



February 2019 Newsletter

Kia ora Koutou

Welcome back to the new year. We hope you are all well rested and ready to face the new year.

2019 has much to offer this year and it is important that we make the most of these opportunities. AS reported on last year the Draft Strategic plan is open for consultation and we would welcome any ideas/feedback you have to contribute to our submission on this. Of particular interest for us will be the workforce strategy part of the draft plan and we will be contributing to this as well as the major workforce strategy that is taking part on the wider Education Sector. The draft Strategic plan for early childhood can be found here

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/early-learning-strategic-plan/>

the wider workforce Strategy can be found on the link below

<https://education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/information-releases-from-2018/education-workforce-strategy-cabinet-paper/>

As individuals you can also add your own feedback and if you do we love a copy sent to us.

At the moment throughout Aotearoa there are many meetings being held to discuss the draft and it would be great if many members can get to these as possible. We need voices heard saying we are disappointed that comment wasn't made on the gendered nature of our workforce and that more emphasis should be made on recruiting men as well as other genders - we need to stand up in the

feedback session after the group work and say – “ we know ece is good at recruiting women – it is time that they look to the other genders and actively recruit from them” this feedback is all recorded and if none is given the status quo will continuewe need troops on the ground and being active – please do what you can.

Any feedback would be gratefully received – on the whole plan as well as the workforce strategy - please send to

rsballantyne@xtra.co.nz

We are now also in the run down to the 2019 Summit to be held in Whanganui (details are on our web site). <https://www.ecmenz.org/>

This is really affordable professional development with great speakers David Spraggs, Joseph Dreissen, Chrissy Lepper, Matt Rayner and Toni Christie. It is also a chance to mingle and connect with men and women across Aotearoa. This is always a great chance to meet others and share ideas and strategies as well as help us plan for the year ahead. We need support and we need ideas on how to meet our organisations aims of increasing male participation with the early childhood workforce.

Why should you care? It is really as simple as making our spaces better than they were when we first went into them. Our children need to see that the care and education of children is a job that both men and women should do. That this is role that is critically important for establishing future habits and understandings and that centres who are only staffed by female teachers are clearly showing that this is a job for women , and its not too far removed to then add “mothers”. In the 21st century this is an outdated and restrictive construct and does not help children move beyond gender constraints and limit possibilities for them.

Our children need to see that teaching is a profession for all genders and we by our presence help achieve that. Although our numbers are small – they do make a difference and from the last ece census figures although our percentage within the total early childhood workforce was 2.6% we had achieved a 19% increase in male teachers from the year before.

This is important and cannot be underestimated and is proof that our message is having an impact. Another result that provides a positive for us is the invitation to join a panel at the Women in Leadership Symposium in Auckland on May 29 of this year. This is a very high powered meeting of minds and I have been invited to join the panel to share our groups progress in challenging the current status quo in early childhood workforce gender dynamics. So yes our efforts and work have not been in vain and here we have a multi agency and very public platform to share the journey so far. More information can be found at

<https://www.womenandleadership.co.nz/symposium2019.html>

Just as an aside - often we are told that the gender is not important - its the ability to be an effective teacher that matters. If gender isnt important why then do we have women in leadership symposiums? Why do we have a ministry of womens affairs? Why do other government agencies set recruitment targets for female employees?

Recently I posted a link on our facebook page to the BBC and their effort to make their reporting more balanced in term of whose voices are being heard - it was a wonderful example of the efforts those who are committed to change can take and can be viewed along with our other posts at this link

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/107588052656097/>

If you are also interested in tackling gender dynamics head on and the resulting sector bias then I suggest you check out the Diversity works website - it has great information on workforce bias and uplifting stories about industries that have challenged their own bias and made authentic efforts to better reflect their communities they serve. They can be found here and take time to read about unconscious bias - our sector is full of this.

<https://diversityworks.nz/>

Finally - it is time to send out our annual subscriptions invoices- again these are a small contribution asked to help offset the costs of running our organisation - your support in this is not only very appreciated but also is very necessary. Not only does it pay for itself in the reduced Summit costs but it ensures that the small group of volunteers, that donate all their time and energy for free, are able to do so without enduring the costs of running this charitable organisation personally.

May the sun shine and water flow amongst the laughter

Russell Ballantyne

President