story follows her search for her identity and the social, emotional complexities that shape her life in Brisbane.

**‘Matilda is Missing’** by Caroline Overington.

Fiction story based on Overington’s years of reporting of custody disputes and Family Court cases over many years. A thought provoking and potent story to open the world so many of our families are affected by.

## **‘The Bear and the Wildcat’** by Yumoto & Sakai.

A picture book for children dealing with the death of loved ones. It is compelling from its illustrations that are delicate and powerful.

### **T.V.**

## **‘The Slap’**, on ABC TV, Thursdays at 9.30pm

A fiction series looking at Australian families, their different parenting styles and how we view the discipline of children by other parents.

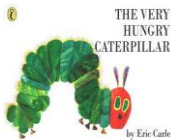
## **‘Parenthood’** on Seven TV, Tuesdays at 9.30pm

An American series looking at one extended family. One child has Aspergers Syndrome and we see how the family faces the challenges of Max, pregnancy, teenagers and relationships.

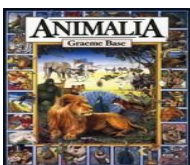
*\*Remember you can watch past shows on iview.*

### **Phone App**

Eric Carle’s My Very First App (\$1.99). A collage style memory game.  
***The Very Hungry Caterpillar.***



Graeme Base’s ***Animalia*** App. Features his beautiful illustrations, s Where’s Wally style game and more.



## ***What's on Around Us.....***

### **Arts Play** (Melbourne City Council)

Come and enjoy the spectacle of The Art Play Christmas lights turned on for the first time. Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011.

Children have created Christmas dioramas with artist Sue Davis using recycled City of Melbourne decorations. Now come and see them all lit up inside 100 silver stars strung between the poles outside Art Play and help count down to the 'moment of illumination'.

Come early to see the exhibition of Christmas inspired 3D collage sculptures also made by children

[artplay@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:artplay@melbourne.vic.gov.au) [www.artplay.com.au](http://www.artplay.com.au)



### **Thomas Tank**

Day out With Thomas at Puffing Billy's Emerald Town Station  
November 5- 20<sup>th</sup>

[www.thomasandfriends.com/au](http://www.thomasandfriends.com/au)

## ***Some useful Internet sites for recent news and research in the Field of Early Education.....***

- **Exchange Everyday.**

A one page article that talks about current issues and research – great for parent information. Short, clear and great for community newsletters on topics that concern us all. You can subscribe and have it appear in your mail box.

.....[www.ccie.com/eed](http://www.ccie.com/eed)

- **Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority**

Puts out a newsletter monthly called Early years Exchange. A must read for up to date information on the Frameworks, research and what's happening in ECD. *'adults create the environments in which play takes place. The key things for adults to learn about the role they have in the play of a young child is when to join in, when to hold back, when to help and when to watch'. Lally, 2009.*

.....[www.vcaa.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.edu.au)

- **OMEP Australia**

Today, OMEP can be found in over 60 countries. It is an international non-profit, non-government, community based organisation dedicated to the enhancement of health, education and welfare for children 0-8 years. *'What kind of Place is it – this Kindergarten?*

.....[www.omepaustralia.com.au](http://www.omepaustralia.com.au)

- **Early Years Learning Framework, Professional learning Program. (DEEWAR)**

provides ongoing professional support to services as they engage in the EYLF implementation process. The program is a national initiative.

.....[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfpplp](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfpplp)

- **The Australian Early Development Index.**

### **Who will benefit?**

A range of early childhood stakeholders will benefit from future cycles, including:

- Communities will gain detailed contextual and developmental information about their children to help them understand what is working well and where there are areas for improvement;
- Schools will have information on the developmental vulnerability of children as they enter school, to use in their early years planning;
- Families will see how children in their community are developing prior to reaching school and gain an understanding of the importance of the early years as a time for building lifelong emotional and learning capability;
- Researchers will gain access to detailed early years development data to enhance the early years evidence base; and
- Governments, at all levels, will gain access to comparable information over time to inform policy development and program management.

The AEDI website [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au) provides comprehensive information on the AEDI, including:

- Background information on the AEDI and national implementation;
- A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia – AEDI National Report 2009, that provides a national summary of the AEDI results;
- Online maps that show AEDI results geographically;
- Community Profiles that provide contextual information and more detail about the community and its AEDI results to support the online maps; and
- A range of online training and resources to help people understand the AEDI and how to work with the results.

## VICTORIAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS -2011.

Since Early Childhood Education was moved to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, we are now included in the annual awards event.

This year it was held in the Crown Palladium in May at a GALA dinner attended by all finalists, DEECD management, Ministers and other dignitaries. Entertainment was provided by The Performing Arts Unit of DEECD, The Sweethearts group from Matthew Flinders College and NICA circus performers. All excellent examples of our youth today!

Victoria Teachers Credit Union Outstanding Early Childhood Award finalists were Gisella Benetti (Knoxfield Preschool), Karen Grubb (St Paul's Anglican Grammar School) and Marlene Steiner (Bright and District Kindergarten). All three teachers presented our profession proudly and with excellent service integrity and innovation. Gisella Benetti won \$10000 to use to further her study in implementing the internationally recognised 'Roots of Empathy' program in Victoria.

*Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.*

*[www.rootsofempathy](http://www.rootsofempathy)*

Gisella will be off to North America soon to make use of her award funds. We wish her well with what she will bring back to Victoria.



*Stop press:* Gisella was invited and did attend the Government House reception for the Queen on October 26<sup>th</sup>. What an honour for our profession!

# THE EARLY YEARS AWARDS – 2011

In October, the Victorian State Government held these awards in the National Gallery of Victoria.

The four categories were:

1. *Better access to child and family support, health services, schools and early education and care services.*

It was won by Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network.

2. *Improvement in parents' capacity confidence and enjoyment of family life.*

It was won by Glenelg Shire Council for its Portland Early Assessment Referral Links.

3. *Communities that are more family and child friendly.*

It was won by Knox City Council for its Early Years Sustainability Program – 'Little GreenLeaves'. This program has been developed for preschools, child care centres and playgroups where children learn about sustainable practices, wildlife in their gardens and developing natural play spaces.

4. *The Ministers Award* went to Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local learning and Employment Network got its Braybrook Family Inclusive Language and Learning Support Program.

The Hon Wendy Lovell MP addressed the audience by saying that these awards celebrate best practice in early childhood education and care, recognising this work in a sector where experienced staff work tirelessly for the benefit of Victorian children and their families. She also said the finalists demonstrated the strength of Victoria's world class early education and care sector and wanted to congratulate them. [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/childrensweek/awards.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/childrensweek/awards.htm)



# **Congratulations Heather!**



Early in October 2011 several AGECS members were honoured to be invited to celebrate with Heather Low (Weaven) for her 90th birthday.

This landmark occasion was held at "Hillsley" the Health and Hospitality complex of Heather's old school Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar of which she is a Life Governor.

It was a perfect setting for a joyful gathering of nearly 200 friends who had known Heather because of her many and varied interests. There was a wonderful collection of family photographs taken throughout Heather's life and a continuous slide show to invite our curiosity.

The event was efficiently and sympathetically organised by Heather's family in an ideal setting with delicious food, interesting speeches and a piece of Meg's poppy seed cake to finish the day!

We love you Heather.





Picture 1: Norway children on an excursion wearing safety vests.

## ***Introducing new Council member for 2011,***

**Wendy Grenfell.** (Dip Teaching IECD, B. Sp. Ed, Monash)

I took this photo in Norway in 2010 to show the preschool teachers I work with, that safety vests for children would help teachers when taking children out into busy public spaces. These vests had the centre name and contact phone numbers written on them in case a child wandered away.

I graduated from IECD in 1976, being in the first group of students to use the Abbotsford Convent for our final year classes. I began teaching with the City of Keilor then moved to the City of Knox. When I started my own family, I stayed with Knox as a relief teacher in kindergartens and toddler groups. During this time I completed my Bachelor of Special Education at Monash University. My family moved to Canada for a short time and I was able to link into the University there and be involved in programs supporting families with children (with additional needs). I returned to Australia and resumed teaching with Knox, then became a Preschool Field Officer (or in Knox, an Early Years Consultant). I also worked for Booroondara Council. Presently, I am working as a team leader in cluster management with Knox and we have 86 staff working as preschool educators in the municipality.

# OBITUARIES

## **Dorothy Colquhoun, August 2010**

**Bettine Parker, late in 2010** Her sister, Barbara Cody, writes that Bettine always had wonderful memories of her training days and all her times with the Graduates of Early Childhood Studies.

## **Vivienne Frankcombe, nee Keddie 1923 – 2011.**

Vivienne attended the Kindergarten Training College, Melbourne from 1943 to 1944. Vivienne was trained by the Tasmanian Education Department and was sent to Melbourne to undertake the preschool education course which included child development.

Vivienne taught on King Island where she met her husband, Geoffrey Frankcombe who was principal of an Area School. Vivienne and Geoffrey, as Principal taught in a number of Area Schools in the north, south and northwest of the state. Among Vivienne's interests were gardening, music as a pianist, and as a team member of a Ladies Lawn Bowling Club. She travelled to play matches interstate. In her later years Vivienne lived in Launceston near her family and grandchildren. She died in Hobart on April 27<sup>th</sup>. She will be missed by her Graduate friends.



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