

Transforming Early Learning Summit – INSIGHTS REPORT

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1. About this report

The future of the early years system is on the national agenda. The creation of a vision for early learning in Australia will enable us to develop strategies and pathways, build shared aspirations, and work together with a shared sense of purpose and connection, transforming the early learning system into one where every child, family and community can thrive.

As part of a broader process by the Front Project and The Apiary Fellowship is to bring together diverse perspectives from children, families, and all corners of the early learning system, a summit was held to start the conversation with a wider range of system stakeholders.

This inaugural Transforming Early Learning Visioning Summit created a space for diverse stakeholders from across the early childhood system to come together to launch a deeper national conversation about the future.

The following report provides a summary of the insights generated during the Summit and shows how it is possible to think differently and reimagine a new era for Australian children.

The insights in this report were generated using a range of futures thinking methods to help prompt collective imagining. These methods were designed with inputs from leading futurists and included:

1. Postcards to the future (photo elicitation)
2. Landscapes of the future (3D system modelling)
3. Transformative futures (narrative scenario development)

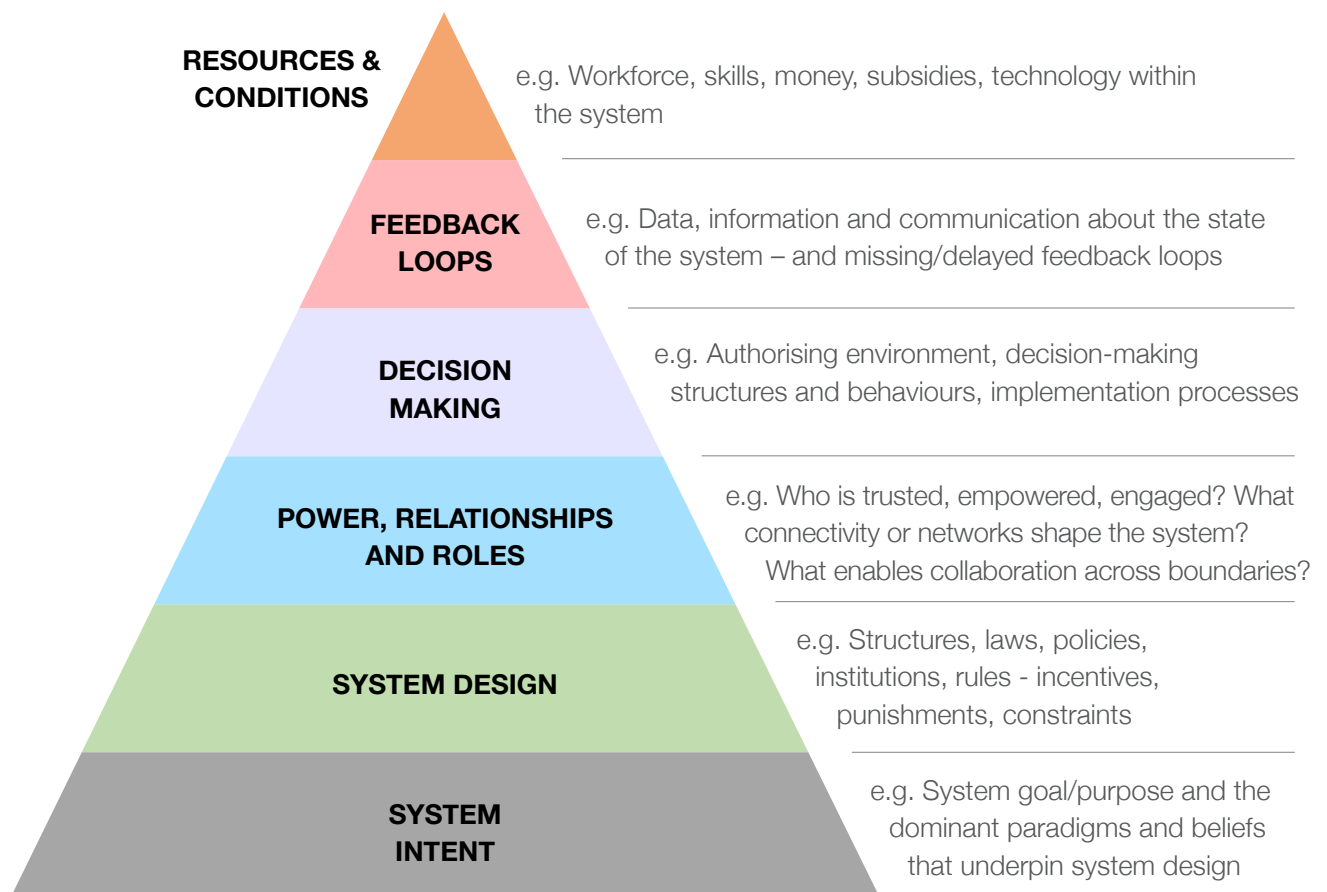
Analysis

The hundreds of ideas, quotes and images generated during the Summit were analysed using a bespoke framework that provides six categories for clustering the changes people wish to see in the system. These are areas that we might seek to intentionally nudge, change, influence or incentivise so that the early learning system works better for all Australian children, families and communities.

These six categories are:

1. **RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS** (e.g. skills, money, subsidies, technology within the system)
2. **FEEDBACK LOOPS** (e.g. data, information and communication about the state of the system – and missing/delayed feedback loops)
3. **DECISION MAKING** (e.g. authorising environment, decision-making structures and behaviours, implementation processes)
4. **POWER, RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES** (e.g. who is trusted, empowered, engaged? What connectivity or networks shape the system? What enables collaboration across boundaries?)
5. **SYSTEM DESIGN** (e.g. structures, laws, policies, institutions, rules - incentives, punishments, constraints)
6. **SYSTEM INTENT** (e.g. system goal/purpose and the dominant paradigms and beliefs that underpin system design)

The following provides a high-level overview of the key insights generated by each of the three Summit methods, followed by a synthesis of overarching key themes generated across the Summit using the 6 categories outlined above (and in the image below).



2. High level activity overview

As mentioned above, Summit insights were generated using a range of futures thinking methods to help prompt collective imagining. These methods were designed with inputs from leading futurists and included:

- Postcards to the future (photo elicitation)
- Landscapes of the future (3d system modelling)
- Transformative futures (narrative scenario development).

Postcards to the future

The Postcards to the Future activity involved individuals selecting a postcard from a choice of five images. On the flip side of the postcard, they were invited to write their “vision for the early learning system”.

Of particular interest is the participants’ choice of image (postcard) and the consistency in some key themes which repeated throughout the day.

Selected quotes are included below, as an indication of how many participants (out of a total of 81 who completed this activity), chose each postcard. The most chosen postcard was the image of an outdoor garden with a mix of diverse people of different ages, abilities and activities pictured. The least chosen postcard was the image of a child interacting with digital technology.

Images chosen and selected quotes

	<p><i>We use and create the technologies at our disposal to make huge jumps forward.</i></p>	<p>Chosen by: 1</p>
	<p><i>My vision is that all three (generations) are teachers and learners as well. The formalised approach to teaching is not the only form and the family unit is very much included and recognised and respected.</i></p>	<p>Chosen by: 16</p>
	<p><i>I see a future of connection with each other. Bonds of friendship built on trust, fund, love. This will create the platform for confident children to be what they want to be.</i></p> <p><i>Men working in early childhood education and care connecting with children and bringing male strength and indigenous knowledge to children.</i></p>	<p>Chosen by: 15</p>

	<p>A world in which children are central to the system, encouraged to be themselves, and valued for their uniqueness. Early learning that is adaptive to individual children and family's needs to support safe cultural innovation and engagement with community and environment.</p>	<p>Chosen by: 34</p>
	<p>Children have a choice in their educational pathway. A system that respects, acknowledges play, difference, inclusion and individualism. Children can create, imagine, vision and be visible in all future decisions.</p>	<p>Chosen by: 15</p>

Postcard word cloud



Landscapes of the future

The landscapes of the future activity was a 3D system modelling activity that invited participants to "imagine the early learning system of the future that would enable children and families to thrive and try visualising this as a landscape."

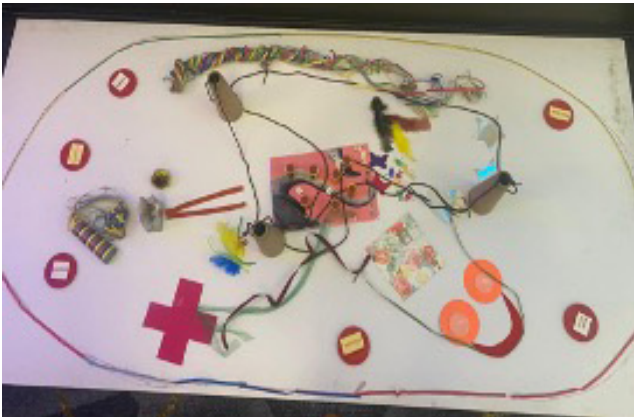
They were prompted to consider what that landscape might look, feel and sound like.

Each group was provided a box of "loose parts" and materials (e.g. cardboard, bottle tops, coffee cups, craft materials, playdough, string) to create their image of a future landscape.

Participants were also asked to write a description of their creation on a large post-it note.

The purpose of this activity was to use a nonlinear and creative process to uncover new insights, a first round of collective visioning for the longer-term.

12 landscapes were created and several images have been included below to provide examples.



Within the landscapes there were overlapping themes and ideas. These included:

- The importance of **drawing inspiration from and respecting First Nations**, especially in terms of:
 - traditional and First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being
 - early learning pedagogy
 - yarning circles - to represent the centrality of community with and alongside children
 - reconciliation.

- **Decentralised decision making** – repeatedly reflected in circular patterns that reflected:
 - connected “circles of care”
 - everyone is “equal in decision making”
 - wisdom at the centre
 - context-based decision making including all ages and intergenerational
 - collective voices and co-design.

- Many of the landscapes had connecting or ‘wiggly’ lines that represented **connection, exploration, play, discovery and inclusivity**. This included reference to:
 - community hubs for the “community to come together to share, to dance, to learn, to eat and to share with other communities”
 - supporting families and children to build connection and communities to build social capital
 - building resilience and sustainability through interconnectedness
 - winding tracks that support the movement of people throughout the community regardless of ability
 - interconnectedness between services and the family and other aspects of early childhood in Australia
 - intertwining of learning creating quality learning pathways that connect and are fluid
 - a system with multiple entry points so families can be where they need to be whenever they need it.

- **Incorporation of nature and green spaces, in the context of** interconnected natural, built and human environments that are experiencing rapid change. This was reflected in diverse examples including references to:
 - community gardens
 - flowers
 - clean energy
 - sustainability
 - environment, animals, and waterways
 - energy and growth
 - presence of nature.

- **Flexibility and accessibility** were reflected through the use of items such as zippers, eraser and pillars, with examples including:
 - zippers to reflect “unlocking access” and that “unzips potential, unlocks possibilities”
 - eraser to reflect “flexibility and diversity”
 - pillars to reflect “responsiveness between services and different family contexts”.

- The use of gold bottle tops was popular, and in several landscapes were used to represent a **‘Gold’ standard in relation to:**

- professional identity
 - professional development
 - the important role of educators as community connectors
 - services (e.g. early learning, allied health, age care) are shining in gold as the most valued by the community
 - supported by evidence
- Lastly, all 12 landscapes made reference to common **societal values** including:
 - the value of early childhood is elevated and has permeated all levels of society and is integral to a way of life
 - local, national and global support for early learning
 - everyone agrees that children shape the future.

Transformative future scenarios

In the narrative scenario development exercise, participants were asked to generate a ‘transformative’ future scenario. To help each group do this, they were provided with a template to complete that included:

- **scenario building blocks** - including key drivers shaping the early learning system and a critical assumption to ‘flip’ on its head
- **what is happening?** – including what new behaviours are emerging (people); what this world looks like (places) and what is valued (society)
- **what is the impact?** – including the implications or outcomes for children and families?
- **points of difference** – including why is this scenario fundamentally different from ‘business as usual’?

After completing their scenario template, each group was asked to generate a “headline statement” that summarised their scenario: *“This is a world in which....”*

Points of difference

The comments on **points of difference** – including why is this scenario fundamentally different from ‘business as usual’, were particularly telling. They told of a current state in which the following does not exist, and a future world where participants hoped these things would exist. This included:

- A rights-based framework with civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for children embedded in all government work. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are also embedded.
- Attitudes towards children have shifted - children’s voices are at the centre of decision making. Children’s voices are meaningful, truly valued and acted upon.
- Everyone understands they have a role in learning. All learning environments are valued - learning everywhere - out of the formal building/structures.
- All adults and children in this space are respected and supported.
- Early childhood education and care is now the most sought after career, with no workforce shortages.
- We have a holistic community focus, where the village keeps the child safe. There is collective responsibility and self-regulating. Government funding equals community-controlled funding and decision-making. More community-focused policy support, and community-focused versus business focused.

- Everyone is advantaged.
- Equity; children or families have free access to the early childhood development and care throughout their journeys.
- Adults are accountable to children and young people and the system is responsive.
- Diversity isn't tokenistic and driven by targets or plans, but by curiosity and kindness.
- Dramatic shift from early childhood education and care to a holistic vision.
- Societal reshape which allows the breaking of the cycles of intergenerational trauma.

Scenario headline statements

The scenario headline statements were powerful descriptions of a transformative future. The following includes each group's headline:

1. *This is a world in which all children/jarjums thrive in a society that is strong, healthy and collectively responsible for each other.*
2. *This is a world in which time and place is configured around responsibility to childhood and country. Decisions are led by this responsibility on a foundation of indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being - and provision follows so that all children thrive.*
3. *This is a world in which children's voices are valued by involving them in designing and deciding on everything. Communities invest in children for the long term. Space is safe and inclusive for all.*
4. *This is a world in which 'old' children are key contributors in intergenerational learning communities.*
5. *This is a world in which children have accountable adults.*
6. *This is a world in which every child's early learning journey is considered unique and critical within a society that values investment in children and a highly skilled and qualified workforce.*
7. *This world is a flourishing society, where every person, young child or families would have strong foundations on which they could build a fulfilling life and determine their own path.*
8. *This is a world in which children are valued as citizens and central in all decision-making by all members of the community.*
9. *This is a world in which Australia leads the early learning agenda. Where every child enjoys an inclusive, playful learning environment, that is supported by a highly valued quality early childhood profession.*
10. *This is a world in which early education and care is a human right of the child that creates changes in social justice and equity. Children lead. Play is for everyone. Healing and joy rule and loneliness is a thing of the past. We are connected as a community.*
11. *This is a world in which everyone comes together to thrive. A community where you belong surrounded by caring people who step up.*
12. *This is a world in which a more compassionate society drives a system that wraps around families and children, so that every child and their family thrives.*
13. *This is a world with an education system that is flexible and responsive to every child in their community.*

Finally, selected key quotes from the scenarios are included below.

“A world in which Australia leads the early learning agenda.”

“The year is 2040. And ECC is not what it used to be. A reimagining has changed the landscape for every single child and their families and communities. Education, family and communities have stretched in harmony to reach new heights and expectations. What once was inaccessible is now available to all through collaborative pathways. We now have a flourishing workforce with the level of skills and qualifications never seen before. Lack of money is no longer a driver that determines whether or not a child’s needs are met. And markets shift from being business focused to community focused. This is a world in which every child’s early learning journey is considered unique and critical within a society that values investment in children and a highly skilled and qualified workforce.”

“The point of difference is that behaviours and mental models have shifted and changed. There is a dramatic shift from early childhood education and care or ECEC, to instead being a holistic vision, an expansion of developmental expectations and outcomes. And social change allows the breaking of cycle of intergenerational traumas.”

“Every child and family will have everything that they need. They’ll have education, they’ll have access to allied health services. There will be support with speech pathologist, occupational therapists, all the things that children need at the support of their families, so families will be mentally healthy and strong. And they will be connected to their community and all the services around them to be able to help and support them to be the best parents that they can be.”

“This is a world in which children have accountable adults. The key drivers shaping the early learning system are the role of children in society, and intergenerational community and connection.”

“Imagine a world when you’re born, your education isn’t predetermined. As a citizen, you are born with the ability to create your own learning journey that is right for you, your family and community with where everyone around you is educated and understands children’s development needs. What might this look like? This could look like free education, responsive contemporary frameworks, children contributing to decision making and people having the ability to remove barriers at the individual, local, state and federal level. Children and Families being part of the consultation process in regards to their local hubs. And there are community-led learning spaces, a prioritization approach of child development knowledge, and a world where everyone is advantaged. And our headline statement is an education system that is flexible and responsive to every child in their community.”

“In our community, people are flourishing more, because they’re able to do what they enjoy. So we see people thriving, we see voices being heard, we see people caring for each other when they can, the load is shared through a collective responsibility.”

3. Key themes - summary

As mentioned above, there were hundreds of ideas, quotes and images generated during the Summit. This data has been analysed using a bespoke framework that provides six categories to cluster the changes people wish to see in the system:

1. RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS (e.g. skills, money, subsidies, technology within the system)
2. FEEDBACK LOOPS (e.g. data, information and communication about the state of the system – and missing/delayed feedback loops)
3. DECISION-MAKING (e.g. authorising environment, decision-making structures and behaviours, implementation processes)
4. POWER, RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES (e.g. who is trusted, empowered, engaged? What connectivity or networks shape the system? What enables collaboration across boundaries?)
5. SYSTEM DESIGN (e.g. structures, laws, policies, institutions, rules - incentives, punishments, constraints)
6. SYSTEM INTENT (e.g. system goal/purpose and the dominant paradigms and beliefs that underpin system design)

The below provides a summary of overarching key themes generated across the Summit using the 6 categories outlined above. This is followed by a more detailed synthesis that includes direct quotes and comments from Summit participants under key headings. Taken together, these themes form a powerful vision for a reimagined early learning system in Australia.

RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS

Resources and conditions relate to the skills, money, subsidies, technology and other stocks and flows of resources within the early learning system.

There was a clear call for:

- A SYSTEM WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, PLACES AND TOOLS
 - Safe and accessible technology
 - A valued, engaged and diverse workforce
 - Fit-for-purpose infrastructure
 - More equitable funding and access.

FEEDBACK LOOPS

Feedback loops refer to things like data, information and communication about the state of the system. This includes where feedback loops are missing or delayed.

The two most common threads under this category were:

- SYSTEMS THAT ARE ACCOUNTABLE
- A SYSTEM THAT LISTENS AND LEARNS

DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making refers to the authorising environment, decision-making structures and implementation processes in the system. This includes consideration of the types of knowledge that might be counted as legitimate or relevant by decision makers.

Under this category, most comments were in relation to valuing diverse types of knowledge rather than specific decision-making structures. Participants sought:

- A SYSTEM THAT SEEKS AND AMPLIFIES DIVERSE VOICES AND KNOWLEDGE

POWER, RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES

Power, relationships and roles relates to who is trusted, empowered and engaged by the system. It can refer to the connections or networks that shape the system and what enables collaboration across boundaries. It is much more about the ‘who’ rather than the ‘how’.

Participants envisioned a future where:

- LEARNING IS SHAPED BY CHILDREN
- THE SYSTEM INCLUDES AND SUPPORTS FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
- THE SYSTEM BUILDS CONNECTIONS

SYSTEM DESIGN

System design relates to the structures, laws, policies, institutions, rules and even the incentives, punishments, constraints that underpin how a system works. In this context, participants were considering how might the underlying design of the system need to change and how?

There were clear themes and the greatest number of comments and ideas related to this category. They included calls for:

- A SYSTEM RECOGNISES THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
- A SYSTEM DESIGNED - WITH CHILDREN - FOR ALL CHILDREN
- A SAFE SYSTEM
- A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
- A SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN
- A SYSTEM THAT IS FAIR
- A SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS CONNECTION TO COUNTRY, PLACE AND NATURE

SYSTEM INTENT

System intent relates to the overarching system goal or purpose as well as the dominant paradigms and beliefs that are held collectively and underpin or perpetuate system design.

In this context, participants called for:

- A STRONGER SHARED INTENT
- A SOCIETY THAT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES “THE VILLAGE” FOR EVERY CHILD
- A COUNTRY WHERE ALL CHILDREN’S BASIC NEEDS ARE MET
- AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY WHERE ALL CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND BELONG

4. Key themes- synthesis

The following includes a more detailed synthesis with direct quotes and comments from Summit participants under key headings.

RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS

Resources and conditions relate to the skills, money, subsidies, technology and other stocks and flows of resources within the early learning system. There was a clear call here for a system with the right people, places and tools.

A SYSTEM WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, PLACES AND TOOLS

Within this theme, participants referred to:

Safe and accessible technology

- Using and creating the technologies at our disposal to make huge jumps forward.
- Ensuring technology is readily available to everyone and that the internet is a safer space.

A valued, engaged and diverse workforce

- Where the importance of attuned education and care experiences are met through baby and toddler educators who are the most highly qualified.
- With men working in early childhood education and care, connecting with children and bringing male strength and indigenous knowledge to children.
- Diverse educators reflecting their community (males, disability, cultures, etc).
- Clear, attainable early childhood education and care (ECEC) career growth pathways and optimal working conditions.
- ECEC is now the most sought-after career, well-paid and regarded, valuing early childhood professionals.
- An engaged workforce with no shortages.
- Professional, respectful, understanding language, and its importance to lifelong learning.

Fit-for-purpose infrastructure

- That incorporates the natural environment.
- An inclusive and sustainable physical learning environment for children, adapting existing infrastructure.
- Built environments enable playful learning.
- Infrastructure required for early learning are seen as critical as public hospitals.
- Housing, transport and other infrastructure needs are also met.

More equitable funding and access

- Every child has access to quality early childhood education and care for at least three days per week with qualified educators, as part of broader education systems.
- Equal funding for early education.
- A highly accessible early learning system for all community members, providing high quality education and care with no financial impact on families.
- A universally accessible, fully-funded system.
- Free education.
- Central/community places would be embedded in recurrent funding.

FEEDBACK LOOPS

Feedback loops refer to things like data, information and communication about the state of the system. This includes where feedback loops are missing or delayed.

The two most common threads under this category were around accountability and learning. Participants expressed a desire for:

SYSTEMS THAT ARE ACCOUNTABLE

- An early learning system that holds the next system accountable and influences it in hope, innovation and quality (i.e. schools, communities and workforce systems that children rapidly move to and through).
- A world in which children and young people have accountable adults, which is authentic and not tokenistic.

A SYSTEM THAT LISTENS AND LEARNS

- Learning from the past and not being shackled to how we have always done things.
- Everyone slows down enough to listen.
- Capacity for self-assessment and autonomous government due to all of our services being really high quality.
- Responsive contemporary frameworks.

DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making refers to the authorising environment, decision-making structures and implementation processes in the system. This includes consideration of the types of knowledge that might be counted as legitimate or relevant by decision makers.

Within this category, most of the comments and vision statements were in relation to valuing diverse types of knowledge rather than specific decision-making structures.

A SYSTEM THAT SEEKS & AMPLIFIES DIVERSE VOICES & KNOWLEDGE

Encouraging diversity and room for many views and voices

- A system and services that support and encourage diversity and inclusive universal participation.
- Everyone can speak, be heard and stay true to themselves.
- Working and walking together.
- A world in which children are central to the system, valued and encouraged to be themselves.
- Lived experience is acknowledged and not limiting.

Respect for all roles and skills

- Everyone's skills are celebrated.
- Diversity is embraced.
- Flatten the hierarchy and everyone is important.
- A paradigm shift around inclusion, recognising the need for various skills, abilities, thinking and sharing of ideas for the future. Neurodiverse people and those of all abilities would be valued in this new world, in their creativity and problem solving for all children.
- Children of all abilities are celebrated.

First Nations at the forefront

- Where First Nations rights, perspectives and ways of being and doing are at the forefront, shared throughout early childhood education spaces for all jarjums.
- First Nations values, knowledge, wisdom and ways of knowing, being and doing are embedded in the early learning system, services and community, as well as deeply valued in society. Children arrive at school ready for learning, grounded in First Nations culture and their own.

Transformative spaces for learning beyond boundaries

- Recognising there are other forms of teaching rather than the formalised approach. A blurring of boundaries where education is not just conducted within formalised spaces.
- Playful learning integrated for everyone and in all parts of society.
- A future where all formal and informal early learning places are welcoming, inclusive, happy and fun.
- A system going beyond narrow definitions of learning and considers fairness, equity and wellbeing.

- The early learning system is agile, place-based, community influenced, progressive and different to the current environment (children to tell us).
- Valued learning environments are incorporated in everyday life, immersing the child and everyone is clear about their learning role.

POWER, RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES

Power, relationships and roles relates to who is trusted, empowered, engaged by the system. It can refer to the connections or networks that shape the system and what enables collaboration across boundaries. It is much more about the 'who' rather than the 'how'.

Participants envisioned a future where:

WHERE LEARNING IS SHAPED BY CHILDREN

Children's voices are heard

- Children's voices are heard, recognised, amplified and at the centre of all decision-making, informing and shaping their own future.
- Children fully contribute to reimagining the learning spaces.
- Children are valued, active and can create, imagine, envision, be visible and hold equal power in decision making.
- Children's voices are authentic and they're truly valued and acted upon.
- Structures and processes are in place to elevate children's voices.
- Co-design is the norm.

Children have agency in their learning

- Children lead conversations about what matters to them, showing adults their unique perspective and imaginative possibilities.
- Children can be creative, show initiative and learning can be accelerated or slowed at the learner's pace.
- As a citizen, you are born with the ability to create your own learning journey that is right for you, your family and community.
- Children are supported and have agency, facilitating and directing their learning and its systems.
- Children can shape their early learning experiences and adults recognise benefits in being-co-learners with them.

A SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES AND SUPPORTS FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Families have choices

- Families and communities have a choice on how and what they need for their children.
- Families have choice and resources to support whole family care.
- Families and children can choose the setting that suits them on a values level.
- People have opportunities to determine their own futures.

Families and communities are part of learning

- Families and communities are supported to be part of the change in early education.
- All parent capacity is valued and acknowledged, and strong partnerships exist between families and their supporting organisations.
- Services support family groupings across age groups.
- The family unit is very much included and recognised and respected as a teaching and learning service.
- A system that nurtures, supports and empowers children, families and communities.
- That fathers can take back their place in community with their children to be the best person and father that they can be. More healing. Less incarceration.
- All children experience a positive, happy, healthy home environment that enables them to grow and learn becoming a strong adult contributing to our world.
- Family and non-family knowledge sharing.
- There are community-led learning spaces.
- All adults and children in the space are respected and supported.
- Flexible groupings, for example families, not age.
- Children and communities create curriculum that is collective and local.
- Services have the capacity and resource to deeply connect with communities and therefore serve the needs of children and parents.

A SYSTEM THAT BUILDS CONNECTIONS

Where relationships matter

- A place where relationships are prioritised.
- All children experience love, care, education and opportunity regardless of their background, culture or community.
- Every child has moments and opportunities to connect and feel loved by others.
- Connections and friendship bonds are built on trust and love, empowering confident children to reach their goals.
- We talked about kinship, living longer, healthier, and stronger connected lives and sense of belonging.

Connections are fostered across community

- Children have access to multiple and varied relationships, including community, extended family and outside of the home.
- My vision for a transformed early learning system is one where children are at the centre of their communities.
- Children and families valued as part of community and have access to local connections and positive support.
- Connection to nature, community and family is important.
- All communities are being sustainably and effectively resourced.
- Healing, joy and community connection rule and people are not as lonely.

A system that embraces multigenerational connections and learning

- It is a multigenerational approach which values culture, intergenerational communities, learning and enabling.
- We engage across generations to provide children with responsive care and enriched learning in their communities, furthering intergenerational knowledge of our history, communities and elders.
- More intergenerational learning experiences.
- A space that engages intergenerational priorities for the community, family, and the village, to be reborn as a safe, enriching way for children to thrive.
- All ages and abilities working together, connected with nature and with each other. A shared harvest of food, knowledge, care and understanding.
- Intergenerational experiences are embedded in society.
- I see all three generations here and my vision is that all three are teachers and all our learners as well.
- Wisdom from multiple generations is reflected in how children experience the world.
- Inclusion, social engagement and active engagement across generations.
- Valuing of education across all levels of life in its broadest definition, with policies developed with a lifelong model and appropriate funding.
- All children are key contributors in intergenerational learning communities.
- Our vision was for a system where the drivers were around intergenerational learning.
- Learning is a lifelong, continuous endeavour and could be shared across generations.
- It is a real intergenerational approach, which embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge around family, connections and cycles.
- Older people wouldn't go to a nursing home. There are multigenerational homes with children and aged care, early childhood, and school etc, are all built as a community and equally valued as critical.

SYSTEM DESIGN

System design relates to the structures, laws, policies, institutions, rules and even the incentives, punishments, constraints that underpin how a system works. In this context, participants were considering how might the underlying design of the system need to change and how?

There were clear themes and strong threads in this category. They included calls for:

A SYSTEM RECOGNISES THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- For children to be recognised for their importance as citizens in Australia and their rights are honoured.
- Children are valued, visible and active citizens from birth, voicing their decisions.
- Our jarjums are our future generations who can help regenerate Mother Earth and we all live in an equitable, harmonious, open-minded continent.
- The Conventions for the Rights of the Child are embedded in all government work, leading to improved social and cultural outcomes because children's voices are heard and acted upon.
- Early childhood education and care is a child's human right, creating change in social justice and equity.
- It is the right of the child to access early learning, not the convenience of families.

A SYSTEM DESIGNED - WITH CHILDREN - FOR ALL CHILDREN

- A system that is designed for children.
- Children safely having a voice in family, society, government and community decisions.
- The voices and rights of children are amplified and at the centre of everything we do within the early learning system.
- All systems are designed from a strengths-based perspective rather than a deficit model.
- Children should be included in policy development for early childhood education and care, education, health, justice, detention, inclusion and community design.
- Children are contributing to decision-making and people can remove barriers at the individual, local, state and federal level.
- Adults around children are courageous, radical, and create aspirational change for children.
- We highlight and foster the vision that children have a world which is free from bias, prejudice and judgment and use it to influence and change their future world and environments.
- Children's voices are heard and acted upon at all levels, including in their communities and globally.
- Children's role and agency in society increases.

A SAFE SYSTEM

- Every early childhood education and care service is culturally safe and has embedded authentic culturally grounded practices.
- There are First Nations services open to all.
- It is safe and facilitates a positive transition to an adult life that meets the child's full potential.
- Kids and families feel welcome and belong at school.
- Children have physical, social, emotional and sexual safety so they can participate and contribute to community and society.

A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Wrap around

- A system fully providing for every child, giving them what they need.
- A community and government system and support that wraps around services, families and societies to educate and care for children.
- Systems that wrap around parent and children so that every child and their family within our communities have everything that they need.
- We've got our own early learning services alongside those in the community at the centre, to help and support children in need.

Integrated

- Schools are multidisciplinary hubs for children and their families, integrated across health, education and social services.
- Where allied health services and welfare supports are accessible to all families even prior to pregnancy.
- Cohesive and coordinated systems of support.
- Early childhood education and care services that serve as a community hub for food, nature and hope.
- The hub concept is the norm and it's extraordinarily well-funded.
- Children and families are part of the local hubs' consultation process.
- All services work together with a shared purpose and are effective communicators - sharing cross-sector information so no one is in fear, cultivating collaboration and more compassion.
- Blurring of boundaries and more flexible delivery.

Continuous

- Early childhood education, primary, and secondary is seamless, connected and experienced, and all part of one system.
- Learning is seamless between children through the different transition points and community.
- Policy and planning is for a 24-year cycle of learning.

A SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN

Holistic

- A holistic approach facilitating children's development and skills for the changing world.
- Each child is valued and supported in a holistic, kind way, with high expectations. Their wellbeing, health and learning are at the centre.
- There is a dramatic shift from early childhood education and care, to instead being a holistic vision, to an expansion of developmental expectations and outcomes.

Adaptive

- Early learning that is adaptive to individual children and family's needs to support safe, cultural innovation and engagement with community and environment.
- An evolving, relevant, flexible, responsive, contextual early learning and education system to every child in their community, where they're placed at the centre.

A SYSTEM THAT IS FAIR

Access is for everyone

- Where all children from birth have equitable access to exemplary learning and services in a safe, caring environment.
- Where your postcode does not determine your early learning opportunities.
- Inclusive for all children regardless of their socioeconomic status, demographic, geographic etc.
- Every child accesses opportunities and support to be the best they can be.
- No child is left behind.

Inclusive system and settings

- Diverse inclusive settings in which each child in Australia, from birth to school, can connect, learn, explore, engage and develop through play.
- The most vulnerable children have equal access alongside all other children.
- Inclusion is at the core of the world in which we want to live.

A SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS CONNECTION TO COUNTRY, PLACE AND NATURE

- All children connect with the world, with holistic early learning immersed in nature and caring for the planet, linking to sustainability, creativity and diverse skills, knowledge and perspectives. The environment is at the curriculum's centre.
- The environment is being privileged in early learning and children are not bound by fences or buildings.

- All services embed nature and focus sustaining the earth and environment.
- More outside time for nature playing and learning.
- A place on country (wherever that may be), where every child is an active citizen whose voices, values, culture, and beliefs are heard, respected, and lived freely.
- Children are in a relationship with the human, non-human, and more-than-human worlds.

SYSTEM INTENT

System intent relates to the overarching system goal or purpose as well as the dominant paradigms and beliefs that are held collectively and underpin or perpetuate system design.

In this context, participants called for:

A STRONGER SHARED INTENT

- A shared belief, vision, expectation across education systems.
- That the wider early learning system has a deeper, connected system beyond daily learning.

A SOCIETY THAT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES “THE VILLAGE” FOR EVERY CHILD

- We have a true village which is holistic and community-focused.
- Focus on strengthening community and regeneration of communal spaces.
- We turn the maxim, “it takes a village to raise a child” into a reality where all parts of the system work together so that all children thrive.
- We embrace the communities we live in so that all children experience early learning at home, in early childhood services and the community.
- Connectedness, community, including purposeful roles for everyone and intergenerationally, and support for people of all abilities, where everyone is valued.
- A greater sense of collective responsibility and regard to all community members, fostering a happier, healthier society overall.
- Everything and everybody has agency. Early intervention and prevention occur through the community (rather than relying on a system to fix us). Neighbours and the community can step in, generational change creates proactive self-regulating.
- The key drivers shaping the early learning system is the role of children in society, and intergenerational community and connection.

A COUNTRY WHERE ALL CHILDREN’S BASIC NEEDS ARE MET

- Where every child has their needs met irrespective of their race, age, privilege, disadvantage, location, or abilities.
- Families have time and security to live lives without the burden of stress about housing, food and job insecurity.
- Every person would have strong foundations on which they could build a fulfilling life and determine their own path.
- Decisions around education, policy and children means the impact of disadvantage is significantly reduced. This is a world where everyone is advantaged.

AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY WHERE ALL CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND BELONG

- The depth of inclusion is so deep that there is no need to keep working towards it because we're there.
- Inclusion is no longer a concept but reality, and a world where children and everyone can be themselves.
- An inclusive society that has any needs met to enable children and families to thrive.
- That no child or young person experiences gender-based violence and stereotyping are a thing of the past.
- That people of all genders are respected and rigid gender roles are no more.
- A world where concepts of social justice and equity set the approach, with kindness, respect, and humbleness at its core.
- In 2040, our will is going to be a more kind, passionate and compassionate society.
- Society has collective responsibility for all children, where they're all loved and accepted.
- Attitudes towards societal support and social justice collectively improve.
- Social change allows the breaking of cycle of intergenerational traumas.



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