

| HESTA | AWARDS

early
childhood
education
& care

Friday 6 October 2023
Stamford Grand, Glenelg

Order of events

Welcome to Country

Entrée

Official welcome

Advancing Pedagogy & Practice award

Main course

Outstanding Service award

Dessert, tea & coffee

Individual Leadership award

Entertainment by the Baker Boys Band



Photos of tonight's event can be viewed at hestaawards.com.au

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Menu

Entrée

Chicken and pistachio terrine with toasted fig and fennel sour dough and Beerenberg's sweet mustard pickle

alternating with

Beetroot and thyme tatin with goat's cheese, candied walnuts, and radicchio (V)

Main

Sous vide lamb rump with pomegranate molasses, coriander and lime, couscous, hummus and zaatar (GF)

alternating with

Grilled barramundi fillet with puy lentils, pumpkin purée, broccolini and toasted almond (GF)

Dessert

Chef's selection of dessert platters

Beverages

Wine

Beach Hut Sparkling
Beach Hut Pinot Grigio
Beach Hut Shiraz

Beer

Coopers Pale Ale
Coopers Premium Light
Great Northern Super Crisp

Non alcoholic

Lyres Non-alcoholic Classico Grande
Soft drinks
Juice
Sparkling mineral water

Welcome

We're here tonight to highlight the frontline educators and carers at the very centre of Australia's early childhood education system, celebrating those who have demonstrated excellence in improving learning outcomes for children.

Congratulations to our nine finalists, whose commitment and passion as early childhood educators shine daily, giving our children and future generations the best chance to fulfill their potential. Our communities thrive because of these dedicated professionals. HESTA and Early Childhood Australia (ECA) are proud to help shine a spotlight on them and their achievements tonight, as we celebrate the remarkable impact of our finalists and announce three outstanding winners.

The three winners will share in a \$30,000 prize money pool to be used for professional or team development or to improve workplace services or processes, which has been generously provided by longstanding HESTA Awards supporter ME Bank.

We believe each person nominated for an award deserves to be acknowledged for the great work they do every day, so every nominee will receive a certificate of congratulations.

Sincere thanks to our judges who, once again, had the difficult task of choosing the finalists and selecting winners across each of the three categories: Individual Leadership, Outstanding Service and Advancing Pedagogy & Practice.

On behalf of HESTA, ECA and ME Bank, we hope you enjoy tonight's celebration as we honour the finalists and winners for 2023.



Debby Blakey
Chief Executive Officer
HESTA



Trevor Brown
National President
Early Childhood Australia

Judging panel

Trevor Brown National President, ECA & Early Years Project Manager, Community Partnerships and Priorities Division, Department of Premier & Cabinet, Tasmania

Beverley O'Connell Professional Experience Placement Supervisor (EC), Faculty of Arts and Society, Charles Darwin University

Shannon O'Shea General Manager, New Business Growth, HESTA

Dr Pauline Roberts Senior Lecturer, Edith Cowan University

Kay Turner CEO, SDN Children's Services

Meet our host



Jay Laga'aia is a much-loved actor and children's entertainer. His film credits include Nim's Island and Star Wars; television credits include Fighting Season, Home and Away, Bed of Roses, Legend of the Seeker, Xena Warrior Princess and Play School.

A gifted musician, Jay has written and recorded numerous albums including four ARIA nominated children's albums with ABC for Kids; he's performed his music with the Queensland, Melbourne, Western Australia and Sydney Symphony Orchestras and starred in the Sydney Opera House Classic Christmas Concerts.

Jay has filmed four seasons of his children's television show Jay's Jungle. He played the title role in Shrek The Musical at the Parramatta Riverside Theatre, the Ogre in Puss in Boots and has recently completed touring with the hilarious production Peter Pan Goes Wrong.

In-demand as a MC, Jay has hosted events for Queensland Government, Kindaling, CapriCon Festival, Carols in the Domain, Sydney City, Family Day Care Australia, National Museum of Australia to name a few...

Jay is a proud father of eight and is a passionate advocate for early childhood education and early literacy.

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Advancing Pedagogy & Practice **finalists**

This award recognises early childhood educators that have significantly advanced early childhood education and care by demonstrating innovation and enhanced outcomes for young children.



Balnarring Pre-School

Balnarring, VIC

Karen and the teaching team at Balnarring Pre-School have been leaders in implementing a nature program which involves learning in and with natural environments.

They teach towards embedding First Nations Peoples knowledges and cultures, to ensure First Nations Peoples teachings is now part of everyday practice.

The team has strengthened relationships with Boon Wurrung Elders N'arwee't Dr. Carolyn Briggs and Fay Stewart-Muir who have, through these respectful relationships, granted permission for them to share Boon Wurrung language and cultures within their pedagogical practices.

A Reconciliation Action Plan and Reconciliation Policy have been developed by the team to express the commitments required by all who are part of the preschool. The esteemed Elders have also taught the centre language pronunciation, with the team creating a book to revisit the learnings.

In future, Karen and the team would like to complete further cultural awareness training, facilitate and financially support the Bundjill Nest conference which provides learning opportunities for teachers across the education sector, and run a Little Long walk later this year.





Goodstart Early Learning Smithfield

Smithfield, SA

The team at Goodstart Early Learning Smithfield is recognised for using its EChO (Enhancing Childrens Outcomes) training to provide families and children experiencing disadvantage and trauma with the holistic care they need.

Their program focuses on emotional security and dispositions, as they know a child who feels safe and confident is a child open to learning.

The children participate in a breakfast program, receiving nutritious meals to eat on-site and extras meals cooked by the centre's cook to take home. Families receive hampers from Foodbank and Oz Harvest to ensure no child goes hungry. The team also implemented the Health to Go program, where children can receive initial health and development assessments at the centre for free.

After taking on a journey of upskilling and knowledge building, the team now prides itself as a service that understands and supports the needs of the local community and provides an inclusive environment for children and families.

Next, they hope to train their staff in music and art therapy programs, with this knowledge to be passed on to children and families.





Rebecca Martin

Sesame Lane Care & Kindergarten,
Moreton Bay, QLD

Rebecca is nominated for being one of the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Cultural Liaison educators in the sector. In this role, Rebecca encourages children's understanding and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Through her work, Rebecca helps families to integrate into early childhood education at the kindergarten, while building relationships across community and supporting educators to become more culturally aware.

In the future, Rebecca and the team at Sesame Lane Care & Kindergarten hope to support deeper connections with local Traditional Owners, who hold the knowledge and wisdom to impart specific cultural responsiveness with the Sesame Lane team of educators.

Rebecca is hoping to organise events that foster closer relationships between Elders and Sesame Lane Care and Kindergarten, also supporting Early Learning Services within the Moreton Bay Region.



Outstanding Service **finalists**

This award recognises early childhood services that have implemented strategies to improve access and participation for children and families that may otherwise face barriers to accessing early childhood education.



Goodstart Early Learning Calala

Calala, NSW

Goodstart Early Learning Calala is recognised for working collaboratively with families to create a positive learning environment for every child.

The centre's program focuses on inclusive learning experiences. Its outdoor learning spaces, a blend of nature and play structures, stand as a testament to their dedication. They prioritise inclusivity by addressing barriers within the centre and fostering understanding of disabilities among families, helping children feel settled, happy, and content.

The centre recognised that inclusion needed a significant place in their enrolment and transition process that families attend at the end of the year. They use this time to help families talk with their children about children with disabilities or additional needs, helping foster a sense of inclusion.

Looking ahead, they would like to develop of a library of inclusive resources, such as communication tools and adaptive equipment.

Their goal is to create more accessible spaces, including stages, outdoor areas, and facilities catering to children with diverse needs.





KU Craigieburn Children's Centre

Craigieburn, VIC

KU Craigieburn is recognised for its dedication to embracing cultural diversity, helping foster a sense of belonging for children, bilingualism, and cultural understanding.

They have worked to address language barriers and increase the participation of refugee families, incorporating home languages into their program. The service also worked with a local Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Jo, to learn about Indigenous culture and include new perspectives into children's programs.

KU Craigieburn Children's Centre recognises the importance of inclusion and support for children with different needs. They have joined forces with organisations to overcome language barriers, creating accessible materials.

Upon recognising a lack of participation in community health checks, leading to undisclosed learning support needs, the service collaborated with maternal and child health services to implement comprehensive health assessments, including free dental checks, to foster inclusivity and provide timely support for children.

KU Craigieburn Children's Centre aims to provide further professional development for the team. They want to learn about different ways of educating children and how to include all children, regardless of their background.





Nazareth Early Childhood Centre

Findon, SA

Nazareth Early Childhood Centre is a Catholic long day care service, recognised for its diversity and focus on enhancing children's development through its unique approach to literacy.

The centre is dedicated to building community, nurturing family life, and making a positive impact on the world by drawing upon social justice teachings which value the importance of inclusion and breaking down barriers.

After reviewing their Australian Early Development Census community profile and assessing the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on families and children, they questioned participation, inclusion and equity, and identified a need to provide extra support.

As literacy development was a core focus for growth, the centre began to acknowledge children's birthdays by gifting them a birthday book, which was grounded in the principle of inclusion. Simultaneously, a project evolved which documented children's engagement when they experienced storytelling. In partnership with Flinders University, they also provide community Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapy services, free of charge, to families.



Individual Leadership **finalists**

This award recognises an individual who has delivered high-quality education to young children in Australia, making a valued contribution to their profession.



Heidi Patrick

Elanora Heights Community Preschool,
Elanora Heights, NSW

Heidi is recognised for individual leadership for her role in developing several quality improvement programs.

In 2018, Heidi initiated a program to ensure families can access speech therapy sessions to help bridge any gaps between home and the early childhood learning environment.

She has also collaborated with NSW Health on a series for educators, aimed at supporting early childhood educators with knowledge and practical ideas on how to embed healthy eating and physical activity within daily programs for children whilst in their first 2,000 days of life.

More recently, Heidi has been involved in the development of a pilot program designed to help children, parents, and teachers respond effectively to social, emotional, and behavioural development.

Heidi intends to further her professional qualifications and enhance the services offered by the preschool to the community.





Rachael Phillips

Birrelee Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service, West Tamworth, NSW

Rachael is a proud Gomeroi women, recognised for her leadership in advancing education for both First Nations children and advocating for more culturally appropriate early childhood settings. Rachael advocates nationally for improving outcomes for First Nations children, as well as for better working environments for educators and women in business.

During the pandemic, Rachael demonstrated innovative thinking when considering the needs of children, families, and the community. She redirected employees and resources to where they were most needed, which was central to the Service's ability to continue to operate and maintain 100% enrolments.

In the future, Rachael hopes to learn from other early childhood providers in remote areas where traditions, stories, languages, and connections to land are still strong and thriving and share this knowledge across the early childhood sector.





Rebecca Harrison

KU Children's Services, Sydney NSW

Rebecca is an Autism Support Facilitator and Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) therapist recognised for her leadership in the education and care of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Rebecca has been central to supporting and implementing a Guided Practice Model to assist early childhood educators in facilitating the equitable inclusion of children diagnosed with ASD.

In 2022, Rebecca began to lead a team of ESDM therapists/Autism Support facilitators in implementing this model. The team has supported 335 children with ASD across 76 services.

Rebecca's leadership of the team has been critical in changing educator mindsets, increasing their capacity and reducing stress. Due to its success, the model is now being offered to all educators working for KU Children's Services.

Rebecca intends to undertake further professional development in inclusive education supporting neurodiverse children in ECE settings and training in mentoring.





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In that time, dozens of HESTA award recipients have benefited from over \$1 million that ME has contributed. It's another way

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