



# Early Childhood Educators' Wellbeing Project (ECEWP)

ISSUE 13 – DECEMBER 2024

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

## Introduction

We begin this newsletter issue by reporting on a recent workshop we held to begin co-designing a wellbeing intervention for early childhood professionals in the Australian context. Thank you to all involved. We look forward to bringing you updates in future issues.

We also introduce you to a new team member, early childhood lecturer and researcher, Dr Nicole Jamison. Next, we provide an update on recent international presentations – on educators' emotional labor and wellbeing – as well as new publications.

We wish you a happy and restful holiday period.

## Intervention co-design workshop

ECEWP held a very successful stakeholder and Macquarie University multi-disciplinary staff co-design day on October 11. The day illustrated consilience at work, with over 40 attendees providing expert feedback and input to a proposed educators' wellbeing intervention design for our Australian context.

We worked on an 'ideal future' for educator wellbeing, then discussed the design of wellbeing intervention models kindly supplied by the US Happy Teacher and Wellbeing First projects. We ended by considering measurement and evaluation issues. The ECEWP team is now considering the input and our next steps.



*Over 40 attendees provided feedback and input at our intervention co-design workshop on 11 October*

After the workshop, we circulated a short survey and obtained useful feedback on the day. Those who attended appreciated working towards a common goal, having robust discussions and hearing different perspectives across the early childhood education and care landscape. The inclusion of cross-disciplinary knowledge also enhanced the conversations and ideas.

*"It was a valuable day of transdisciplinary, knowledgeable and robust discussion and co-design."*

*"[The workshop] affirmed for me that whatever stakeholder position one has, we are all calling for the same thing."*

*"The interdisciplinary approach ... was a key aspect to bringing 'ah-ha' moments and challenging thinking as it currently sits."*

*"The day and ideas were a ... solid establishment of the foundation necessary for what comes next."*

## New ECEWP team member



We would like to introduce you to a new member of the ECEWP team: Dr Nicole Jamison. Nicole is a Lecturer in Early Childhood Education

(Creative Arts and Play) in the Macquarie School of Education and the Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education (CRECE). Nicole's teaching and research specialises in children's play, arts-informed and creative pedagogies and methodologies, and reconceptualist and intercultural practices in early childhood. She is particularly interested in interdisciplinary and co-design research processes and is looking forward to working with the ECEWP team.

Prior to her position at Macquarie University, Nicole taught and researched in a range of early childhood, primary and tertiary settings in Canada and the UK, focused on early childhood pedagogy, play, literacy and early numeracy.

She also has 10 years experience as an early childhood teacher in Alberta, Canada, served as a mentor teacher for primary teacher trainees in placement, co-facilitated teacher professional development workshops, and was a pedagogical partner supporting early learning and childcare centres with curriculum framework implementation. Welcome Nicole!

## Presenting on emotional labor

ECEWP and WECARE members Tamara Cumming and Mari Saha recently presented a symposium drawing on their work on educators' emotional labor at the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) conference in Brighton, UK. Their papers responded to one of the conference's themes: *"Who makes the decisions and how are they informed?"*

Tamara questioned the politics of research that has been conducted about educators' emotional labor, considering the issues of who knows about emotional labor, what they know and what effects this knowledge is producing.

Mari considered whether there are associations between Finnish early childhood educators' and centre leaders' stress, emotional labor and organisational climate, and proposed directions for further research on leaders' emotional labor. In particular, she argued for consideration of leadership hierarchies (e.g. whether they share leadership / have a deputy / have a supervisor themselves), and what opportunities for social and peer support might be available to leaders to support them in their emotional labor.

The symposium also included University of Sydney PhD candidate Melanie Dickerson, who discussed educators' use of emotional labor with families and the nature of this emotional labor as skilled work. Also in the picture below with Mari, Melanie and Tamara is Associate Professor Nikki Fairchild of the University of Portsmouth. Nikki has used critical feminist materialist theory and has written about educators' emotional labor with her colleague Eva Mikuska.



*Back: Nikki Fairchild and Mari Saha  
Front: Melanie Dickerson and Tamara Cumming*



After the conference, Tamara spent a week with Mari at Tampere University working on their proposal for an edited book on emotional labor, and meeting with colleagues Eerika Länsmans and Linda Nurhonen, whose PhD work also focuses on educators' wellbeing.



L to R: Eerika Länsmans, Mari Saha, Linda Nurhonen and Tamara Cumming

### Sharing our research in Singapore

Rebecca Bull recently travelled to Singapore to attend the National Institute of Early Childhood (NIEC) Education Conference. On behalf of the ECEWP team, Rebecca presented a symposium paper on wellbeing of the early childhood workforce in Australia.



She also attended a roundtable discussion prior to the conference (organised by the NIEC) on the topic of exploring the future of early childhood teacher training.



### Cross-national collaboration

Members of our international research alliance have had an article published in the *Qualitative Research Journal*. The article describes the [development of the WECARE cross-national research alliance for investigating early childhood educators' wellbeing](#), and details the experiences of some of WECARE's 17 (and growing) members.

The findings discuss member mindsets and motivations, benefits and challenges of membership, cultural sensitivity, research capacity-building, leadership, communication, data security and planning.

If you would like a copy of the article please contact us.

### Pay win – will it be enough?

Tamara Cumming was interviewed for Macquarie University's *The Lighthouse*, on [whether the pay increase for some early childhood educators will be enough to stem the workforce exodus](#).

#### MORE INFORMATION ON ECEWP

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Facebook	<a href="#">ECEWP</a>
X	<a href="#">ECEWP Aus</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:ecewp@mq.edu.au">ecewp@mq.edu.au</a>
Video	<a href="https://youtu.be/QqfNX7f4XnQ">https://youtu.be/QqfNX7f4XnQ</a>