

Welcome to the ECC Conference 2026!

We're delighted to have you joining us in Wellington. We encourage you to arrive early to register yourself, get familiar with the venue, and settle in before the conference officially begins. Taking time to orient yourself will help you make the most of the two days ahead. Wellington offers plenty of opportunities to explore, relax, or catch up with colleagues at your own pace, making Thursday the perfect chance to ease into the conference experience.

TIME	SESSION
11:00am	Registrations open at Tākina (until 5pm)
12:00pm	ECC Members' Lunch – With Guest Speaker David Ferguson Connect with other ECC members over lunch
2:30pm	Lunch ends – free time to explore Wellington
4:45pm	Check in for Centre Tours
5:30pm	Centre Tours depart Tākina
7:30pm	Centre Tours return to Tākina



TIME	SESSION				
8:00am	Registrations and Barista Cart Open				
8:30am	Conference opening Mihi Whakatau and Welcome				
9:00am	Tell Me the Good News Jehan Casinader				
9:45am	Positive Leadership in Uncertain Times Sue Kurtovich, Clare Kernot & Rebecca Scott – Facilitated by Jehan Casinader				
10:30am	Morning Tea				
11:00am	Economic Update Sharon Zollner				
12:00pm	Lunch				
1:00pm	Living the Story: What Happens When Storytelling Becomes the Heart of Pedagogy Del Costello	Helping Kaiako Identify and Support Tamariki with Developmental Differences Venus Wong & Alison Leversha	Leading with Purpose: Strategic Decision Making in ECE Nikki Joyce	Understanding Parent Choice: Childcare Customer Opportunities for 2026 Mita Bedi	Progressing in Meaningful Ways for an ERO Visit Bev Trim
2:30pm	Afternoon Tea				
3:00pm	Three Gals One Beehive Brigitte Morten, Esther Robinson & Georgie Stylianou				
4:15pm	Conference Day 1 Ends				
6:30pm	Gala Dinner Doors Open & Pre-Drinks				
7:00	Gala Dinner & Awards Ceremony				
11:00pm	Gala Dinner & Awards Ceremony Ends				

TIME	SESSION				
8:00am	Registrations and Barista Cart Open				
9:15am	Welcome Back				
9:30am	A Story of True Grit - A Journey Across Continents & Cultures Abbas Nazari				
10:30am	Morning Tea				
11:00am	Ako takiwā: Exploring place-based education Krystal Taiapa	The Balance Between Purpose and People in Modern ECE Services Todd Painter	The Power of Choice: Reclaiming Agency in Leadership and Pedagogy Laurayne Tafa	What Hat to Wear? Making Better Choices in Your ECE Centre Herman Visagie	The Ripple Effect of You Preety Sehgal
12:30pm	Lunch				
1:30pm	Beyond Compliance – Rediscovering Your Why in ECE Himal Randeniya				
2:15pm	Te Kete Rangimārie: Building Life Long Social and Emotional Health in Tamariki Elise Walton & Erin Rush	Growing a Centre with Purpose: Nature, Community and a Load of Faith Bridget Gifford	Small Shifts, Big Results: The Financial Power of Everyday Decisions in ECE Mark Salmon	Building High-Converting Websites: Practical Principles That Help Parents Say “Yes” Grant Johnson	Rough and Tumble Play: Facilitating Big Movement, Big Emotions, and Big Learning Max Christie
3:00pm	Afternoon Tea				
3:30pm	The Power of Energy: Choose What Fuels You Lisa O’Neill				
4:30pm	Major Prize Draw and Closing Remarks				
5:00pm	Conference Ends				