Excellence and Innovation in Pedagogy and Practice Award: the education teams from C&K Paddington, Rosalie and Oakleigh Kindergartens.

1. How does the service and/or educator/s demonstrate innovative work practices?

This innovative and collaborative initiative was to ***showcase, celebrate and respect young children's artwork*** through the assemblage of a professionally curated gallery, in the public space of the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre at the 2015 C&K QLD Early Childhood Annual Conference. This project was a collaboration across three C&K Branch Kindergartens:

C&K Paddington Community Kindergarten; C&K Rosalie Community Kindergarten and C&K Oakleigh Community Kindergarten:

The collaboration involved: Three C&K Kindergartens; Five artists in residence; 10 Kindergarten groups; and 211 children. The theme of the Arts Project was*:* ***Connect Collaborate Create.*** The aim of the project was to compliment the conference theme of ***Connection Collaboration Creation*** and emulate the theme of the conference. Also, to value co-construction and the diverse responses from children, teachers and communities across C&K Paddington; C&K Rosalie and C&K Oakleigh Community Kindergartens.

The teams - Directors, Teachers and Teaching Assistants, who have a strong commitment to celebrating children's creativity, inspired a high standard of education and care and innovative practice throughout this project. This initiative aligned with the C&K Strategic Plan 2014-2017 *To Maximise children's life outcomes and guide their learning journey* and achieved explicit outcomes for children and families; and the wider community. The C&K Values of Integrity- we stand by our word; Courage – we embrace change and challenge; Respect – we are inclusive; Collaboration – we work together to achieve together - these core values influenced this project.

Context: C&K Paddington Kindergarten has an established tradition of an *Artists in Residence* program since 2009. It is an important event in the Kindergartens' calendar. The 2014 showcase of young children's creativity at the C&K Paddington Community Kindergarten Unit 2 Art Exhibition. ***We Are All Artists*** and The Children's Art Exhibition at the Brisbane Convention Centre at the 2015 QLD Early Childhood Conference was inspired by this established tradition.

The brief for the 2015 Art Exhibition was for the children across the three C&K Kindergartens to create a *body of work* that would showcase and celebrate their creativity at the Early Childhood Annual Conference. Inspired by [redacted] grandparent/art educator/artist, who was critical in actualisation of this vision; the Kindergarten teaching teams who engaged in collaborative discussions; integrated curriculum and co-constructed artistic practice with the children to produce an outstanding body of work.
The exhibition of children's artwork demonstrated the value and respect for their creativity and the significance of respecting young children as artists and competent and capable learners; children as active citizens within our communities. It also celebrated the value of co-construction and the diversity of responses from the children, teachers and communities across the three Kindergartens.

Additional information to support Q1.

Q.1 How does the service and/or educator/s demonstrate innovative work practices?

Demonstrated innovative work practices to value co-construction and the diverse responses from children, teachers and communities across C&K Paddington Community Kindergarten; C&K Rosalie Community Kindergarten and C&K Oakleigh Community Kindergarten.

A 10-week unit of work of learning and the visual arts…a living curriculum

In order to accomplish the project goals and key outcomes the project team had to **connect** the incredible people, resources available; the teaching staff, artists, volunteers and community; had **collaborated** with children to **create** a body of work with the intention to *showcase children's creativity.*

The event demonstrated education through the visual arts and the importance of reciprocal listening and learning. In 2014, a National Children's Commissioner was appointed in Australia. The commissioner worked together with Early Childhood Australia to launch the Supporting young children's rights – Statement of Intent (2015 – 2018). There is an increasing focus on children being viewed as active citizens with participatory rights through multiple avenues which includes initiatives such as this.

Three C&K Centres; Five Artists; Ten Groups; 211 Children: PADDINGTON.ROSALIE.OAKLEIGH
Celebrating Children's Creativity: *we are all artists* Brisbane Convention Centre 23-24 May 2015 Opening Celebration Sunday 9-11am

Artists in Residence Profiles:

Paddington 1 K[redacted] With a graphic art background I was pleased to have the opportunity to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Griffith University in 2013 majoring in painting. While at Griffith I participated in numerous art exhibitions with fellow students in and outside the college. I am currently working towards a solo exhibition later this year in my local community.

Paddington 2 K[redacted] I studied Fine Arts at the Australian National University and Southern Cross University majoring in Glass and Painting. After completing my degree, I ran a gallery in Lismore, NSW before moving to Brisbane to commence my career as a secondary Visual Arts teacher.

Paddington 2 K[redacted] My passion lies in adapting and composing objects and forms that create movement. Children enjoy flying things, wings and the story created by an animated object. My interactive artwork the 'flying watering can' was the inspiration to create a body of work with the children that represents the elements of the weather.

Rosalie K[redacted] has been involved in the creative arts for over fifteen years, completing a Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Queensland College of Arts in 1999 and a Graduate Diploma in Senior Art Education in 2009. [redacted] is passionate about her own arts practice as well as facilitating creative expression for groups and individuals.

Oakleigh K[redacted] I am a Brisbane based artist working in printmaking, painting, textiles and ceramic. I trained in community arts and am interested in how the creative process connects people. I travel all over Australia working with communities on projects, festivals and I run workshops.

2. How is community engagement incorporated into this service and/or the educator/s work practices?

This Arts Project engaged children, families and the Kindergarten communities from the beginning of the project to the weekend of the exhibition and celebrated the children's artistic growth and development over a period of time. The exhibition valued and respected the children's creativity as young artists as well as being a point of reflection on artistic practice for the children, the educators and the families from each of the Kindergartens. The artist in residence project and art educators and the themes, see attached documents.

The project was a collaborative community venture: supported and guided by C&K and curated by [redacted] art educator extraordinaire. It included The Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, and involved the educators from the three kindergartens; the art educators; the artists and their families. The C&K Community, [redacted] international, national and local speakers and C&K and external delegates who participated in the conference had the opportunity to engage with the exhibition. The keynote speakers made reference to the exhibition during their presentations and the stall holders delighted in the fact that there were children and parent participation at the conference.

The Kindergarten parents were engaged on many levels supporting their children during the varied art projects, helping financially with the artists in residence and other costs; and for bringing their children and extended families to see the exhibition.

Parent Testimonial: Parent -[redacted]mum from Paddington 2.

[redacted]loved the art program at her kindy. Hearing about the interesting techniques and mediums the kindy kids were using intrigued us until we saw the incredible pieces they had created at the exhibition. Seeing the kid's art in such a 'professional' setting blew us away - our children are capable of so much! Now we have beautiful tea bag and ink pictures on our walls and a tree stump and feather windmill as our table centre piece!

Educator: "We always bring people in; this showcase was an opportunity to take it out into the community…. Not only making the artwork visible but it made the learning visible to many others…. Stepping out beyond the C&K centres… "

[redacted]

Additional documentation to support:

Q:2. How is community engagement incorporated into this service and/or the educator/s work practices?

For children, their families and extended family to see the exhibition and to be part of the children's learning and to share in the joy…

Community Engagement Parents viewing (lingering) over documentation sheets on the day. "We noticed people lingering over the documentation, reading and discussing and taking the time to

absorb the information on it and wanting to know more about their child and their learning" (an educator).

Parents have the time to engage in the documentation and to understand their child's learning more deeply and appreciate the journey of the development of the body of work.

The conference community participate in the opening of the exhibition

The stall holders commented on the parent and children visitors to the conference. Parents purchased products and inquired about them, the children engaged with their products – the Nature inspired playground company enjoyed the children engaging with their children's nature playhouse.

Educator Teams: C&K Paddington K Unit 1

C&K Paddington K Unit 2

C&K Oakleigh K

C&K Rosalie K

The provocations for the development of a body of work for each of the C&K Kindergartens had been guided by the co-constructed themes of: ***Bowerbird and Collection; Weather; Metamorphosis and Change; Wrapped***

3. How has the service or educator/s utilised the environment to support education goals and/or service goals and philosophy?

There are three teachers of children: adults, other children, and their environment

Exchange 2, 1994.

Throughout the art exhibition and 'everything in between' there was a clear evidence of how pedagogy aligns with the Kindergartens' philosophy, the teaching and learning environment; the curriculum frameworks and differing perspectives that inform the educators' thinking and practice. The intent was to value children not only as artists but to respect children as *active citizens of the world*.

We know, children bring a powerful drive to learn and understand what is around them. They learn best when offered interesting materials, ample time, and opportunity to investigate, transform and invent. They have vivid imaginations and theories about the world and this was clearly evident in the *body of work* that was produced and in the documentation panels that sat alongside the artworks.

The environment - physical, temporal and social and all that it presents was used extensively as part of this project.
"At the start of the session I let the children explore a garden for a few minutes. They were very settled then, and ready for some creative activities. I showed the children raw cotton and ***raw silk, which the children took a piece of and*** *tried twisting it into strands. I brought spray bottles and eyedroppers, which are very popular, and they need to share, as well as the paint brushes"*
Art educator.

The children were fascinated by the berries …
Collecting and cutting leaves
Leaves of different shapes

Our C&K Building Waterfalls Teaching and Learning Guideline honours *Creativity, Connectivity and Collaboration*. Exploring: We create, represent and communicate our understanding in many ways. The intent of this shared understanding was clearly evident throughout this project:

- the visual and creative arts are embedded within the living and learning environment
- imagination and creativity are valued and promoted

The child artists were encouraged to discuss, critique, compare and problem solve together in order to gain valuable reflection and new insights. Through this process the artists were able to develop sensitivity and the skills of critical reflection.

Additional Information to support:

Q3: How has the service or educator/s utilised the environment to support education goals and/or service goals and philosophy?

Our *image of the child* – Child, teacher and parent together as part of the teaching and learning process is reflected in the ethos of the participating kindergartens and become visible through the exhibition. All three partners were united in an integrated, equitable and partnership based relationship. In this approach, the educators and parents were stimulated to revisit their *image of the child*. They came to understand that childhood and the child as artist in a richer and more complex way.

Making children's Learning visible:

4. How does the service and/or educator/s communicate curriculum and service delivery to children, families, other professionals and the wider community?

A living curriculum: The exhibition of children's artwork demonstrated the value and respect of their creativity and the significance of valuing and respecting young children as artists and competent and capable learners. It was a very effective way to communicate curriculum to the children, families and the wider community.

What emerged over the 10-week period was a *community of learners.* It would be accurate to say that everyone learnt something:

- The development of the children's skills, knowledge and understanding of a myriad of artistic concepts.
- The families learnt about their children; their learning and early childhood education.
- The teaching teams were provoked to think more deeply about artistic expression; the importance of documentation and the installation of an art exhibition
- The teaching teams learnt from the art educators and the mediums of art that would work with young children.
- The teaching teams were inspired by the documentation that offered more than a narrative but an insightful record of the children understandings.
- The broader community about the amazing capacity of the child and the importance childhood.

Working collaboratively with the child artist and art educators they produced a body of work and engaged in diverse applications of art making practice. The educational teams positioned *children as effective communicators who can express ideas and make meaning using a range of media,* Early Years Learning Framework. *Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflectivity.* This was evidenced throughout the project as the children worked alongside the art educators and their teaching teams.

Upon reflection: There was so much positive feedback from everyone, who visited the exhibition.

…the child artist to see their work (in the city!)

…the parents

…all of the conference participants: guests and speakers.

The children were celebrated as individuals, and the teachers acted as 'guides' and 'facilitators' as children progressed their learning through experience, inquiry and discovery.

Additional documentation to support:
Q.4. How does the service and/or educator/s communicate service delivery to children, families, other professionals and the wider community?

The C&K Building Waterfalls Guideline honours Creativity, Connectivity and Collaboration.
C&K enabled this exhibition to materialise. It demonstrated C&K's strong commitment to children as active citizens within our society and recognised the many ways in which children express themselves (the hundred languages).

A children's art exhibition assembled in a public place.

5. Describe the service and/or educator's curriculum decision-making and reflective practices.

There has been ongoing review and reflection of the project to consider the long term application and ongoing commitment of making children's creativity visible.

To demonstrate education through arts and the importance of reciprocal listening and learning within the early childhood curriculum the teams produced documentation panels that were able to emphasise the power of documentation, that reflected their professional knowledge and the captured the significance of the emerging learning; and the children's voices.

"Documentation can be seen as visible listening: it ensures listening and being listened to by others"
Rinaldi, 2011

Art Educator: "The depth to the documentation process can be defined in one word "listening". Empathetic and active listening skills practiced to support the wisdom in the documentation panels. And sharing again when the documentation sheets are formed they are reflected upon… and the story continues. Not seen as an end product in themselves but a working document…. "
This was evident across all the teams, as the documentation was drafted with the children, reviewed and commented on by parents, children and others… *a shared practice* that revealed the teams' curriculum decision-making and pedagogy.

The educators found the documentation panels were powerful and as articulated by them the panels reflected their professional knowledge and the children's voice in the process of making creativity visible. The documentation panels became reflective and learning tools for all the participants. The educators were and are advocates for how the arts offer relevant and significant forms of learning and ways of knowing for the child. They were able to explore the place of the visual arts within the life of the young child, within their educational setting and within the broader community.

In June 2016, *One Sun, One World – Many dreams* will open at the Out of the Box festival of early childhood at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in Brisbane. [redacted] and three C&K Branch Kindergartens – C&K Paddington; Oakleigh and [redacted] will participate in this project that will involve 1,000 young children from Queensland and Hubei, China. This collaboration involves: 10 primary schools; three C&K Kindergartens and a Chinese contingent.

Being visionary: Review and Reflection has been an important part of the project and consideration of the long term application and ongoing commitment to collaborative processes of making children's creativity visible.

Ultimately these projects, born out of a tradition at C&K Paddington Kindergarten would be seen as an inspiration to secure a dedicated and permanent children's exhibition space. This group of dedicated educators hope to procure a State government grant to then pursue their goal of a dedicated art space in Brisbane beyond this first public exhibition at the Convention Centre. To find a permanent and dedicated art space for <u>all</u> children from birth – 8years.

A question to leave you with from the these inspiring educators…

Why are there no dedicated children's art gallery spaces?

"The way of the artist is through visual literacy and the exhibition was integral to the artist's world as a reflection on their practice and a way of sharing with others their practice. A place where children can take parents to see their body of work, viewed with the same respect and reverence as the adult artist" Venus Ganis.

Additional Information to support
Q5. Describe the service and/or educator's curriculum decision-making and reflective practices.

The Power of Documentation: is making learning visible; knowing about the importance of documentation and as an advocacy tool for early childhood.

Children artists engaging with their exhibition - a celebration. Children are given the opportunity to engage and reflect on their practice….

Documentation makes learning visible and is a vehicle for adult learning.

C&K Paddington, Rosalie and Oakleigh Kindergartens Curriculum Frameworks PDF documents.