

ACA Victoria Executive Board Nomination 2025

Nominee: Shan Kuo

Service Provider: Little Lane Early Learning Hawthorn Pty Ltd

Bio:

As the approved provider and chief operating officer of Avenues & Little Lane group of early learning centres, Shan Kuo began her journey in the early years sector in 2004 with her husband when they acquired their first 75 place centre in Brisbane with 20 employees. Over the past 21 years, they have designed and built 12 of their own centres from ground up and acquired further 11 centres and rebranded them into their group. To date, they currently operate 24 centres with a team of over 1000 staff, providing approx. 3000 long day care spaces across QLD, VIC and NSW.

As a qualified primary and early childhood teacher and proud mother of 5 children, Shan is extremely hands-on and passionate with working with children as well as educators to facilitate the delivery of high-quality early childhood educational programs across all her services. She has personally led all of her services through the assessment & rating process to which 13 of the 24 services are rated as Exceeding NQS and 11 are rated as Meeting NQS.

Shan is also the CEO of Avenues Training College founded in 2008, delivering Commonwealth & Queensland State Government funded apprenticeships for Certificate III and Diploma in Early childhood Education and Care.

Shan is currently a committee member of the QLD stakeholder's committee comprised of authorised officers from the state regulatory authority as well as approved providers and nominated supervisors that convene bi-monthly to review, discuss and inform regulatory changes relevant to the Australian early years sector.

Despite being an introvert and a private person, Shan has been inspired by many current committee members of ACA VIC for the advocacy work they have given to the sector. She hopes that she can also be of service to other providers in the early years sector if given the opportunity to serve and learn.

Describe your experience in the early childhood education and care sector.

My journey in the Australian early years sector began in 2004 where my husband and I acquired our first 75 place centre in Brisbane. In the 21 years that we co-founded Avenues & Little Lane early Learning centres, we have planned and built 12 centres of our own and established new services from ground up; additionally we acquired 12 services and rebranded them into our group. We've set up our own head office to manager the 24 centres and currently leading a team of over 1000 staff, providing over 3000 childcare spaces across QLD, NSW and VIC.

Tell us what makes ACA Victoria’s mission meaningful to you.

Having been in the sector for 21 years, I have seen the advocacy work that ACA has done for our sector throughout this time and feel that can be of service to our sector and be apart of the advocacy work to be of service to other providers

Describe any Board Leadership experience you have had to date.

I am on the board of my company as well as the fundraising committee in my children's school. I am not too experienced, but I am willing to learn from current board members.

Outline any skills, connections, resources, or expertise you can provide to improve the services ACA Victoria offers to its members.

I have experience, planning, building and gaining approvals for LDCs as well as applying for relevant state and federal funding for our sector. I have also liaised with DET authorised officers with regards to approvals and investigations across various state jurisdictions. I have in the past spoken with several ministers regarding issues relevant to our sector. I also operate a nationally registered RTO and have delivered Commonwealth and state funded apprenticeships since 2008. I am able to share my knowledge with other providers and members and or draw on experts to provide training should there be need or interest.

Confirm that you can commit to the time required for meetings and other duties as outlined in the Executive Board Position Description.

I am willing to commit my time to ACA VIC for meetings and duties as outlined. It would be helpful to have the dates for meetings available for the year so that I can block off my calendar for these times.

What are your thoughts on the key challenges and opportunities facing the Early Childhood Education and Care sector?

Some of the challenges in our sector that come to mind include the shortage of quality and qualified educators which has resulted in the need to increase wages to compete with the shortage of supply. The increasing regulatory and compliance requirements in our sector which require more and more staff to attend to administrative tasks; the possible need to fit CCTV cameras in our services as a result of child sexual abuse cases that has taken place in recent times. The stigma around the engagement of male educators in our services. It would be prudent to assess learn from other countries that has already imposed the requirement for CCTV cameras to be used and understand the flow-on effect this has had on providers and regulatory authorities with regards to increased workload to manage issues including cyber safety, review and implementation of regulations and laws on privacy, and possible increase of workload to address grievances and complaints on petty issues where parents would request CCTV footage to be reviewed. Studies also show a significant decline of interest for people to enter into our profession and the increase in tension and work atmosphere due to constantly being under scrutiny at work. Other challenges include operating a viable business with declining occupancy due to new centres being approved in close proximity to existing services. The implementation of the Arrival kindergarten system in Victoria where the Helpdesk is unresponsive and more...

Indicate how you might use your time on the ACA Victoria's Board to address these challenges and opportunities.

I understand that ACA VIC would already have current systems and roles in place. As a new comer into the board, I would be happy to be guided by other board members on where the need is to offer my service to work collaboratively with other board members. Otherwise, I am also a self-driven individual, I will step in to fill in gaps where needed. I have a passion with speaking and advocating for change needed in the sector and would be keen to host discussions and meetings out of my centres where needed to save cost for running meetings.

What are your ideas to enhance ACA Victoria's engagement with its members?

Once suggestion is to host forums and meetings in different areas of Melbourne so that we can encourage more participation. Connect with other groups within the early years sector to encourage more people from the sector to join ACA VIC membership. As I understand ACA QLD has more members and we hope that ACA VIC will have the potential to grow too.