

For Children, Together: Aligning Strategy, Strengths, People and Practice for Impact.

North Belconnen Community Association — A Multi-Disciplinary
Approach

NBCA has been walking alongside families for half a century, and today we are building for the next fifty years.



~50 YEARS AGO

Founded as a Mothers Co-op

Early childhood education and care rooted in community — built by families, for families.



INCORPORATED

North Belconnen Community Association

Formalised as an Incorporated Association — two ECEC centres: **Flynn ECEC** and **Cooinda Cottage**.



TODAY & BEYOND

Future-Proofing for the Next 50 Years

My mission: strengthen governance and strategy so NBCA thrives for another fifty years of service.



North Belconnen Community Association — a community-rooted early childhood organisation guided by a clear purpose, vision, and values.

01

OUR PURPOSE

**For Children,
Together**

02

OUR VISION

**Lifelong learning,
lasting impact**

03

OUR VALUES

We Welcome

diversity in cultures, abilities and perspectives.

We Care

about each other and what we do.

We Collaborate

to achieve outcomes.

The Burger Analogy — Four Perspectives

 Joss · The Bread / Bun

Today you will hear four voices, each representing a layer of the burger — together they form the whole.



 The Bread/Bun

Joss

Governance and Strategic Lens

 The Special Sauce

Natasha

Centre Management and Community Engagement

 The Cheese

Sarah (for Sam)

Champion Model and Reconciliation

 The Protein

Anna

Pedagogical Approach and Active Citizenship

Governance — Where We Are At

Strong governance is the bread that holds everything together — without it, the whole burger falls apart.



Constitution Review

Reviewed our constitution so governance framework is current and provides meaningful oversight.



Company Structure

Moving from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee.



Board Model

Moved from a parent-led volunteer committee to a strengths-based matrix model.



Sub-Committees

Established Finance, Audit and Investment Sub-Committee; Quality and Risk Sub-Committee.



Director Delegations

Clear Director Delegations to manage risk and liabilities of the Approved Provider.



Critical Reflection

Passionate Directors engaging in vital critical reflection as part of the Approved Provider role.

Structure That Enables Strengths-Based Delivery

Governance is not separate from practice — it is the vital bridge that enables us to excel.

CliftonStrengths

CliftonStrengths is a strengths-based development tool for learning, leadership and professional growth.



Clifton Strengths — Four Domains



Executing

When teams need to implement a solution, they look to people with Executing themes who will work tirelessly to accomplish the goal.



Strategic Thinking

When teams need to focus on what could be, they turn to people with Strategic Thinking themes to stretch the team's thinking for the future.



Relationship Building

When teams need to be greater than the sum of their parts, they turn to people with Relationship Building themes to strengthen their bonds.



Influencing

When teams need to sell their ideas inside and outside the organisation, they turn to people with Influencing themes to convince others.

Our Strategy at a Glance

Our strategy formalises what we have always done — it reflects half a century of practice, not a new direction.

Excel

In our centres

- Our people
- Our expertise
- Our resources

Engage

Meaningfully with
our community

- Communication
- Outreach

Elevate

Our sector

- Innovation

To read more about our strategic plan, go to: <https://www.nbca.org.au/about>

Our Strategy at a Glance

★ Excel In our centres

- Strong focus on valuing and investing in staff
→ supports retention
- Consistent teams build strong family relationships and program knowledge
- Invest in safe and high-quality resources to support positive educational outcomes for children
- External partnerships to support children, families and staff
- Above-ratio staffing enables breaks, admin time, additional programming time and high staff capability

7.9 years
average staff
tenure at Flynn

451.3
combined
years of service

Staffing ratios
exceed minimum
requirements

Our Strategy at a Glance

Engage

Meaningfully with our community

- Focus on meaningful support for vulnerable families and strong partnerships (e.g. Karinya House, government initiatives)
- Community-centred approach: welcome, care, collaborate
- Reviewed and strengthened communication (internal & external) Technology improving communication with families, staff, community



Who is considered a vulnerable person?

- Vulnerable person = child or individual unable to protect themselves
- Increased risk due to illness, trauma, disability, or circumstances
- Vulnerability influenced by social, economic, cultural factors
- Examples: children, trauma, disability, poor health, disadvantage
- Includes diverse backgrounds (CALD, Aboriginal, refugee, aged)



Natasha - The Special Sauce

Centre Leadership and Community Engagement

The sauce is what gives the burger its flavour — community engagement and family support is what makes our centres come alive.

- 25 years with NBCA — Centre Director and Community Engagement Officer
- My role is the living expression of the Engage pillar — what supporting families looks like day to day
- We already have the skills: observe, listen, notice change, build trust
- Using those skills intentionally creates opportunities for support, connection, and early intervention
- Supporting families means noticing, responding calmly, and connecting them to the right support at the right time



Recognising and Responding to Family Vulnerability

Vulnerability does not always look obvious — it takes presence, empathy, and trust to see it and respond well.



Notice

Observe subtle changes in demeanour and wellbeing



Approach

Engage with empathy from a strengths-based, non-judgemental place



Refer

Confidential conversation & practical referrals to support services



Support

Wrap around support — the whole family, not only the child

Case Study: Notice, Approach, Refer & Support in Practice

Vulnerability does not always look obvious — it takes presence, empathy, and trust to see it and respond well.

Mother of infant twins — recently returned to work, primary support network overseas, partner working interstate.

Appeared organised and capable; beneath the surface was overwhelming stress. Our Be You Champion and Early Childhood Teacher in the infants space noticed subtle changes in demeanour.

She described feelings of isolation, exhaustion, and the constant pressure to appear as though she was coping when, in reality, she was crumbling under the weight of responsibility

Together, we explored practical supports available to her, including referrals to community-based family support services, mental health resources, and opportunities for ongoing check-ins with the service.

What is Vulnerability?

Vulnerability is broader than hardship — it shows up in many forms and can be invisible from the outside.

- Outside our sector, vulnerability is often seen as those experiencing hardship or disadvantage
- In practice, it can include: financial stress, trauma, mental health challenges, social isolation, housing instability, or a season of deep overwhelm
- It does not always look obvious — it can be hidden beneath composure and capability



What supporting our families looks like in action.

- Greeting families warmly
- Checking in early
- Being flexible
- Helping families navigate support systems and pathways
- Child centred and child focused



Child and Family Centres

Most services are for families with children up to 8 years. Some services are for children up to 12 years.

Families can get help before and after the birth of a child.



Tuggeranong
159 Anketell
Street,
Greenway



West Belconnen
6 Luke Street,
Holt



Gungahlin
51 Ernest
Cavanagh Street,
Gungahlin

Families and carers can get free:

- parenting support and advice
- child development assessments with the Child Development Service
- referrals to other health, wellbeing and support services
- help from a qualified social worker
- playgroups and parenting groups.

Cheese binds the layers together — the Champion Model gives educators permission to lead what they care about, and the impact sticks.

- Early Childhood Teacher and Assistant Director at Flynn; presenting on behalf of Sam (Reconciliation Action Plan Leader/Early Childhood Teacher)
- The Champion Model: educators lead areas they are passionate about — passion drives momentum
- Each champion receives dedicated fortnightly time off the floor, collaboration across rooms, and an allocated budget
- Impact is visible: in how children play, the questions they ask, the values they develop, and what families see





Champion Model in Practice

When educators lead what they love, change is practical, visible, and sustained.



Be You Champion

- Connects regularly with a Be You Consultant — a free service
- Visits each room to check in with children and staff
- Brings mental health and wellbeing into everyday practice



<https://beyou.edu.au/>



Sustainability & Loose parts Champions

- Educators visit each room to encourage sustainable practices
- Lead clothing swaps and a recycling station
- Embed sustainability as lived experience for children
- Works alongside teams; plans with educators based on children's interests
- Sources materials through op shop visits, community donations and by walking on Country with children.
- Encourages open-ended, imaginative play



“Flynn Clothing Swap” sign



Reconciliation Champion

- Role created in 2022 to develop and deliver the Reconciliation Action Plan
- Sam stepped into the RAP Leader role in early 2025; now also supporting Coinda
- Drives cultural learning across both NBCA centres



Pre-school room
Acknowledgment of Country

Reconciliation in Action

When Reconciliation is done well, the impact lasts — for children, for staff, and for families.

★ Strategic Pillar: Excel

Reconciliation Champion Responsibilities

- ✓ Reviews curriculum planning and developed a cultural calendar
- ✓ Works with the kitchen team on cultural menus
- ✓ Oversees RAP implementation and attends Narragunnawali webinars
- ✓ Supports rooms to update the Reconciliation wall and book across both centres
- ✓ Supports each room with Acknowledgement of Country





Acknowledgment of Country Gumnut Room'

ARTIST: HARPER



Acknowledgment of Country

We care about the Ngunnawal People

Reconciliation in Action

When Reconciliation is done well, the impact lasts — for children, for staff, and for families.

★ Strategic Pillar: Excel



Impact Story

🌱 A Child's Journey — From Disconnection to Pride

A three-year-old whose family had been impacted by the Stolen Generations arrived saying firmly she was not Aboriginal. Through gentle, consistent learning and an incursion with an Aboriginal singer and dancer, something shifted.

"I love all Aboriginal people! I'm Aboriginal like him!"

💡 Key Takeaway

Give people permission and time to lead what they care about — early childhood education has the power to interrupt stigma and replace it with pride, belonging, and respect.



Anna - The Protein

The protein is the heart of the burger — active citizenship is the substance of what we do with children every day.

- Building on Sarah's champion model — from educator-led change to the incredible capacity of children themselves
- Preschool program focus: what does it mean to be an active citizen in the early years?
- When children are empowered to have a voice, show empathy, and take action, they become powerful contributors to their communities
- Children are citizens of today, not just future citizens — active citizenship begins in the early years

Active Citizenship

- As educators, we have an opportunity to support children to recognise that they are capable, valued members of society right now.
- Create opportunities for children to participate, contribute, care for others, and take action on issues that matter to them
- Strongly aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework
- Ensure that every child and family feels seen, heard, valued, and connected within their community.



Active Citizenship in Practice

When we embed active citizenship, children learn to connect, contribute, and care within their community.

Documentation

- Transition to School Process
- Capacity and Participation Plan (CAP)
- Curriculums, observations and Summative Assessments

For the second section of this document, the child is invited to draw a picture of themselves at school, or alternatively a picture of their choice. The child was asked the following questions while they were drawing their picture.

Have you ever been to your new school/room? Yeah, a little. It's called Evelyn Scott School. How do you feel about going to your new school/room? Good, because they are very kind and we played together. What do you think your favourite things at your new school/room will be? Playing with Aaron and my big friend. What do you think will make you happy at your new school/room? I have a green fidget and a unicorn fidget, so maybe fidgets? What would you like me to tell your new teacher about you? Pokemon! My favourites are Bulbasaur, and Pikachu, and Charmander, and Eevee.	<i>"Me and Aaron and my friends at my school and they are in Kindergarten."</i>
--	--

Transition Statement - Flynn Early Childhood Education Centre



Active Citizenship in Practice

When we embed active citizenship, children learn to connect, contribute, and care within their community.

Caring for Country

Rather than providing answers, we encouraged the children to investigate

The children's responses were immediate and practical.

They wanted to do something.



“I pick up rubbish to look after the land.”



“I'm picking up a piece of paper and putting it in the recycling bin. That's where it should go”

The Flynn Hearts Project

Children do not need to wait to make a difference — small acts of empathy are active citizenship in practice.

🕒 Children's Committee

Volunteer preschool representatives meet monthly with Natasha (Flynn Director) — ensuring children's voices shape centre decisions.

💖 Flynn Hearts Project

A child's story of receiving a love heart in their lunchbox inspired children to create hearts for the Karinya House community for Mother's Day — empathy made visible.





Flynn Early Childhood Education Centre

The Flynn Hearts Project 2026

Bringing It All Together — The Whole Burger

Every layer matters — aligned strategy, governance, and day-to-day practice strengthens outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

The Bread / Bun — Joss

- Governance and strategy that holds everything together

The Special Sauce — Natasha

- Relational, responsive, and compassionate centre management

The Cheese — Sarah

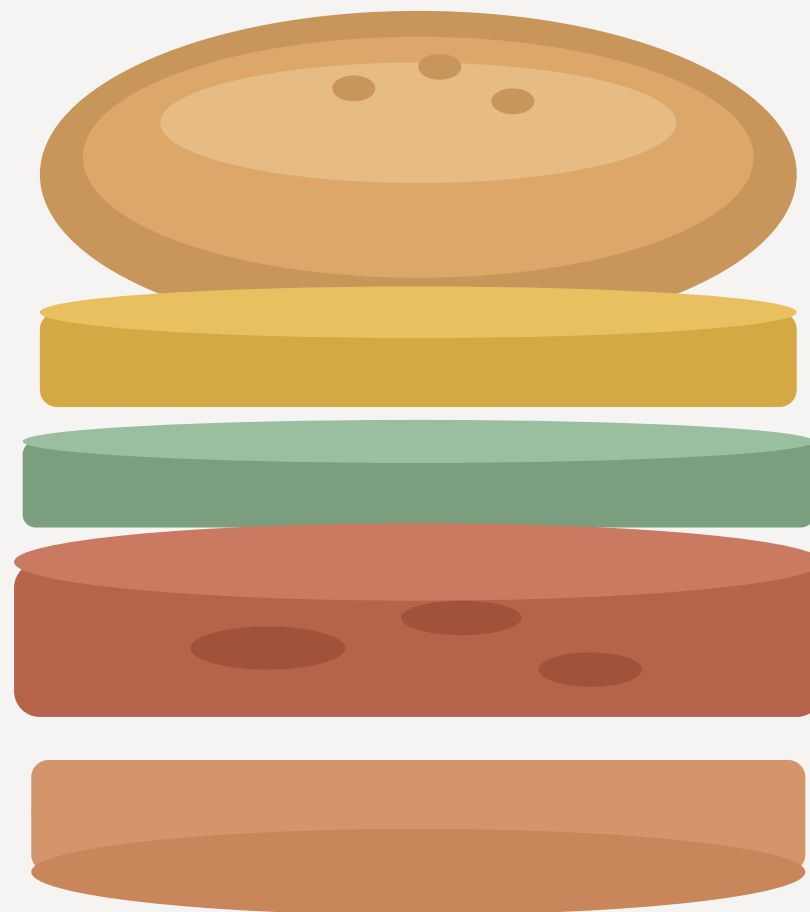
- Champion Model giving educators permission to lead — visible, sustained change

The Protein — Anna

- Pedagogical practice empowering children as active citizens today



Not four separate things — one whole, nourishing, intentional organisation.



We Welcome, We Care & We Collaborate

**Get to know us
We would love to connect**



OR email us:

jocelyn.cronin@nbca.org.au

References:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2022). Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0). <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

Be You. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

CliftonStrengths. Gallup. <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/home.aspx>

Karinya House. <https://karinyahouse.asn.au/>

Narragunnawali. <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/webinars-and-workshops>

North Belconnen Community Association (NBCA). <https://www.nbca.org.au/>

ACT Government – Child and Family Centres. <https://www.act.gov.au/community/families/child-and-family-centres>