



Early Childhood Educators' Wellbeing Project (ECEWP)

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to our 11th ECEWP newsletter. This year we have collected data for two pilot projects: using hair cortisol to measure educator stress, and measuring educator–child interaction quality using the Caregiver Interaction Profile Scale (CIPS).

We've also been analysing and writing about the large body of data we've collected on educator wellbeing through psychological and physiological assessments, and surveys and interviews on organisational and social factors. This has been complemented by a range of presentations on our findings both nationally and internationally. You can read more in this issue.

Finally, congratulations to ECEWP researcher Laura McFarland, who was promoted to Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

We wish you a happy and restful Christmas.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, past and present, of the lands where we live and work.

EC teacher quality research funding

Sandie Wong is part of a team recently awarded Australian Research Council Discovery Project funding to track early childhood teachers' career trajectories and develop a world-first tool to assess teacher quality.

Marianne Fenech from the University of Sydney will lead the research project. It aims to address the chronic shortage of early childhood teachers in Australia, which compromises quality and return on investment in early education.

Findings are expected to inform policy and support the future sustained supply of a quality early childhood teacher workforce and improve outcomes for young children.

A feminised industry



In November, Tamara Cumming was interviewed, alongside Kate Damo from the Independent Education Union of Australia, by the Gender Network at Charles

Sturt University, on their 2MCE radio program *Conversations for a Brave New World*.

"It's been proven now for decades and is really beyond dispute – early childhood education is the silver bullet if it's high quality ... There is a lingering cultural bias that prevents it from being addressed ... This is a collective responsibility for society."

Tamara Cumming

Tamara and Kate spoke about the feminisation of Australia's early childhood education sector, including the problems of low pay and unequal conditions. Tamara discussed the historical legacy of feminisation in early childhood education, and what can be done about it. Kate addressed initiatives that are creating better conditions for educators.

You can listen to the interview [here](#).



International presentations

WECARE at OMEP

On 6–8 December, OMEP Australia hosted the [12th OMEP Asia-Pacific Conference](#) at Macquarie University. OMEP is the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education. The conference theme was 'Looking Back, Moving Forward: Progressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific Region'.

Researchers from our WECARE international collaboration presented at the conference. Rebecca Bull, EeLynn Ng, Kiri Gould and Sandie Wong discussed the visibility of and support for educator wellbeing in early childhood systems, with reflections from Australia, Singapore and New Zealand.

Tamara Cumming and Mari Saha hosted a symposium on new research into emotional labour in the work of early childhood educators. Tamara and Mari discussed reasons for differences in emotional labour between Australia and Finland. Graduate researchers Joanne Ng (Macquarie University) and Melanie Dickerson (University of Sydney) presented on their research about emotional labour and job satisfaction in educators' work (Joanne) and in educators' work with families (Melanie). We are hoping to keep this connection alive through publishing together in the future.

PhD student Eerika Länsmans, from Finland, who is supervised by Mari Saha, also presented on her research.



Tamara, Melanie, Joanne and Mari



Mari, EeLynn, Eerika and Tamara

Southeast Asia

In October, Sandie presented a webinar organised by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Centre for Early Childhood Care Education and Parenting (SEAMEO CECCEP).

She spoke about findings from ECEWP in regard to understanding early childhood educators' wellbeing. Several hundred participants from 28 countries attended via Zoom and YouTube livestream.

A promotional poster for a webinar. At the top, it features logos for Macquarie University, the University of Sydney, and SEAMEO CECCEP. The title "Webinar on UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' WELL-BEING" is prominently displayed. Below the title is a portrait of Prof. Sandie Wong, identified as the speaker from Macquarie University, Australia. Registration information includes the link link.seameo-ceccep.org/reg-uecew, a Zoom link link.seameo-ceccep.org/uecewzm, and a YouTube live streaming link link.seameo-ceccep.org/uecewyt. The event is scheduled for Monday, 23 October 2023, from 10.00 to 12.00 WIB (GMT +7). A badge indicates that the webinar is "FREE E-CERTIFICATE". Social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn are at the bottom, along with the website www.seameo-ceccep.org.

Europe

In August, Sandie travelled to Lisbon in Portugal to present at the 31st conference of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA).

Sandie spoke about early childhood educators' practice across different qualification levels and assessing teacher quality in the early years.



ECEWP website

All of the information about our early childhood educators' wellbeing project is on [our website](#). You can get to know our staff, find resources for wellbeing, download project descriptions and find previous newsletter issues.

Other presentations

In October, Sandie did an online presentation to Catholic Schools New South Wales. She spoke about our holistic approach to assessing and advocating for educator wellbeing. This was followed by an in-person talk at the Australian Capital Territory Government Early Childhood Teacher Forum, held on 31 October and 1 November. Sandie presented insights into attracting, preparing, retaining and sustaining early childhood teachers in Australia. About 120 people attended, mostly teachers and some providers.

Supporting leaders in natural disasters



Sandie Wong has had an article on clinical supervision to support early childhood leaders in times of natural disaster published in the *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*.

The article presents a case study of five directors, and their manager, working in long day care services in regional New South Wales, following catastrophic flooding in the region.

“During natural disaster, your world turns upside down and you lack the ability to make decisions and choices ... And those conversations [with your supervisor] can ... help you make those choices and prioritise.”

Centre director

The benefits of clinical supervision are identified for these leaders' personal wellbeing and professional practice. There is also a need for clinical supervision to be delivered by skilled, trauma-informed supervisors who understand the early childhood context. Some challenges to clinical supervision are discussed.

It is recommended that clinical supervision be provided and sustained to support early childhood leaders in both the emergency and recovery periods of a natural disaster.

You can read and download the article for free here:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391231217266>

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