UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

The role of early childhood centre directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus early childhood centres

Submitted by

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Abstract

On-campus early childhood centres (ECCs) can play a significant role in supporting their universities' teaching and research activities. It is important to have an ECC on a university campus to provide a high quality education and care service to staff, students and the wider community, to support and promote early childhood teaching and research and provide a resource for research and teaching collaborations across the university and further afield.

In this study, I specifically investigated the role of the centre director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. As the long-standing director of an on-campus ECC, I have some insights and a particular professional interest in this study. Most of the research literature has focused on North American laboratory schools on university campuses, there are limited recent studies in English and no Australian studies to my knowledge. The limited literature available highlights the essential role of an on-campus director for the success and integration of on-campus ECC's.

The purpose of this study was to investigate two Australian on-campus ECCs with a particular focus on the role of the centre directors in supporting their universities' teaching and research. I explored the ways in which this support occurs and what barriers and/or tensions directors may face to reach the centre's full potential for university teaching and research. A social constructivist theoretical framework within an interpretivist paradigm informed and guided this research study. A case study methodology was employed with two purposefully selected centre directors being the case studies. The data collection tools encompassed document analysis, paper-based and face-to-face interviews, plus a researcher's journal. Data was analysed initially using narrative analysis for each director's story then a comparative analysis for both together.

The findings of this study offered a rich understanding of the role that on-campus ECC directors play in supporting university students, academics and researchers. It revealed that the impact the director had on supporting university teaching and research was greatly influenced by not only their own perceptions about the importance of university teaching and research but also university organisational structures, policies and practices that positioned the centre. The findings highlight the importance of acknowledging, promoting and supporting on-campus ECCs as an integral resource and part of the university organisational structure. As such, the ECC would not only provide quality early childhood education and care for the children of university staff and students but also be an essential
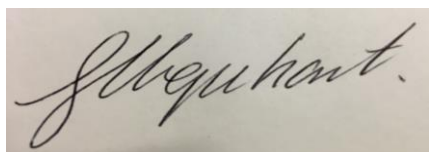
part of the university in facilitating and supporting university teaching and research opportunities. This is possible when university management ensures organisational structures as well as policies and practices integrate the ECC within the academic areas to facilitate the achievement of university strategic goals.

This study has provided a current and uniquely Australian perspective to contribute to the identified gap in the research around the role of on-campus centre directors in supporting university teaching and research. Further Australian research in this area could provide direction and data to guide and inform future policies and practices at Australian on-campus ECCs.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements and procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University.
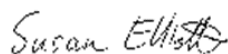
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Signature of Candidate   Date

ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Supervisor/s   Date

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ECC	Early Childhood Centre
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECT	Early Childhood Teacher
EfS	Education for Sustainability
lab	laboratory
NCAC	Australian National Childcare Accreditation Council
NQF	National Quality Framework
PAG	Parent Advisory Group
PECC	Peony Early Childhood Centre
TAFE	Technical and Further Education training courses
US	United States of America
WECC	Wattle Early Childhood Centre

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Overview

The acknowledged role of a centre director role in university based on-campus early childhood centres (ECCs) is to oversee the education and care of young children. However, they may also have additional roles and requirements associated with operating within a university teaching and research context. I propose there is much that on-campus centres can contribute towards university strategic goals, which is the subject of this thesis. Barbour and McBride (2017) detail the goals and missions of on-campus centres as being a professional training site, a nucleus for research, a model for the community and operating in alignment with the university strategic goals. The increasing awareness of the significance of the early years worldwide further supports the value of an ECC on a university campus to both promote and inform university teaching and research (Barbour & McBride, 2017). As the long-standing director of an on-campus ECC, I have some insights and a particular professional interest in this study. The role of on-campus centre directors and their challenges has been investigated by others, but most research is focused on North American laboratory (lab) schools. For example, Elicker and Barbour (2012), File (2012), Myers and Palmer (2015) and Townley and Zeece (1991) with limited recent studies and no Australian studies located.

This study investigated two Australian on-campus ECCs, particularly focusing on the role of the centre directors in supporting their universities' teaching and research objectives. I explored the ways in which this support occurred and what barriers and/or tensions directors faced to reach the ECCs' full potential for university teaching and research. I identified how the directors balanced their centre responsibilities while also supporting teaching and research. In addition, I was interested in the level of support from the university and influential factors involved, including issues such as the position of the centre within the university's organisational structure, the designated role of the centre's director and the personnel, financial and management assistance received from the university.

1.2   Study aim and rationale

The aim in undertaking the study was to offer a rich understanding of the role that on-campus ECC directors play in supporting tertiary students, academics and researchers at a university. This includes examining ECC positioning within a university, the director's role and the varied organisational, management and funding arrangements influencing this role. The study draws on both my current professional role and the research literature available.

As a long standing on-campus centre director, my decision to complete a Masters of Education (Research) was based on my experience in the early childhood profession, interactions with tertiary students, researchers and academics, and my interest in realising the university teaching and research potential of an on-campus ECC. My 20 years of experience working in a university ECC has inspired my desire to focus on the role of ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus ECC's. My journey has encompassed undertaking the expected regulatory and licensing requirements of managing an ECC as well as the additional obligations of the policies and practices within a university context. I have a strong commitment, as the director, to support university teaching and research. I acknowledge this is an essential and vital part of my role to ensure that the ECC is a resource for the university and there is, therefore, a need to maintain my focus on and drive towards reaching the university strategic goals.

Specifically, support for the university has included enabling early childhood teacher education students to undertake observation visits, practicums and on-site components of academic units. Also, enabling visiting nursing students to explore communicable disease prevention, and medical students in paediatric rotations to conduct mock consultations with the children and their teddy bears. This is indicative of the previous students visiting the on-campus ECC, but generally a wide variety of students from many disciplines as well as both internal/external and online students access the centre.   Student and academic staff responses to such interactions in the ECC have been positive and students gained knowledge and support in completing required studies. In addition, researchers have been able to complete essential data collection to achieve research study outcomes. I believe the centre has also been able to continue to enhance the knowledge and professionalism of the centre educators and advocate for quality early childhood education (ECE).

In spite of the numerous apparently positive outcomes resulting from positive engagement, advocating for the ECE profession and continued professional development for the centres educators, I am often challenged in my thinking and perceptions about how, as a director, I can

best support the university to achieve its teaching and research strategic goals. This includes the dilemma of maintaining a balance between two potentially conflicting roles, that of ECC management and the academic aspects of university teaching and research. My experience has brought the particular research problem to the fore, thus driving this study.

A further rationale for this study was the identified gap in the research literature. This included the limited research undertaken in this field. Research that exists is mostly from 1980's and 1990's and undertaken in the laboratory schools of the US, within a different philosophical, political and economic context to that faced in Australia. Some international non-English research exists from Asian and European countries, on the purpose and challenges of on-campus ECCs, but little within an Australian context and none that focuses on the role of the director in specifically facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus ECCs.

1.3   Contextualising the study

The context for this study was on-campus ECCs. Akin to the US laboratory schools, to my knowledge, there are very few on-campus ECCs in Australia explicitly aligned with university teaching and research. Most take on a university service role to just provide childcare for working or studying parents in line with the fundamental care and education role of ECCs. The following quote is offered as guidance for readers potentially unfamiliar with ECE:

> Early childhood education is the planned support of early learning by a qualified early childhood educator through a deliberate focus on the key elements that contribute to a child's learning, development and wellbeing. It is generally delivered in a venue away from the child's home in formal, government regulated and non-compulsory early childhood education and care settings. (Pascoe & Brennan, 2017, p. 14)

However, on-campus ECCs may have additional university teaching and research roles, which is the focus to this study.

On-campus ECCs exist in universities worldwide and under a wide variety of management and structural formats. Whitebook (1984) states that the first ECC's on university campuses were instituted in the 1920s as laboratory (lab) schools. These earliest lab schools were required to satisfy three aims: teaching, research and service (Corder, 1986; Spodeck, Saracho & Peters, 1988). Decades later, Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) defined a lab school as a school supported by a university department with three associated complementary activities: education,

training and research. Further, McBride et al. (2012) and Elicker and Barbour (2012) acknowledge that lab schools adopt important functions on university and college campuses:

> University lab schools have a clear mission to prepare early childhood teachers and to improve teaching. Situated in colleges and universities, they have a clear educational mission. Equipped for observation, with adequate space and other provisions, they often offer ideal facilities for concentrated research. Based in academic departments, they can provide unique opportunities for faculty and experienced early childhood professionals to collaborate; to better understand young children's experiences in early schooling; to investigate teaching and learning processes in depth; and to experiment with new approaches to teaching, learning, and working with families. (Elicker & Barbour, 2012, p. 142)

McBride et al (2012) stated that lab schools have an extensive and in depth "history of supporting teaching, research, and outreach activities in the child development/early childhood education fields" (p. 154). The context and mission of an on-campus ECC is acknowledged here and, with this in mind, the centre director has a significant leading role. The director implements the educational mission and integrates the on-campus ECC within the wider university.

1.4   Theoretical and methodological orientations

A social constructivist theoretical framework within an interpretivist paradigm informed and guided this qualitative research study. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) support social constructivism within an interpretivist paradigm, stating theory is generated or developed utilising qualitative data collection methods. A case study methodology was also employed; according to O'Toole and Beckett (2014), this involves choosing an individual or group of people to investigate a phenomenon. In this study, two purposefully selected centre directors were the case studies.

The data collection tools encompassed document analysis, paper-based and face-to-face interviews, plus a researcher's journal. The data collection methods were conducted in the following order: document analysis, paper-based interviews and face-to-face interviews, as an iterative interpretive research process. In addition, I maintained a researcher journal throughout the study.

While the particular focus was on the role of the centre directors, I also examined the context. This involved investigating the centre context within the university's organisational structure and the financial and management assistance the centre received from the university, as well as the role of the centre director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. Initially, each

director's response was subjected to narrative analysis then to comparative analysis. This was supported by ongoing reflective researcher journal memos.

The selected ECCs were located in Australian university campuses and long day care centres that cared and educated children from babies to preschool age. My own field knowledge in conjunction with that of my supervisors identified the services as professionally significant in their university teaching and research role at their respective universities. The directors of the ECCs were the nominated supervisor and manager of the on-campus ECC. In the following section, I identify the research questions guiding the study.

1.5 Research questions

Researching the role of ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research required investigating each director's socially constructed world when undertaking their role. In this research study, the world was the university context and the on-campus ECC in which the directors were employed. My intent was to seek understandings of their stories and experiences and develop case study narratives. Drawing on the overall aim and rationale, including literature and study context, I formulated the following research questions to guide the study:

1. What is the role of university on-campus ECC directors in facilitating and promoting teaching and research?

    a) How does the ECC director perceive the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research?

2. How is the role of the director positioned and integrated within the ECC and the university?

    a) How do the ECC policies and practices support the strategic goals of university teaching and research?

    b) How is the integration of the ECC within the university supported by the university management, policies and structure?

1.6 Importance and significance of the study

The significance of this study is that it can guide and inform future policy and practices at on-campus ECCs to support university teaching and research. The study provides for a deeper understanding of the director's role in on-campus ECCs and how they provide guidance, knowledge and support to centre and academic staff as well as tertiary teacher education students.

Also, the study highlights the support and development role of the director in relation to university policy and practices centred on teaching and research.

I argue the importance of undertaking this study is to realise the full potential for on-campus ECCs to become an integral part of the university teaching and research strategy across a range of university courses and disciplines. In this study, my intent was to gain a deep understanding of the influential factors and the optimum environments for on- campus ECC's in relation to university teaching and research.   To then have the capacity to inform staff employed as directors as well as university management who direct policy and practice.

1.7   The structure of the thesis

This thesis has six chapters, with the first being this introductory chapter which has summarised the research topic, including the aim and rationale, a contextual overview, theoretical and methodological orientations, the research questions and the importance of the study.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the current literature in relation to on on-campus ECCs for supporting their universities' teaching and research, with a particular focus on the role of centre directors. Chapter 3 explores the theoretical framing, methodology and methods employed in this study. This study is essentially a qualitative case study. The chapter includes information on the participants, ethical considerations, and data analysis methods and concludes with a description of study limitations.

Chapter 4 draws on the data from document analysis and interviews and, through a narrative analysis, I explore the director's roles in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research at the Peony Early Childhood Centre (PECC). Then, in Chapter 5, I explore the director's role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research at the Wattle Early Childhood Centre (WECC).

Chapter 6 is the concluding thesis chapter. I begin with a comparative discussion of the narratives constructed from the lived experiences of the two centre directors, then discuss the benefits and challenges of an on-campus EEC and the creation of optimum environments. I conclude by considering the challenges of data analysis, propose possibilities for future research and complete the chapter with a personal reflection on my research journey and experiences undertaking the study. To ensure anonymity throughout the thesis, the case study directors will be referred to by pseudonym or the third person pronoun she, the Wattle ECC Director will be referred to as Mary and the Peony ECC Director will be referred to as Sarah.

1.8　Summary

This chapter has introduced this research project, which aims to investigate the role of ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus ECCs. In this chapter, I have presented reasons for undertaking this research at a critical point in both tertiary and early childhood education environments. I shared my personal orientation to this research, which stems from my own experience in an on-campus ECC as well as my interest and motivation in supporting university teaching and research. In Chapter 2, I provide the grounding for this study in the relevant literature.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

The following sections identify and elaborate the key themes pertinent to this study and particularly remind the reader of the scarcity of relevant literature. Nolan, MacFarlane and Cartmel (2013) state that it may be necessary to widen the scope of a search to include related fields to uncover the required depth to undertake a comprehensive literature review. It was challenging to identify the depth of information required, therefore the subjects of the literature search were not only broadened, but online information from the websites of on-campus ECCs were added to provide another literature review source. I was also challenged by the historical nature of the literature because much of the previous research in English speaking countries was completed in the 1980's with the data and analysis pertaining to more than 30 years ago. The following literature review is based upon literature written in English from countries where English was the first language, note pertinent literature from non-English speaking countries may exist, but was not readily accessible.

A comprehensive literature and policy review is, according to Schwandt (2001), a way to gather and arrange the results of preceding studies to compile knowledge of what has already been learnt about a particular topic. The knowledge gained and the gaps identified in the literature review below has guided the development of my research questions, theoretical framing, methodologies and methods. Walker and Solvason (2014) state that a literature review also aids in supporting the reliability and validity of the research by expanding the reader's knowledge and providing the reader with the reassurance and confidence that the researcher understands the subject, key themes and potential gaps in knowledge and/or policy.

As already noted, the majority of the literature identified was historical and related to the on-campus lab school models in the US. Nevertheless, some similarities and differences were evident between these lab school models and Australian ECCs. First, Myers and Palmer (2015) and McBride et al. (2012) stated that campus-based centres face a number of barriers to their success: financing, shrinking support bases, appropriate role and perceptions of the centre by other university personnel. These are similar issues, in my experience, to those faced by on-campus Australian ECCs. Second, Elicker and Barbour (2012) pointed out the unique position and potential of lab schools, which exist at the connexion of research, education, teacher preparation and service. Third, McBride et al. (2012) acknowledged that:

The demands of providing full-day child care can detract from the time and resources teachers need to consistently connect research and theory to practice, to serve as models of best practices in early childhood education, to take the time to train and supervise student learners, and to meet with and support the needs of researchers on campus. (p. 155)

Beyond these three similarities, it was also noted significant contextual differences between lab school models and Australian ECCs. Such differences need to be borne in mind when drawing insights for Australian ECC contexts from the US literature.

This literature review, targeted five research papers, one recently published book, and one unpublished position statement as well as the online policies, philosophies and organisational structures of the Australian on-campus ECCs. This literature review is structured around four key emergent themes drawn from the analysis and synthesis of the current and historical literature. The four key themes are: the gaps in the literature in relation to both current and Australian literature; the impact of the organisational structure on university teaching and research; the significance of the director in supporting university teaching and research; and, the roles of an ECC in supporting university teaching and research.

2.2 The gaps in the literature in relation to Australian contexts and currency

The most significant and relevant finding that initially emerged from this review were the substantial research literature gaps in context and currency. These two sub-themes are discussed below.

2.2.1 A gap in relation to current Australian contexts

A large gap to emerge was the non-existence of research published in Australia. Of the ten journal papers examined, all studies were conducted and published in the US. The most recent texts by Barbour and McBride (2017) and the *Arlitt Position Statement* (Elliott, unpublished) were also based on findings from the US. I could not locate, through repeated online searches and with additional library support across a range of key search words, any pertinent Australian-based studies.

The US literature considered addressed the significant role of directors (Bickimer, 1991; Myers & Palmer, 2015), but the specific roles of on-campus ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research were not discussed. Also, there was scant understanding evident

of, what I consider to be, the pivotal alignments between an on-campus centre and the overarching organisational structure. Further, there are inherent challenges in transposing any findings from the US lab school studies, such as that by Monroe and Horm's (2012) to Australian contexts. Lab schools within a North American context differ to the on-campus Australian ECCs in many respects including regulations, curriculum, economic and political environments. The clear intention is for this study to add new and current knowledge to the existing US studies.

The literature review was then broadened beyond published papers and books to include the websites of Australian on-campus ECCs. This provided online public access to centre philosophies and management structures. The websites identified centres that purported to value university teaching and research and collaborate with the academic areas within their university settings. The philosophy of the Peony Early Childhood Centre (PECC) website emphasised the centre's role was supporting the teaching and research functions of the university:

> PECC centre has a national and international reputation for excellence in early childhood education and teaching. It provides a high quality, long-day care program for the community – offering excellent learning, observation and research opportunities for our academic staff and early childhood education students. (The PECC Centre, 2018)

This online information broadened the available literature and was essential to the initial document analysis work.

2.2.2 A gap in relation to currency

As a second sub-theme, the historical age of the relevant research papers emerged with the majority published during the 1980s and 1990s in very different philosophical, political and economic times. I was only able to locate ten journal papers, with six published in the 1990s:

- Barbour and Bersani (1991) The Campus Child Care Centre as a Professional Development School;
- Bickimer (1991) Leadership and the Campus Child Care Setting: Theory into Practice;
- Briley, Reifel and Paver (1997) Child Care on Campus: A Case Study in Evolving Programs and Issues;
- Gilbert (1999) Campus Early Childhood Laboratory Schools: Partners in Teacher Education Programs;
- Keyes (1991) Campus Children's Centres: Two Decades of Ferment; and,

- Townley and Zeece (1991) Managing the Mission: The Primary Challenge to Campus Child Care.

Upon further investigation, a limited number of additional US papers were located; six papers published in 2012 and one in 2015, including:

- Cutler et al (2012) Laboratory Schools as Places of Inquiry: A Collaborative Journey for Two Laboratory Schools;
- Elicker and Barbour (2012) Introduction to the Special Issue on University Laboratory Preschools in the 21st Century;
- File (2012) Identifying and Addressing Challenges to Research in University Laboratory Schools;
- McBride et al. (2012) Child Development Laboratory Schools as Generators of Knowledge in Early Childhood Education: New Models and Approaches;
- Monroe and Horm (2012) Using a Logic Model to Evaluate Undergraduate Instruction in a Laboratory Preschool;
- Myers and Palmer (2015) Impact of Campus Child Centre Director Leadership on the Internal Success and Integration of the Campus Centre; and,
- Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) Lessons Learned: Building a Better Laboratory School.

The most current literature located was the book *The Future of Child Development Lab Schools* (Barbour & McBride, 2017) and an unpublished 2017 position statement on the Arlitt Centre for Education, Research and Sustainability, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US (Elliott, unpublished). Both of these delved into the purpose and function of on-campus EECs supporting university teaching and research, which I have already referred to. The journal paper, "Impact of campus child care director leadership and activities on the internal success and integration of the campus centre" (Myers & Palmer, 2015) explored the significant role that an EEC director plays in a university campus ECC as a nucleus for teaching and research.

2.3 Impact of the organisational structure on teaching and research

A theme identified within the literature review was the impact that the university organisational structure had on the potential of the ECC to meet the university teaching and research goals. The organisational structure also impacted on the director's role and requirements for an on-campus

ECC. McBride et al. (2012) stated the impact of the organisational structure on a director was in the form of the demands for providing a childcare service that can detract from the time and resources needed to consistently connect research and theory to practice. The perceived issue was the need to balance the usual responsibilities of an ECC director with the requirement to support university teaching and research. Support for teaching and research might include serving as a university located model of best practice in early childhood education, taking time to train and supervise student learners, and meeting with and supporting the needs of on-campus researchers (McBride et al., 2012). Such services face a variety of challenges within their organisational economic and academic landscape. It is about balancing these challenges with the requirements of operating an ECC, whilst meeting the additional needs of an on-campus centre as part of a larger organisational structure.

An overview of contemporary Australian university organisational structure is provided to further inform understandings about on-campus ECCs and the significance of university teaching and research. Australia currently has 37 government-funded universities and two private universities with one of the world's highest percentages of higher education qualified population (studylink.com, 2021). Research within Australian universities is of great importance and innovation currently drives Australian economic growth, national productivity and the wellbeing of all Australians. It is also acknowledged that cutting-edge Australian university research also informs public debate, improves health and wellbeing and helps solve the most complex problems, while informing how we educate the next generation of university-trained professionals, researchers and leaders (Universities Australia, 2021). Current relevant statistics include:

- Australian university research created knowledge worth around $160 billion in a single year (2014) or 10 per cent of our GDP;
- Australian research accounts for 9 per cent of the world's research output;
- Government investment in research and development is projected to plunge in 2018-19 to its lowest level as a share of our economy in four decades — lower than 1978;
- More than 90 per cent of Australian university research is rated as world class or higher;
- Around 88 per cent of Australian university research has medium to high positive impact for the wider community;
- Australian university research has strong international links as more than half of scientific articles by Australian academics having an international co-author.
  (universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/research-innovations/)

In regards to contemporary early childhood services in Australia, early childhood education is not compulsory and provided through a variety of services such as preschools, long day care centres and in home family day care. These may be community-based, workplace-based or privately owned for profit services. High quality early childhood education and care promotes early childhood development and learning, while supporting the workforce participation of parents/caregivers. Childcare can be either formal or informal for working families, the formal early childhood education and care sector includes centre-based long day care and preschools (Productivity Commission 2016, Box 1). There is increasing evidence that quality early childhood education and care promotes children's learning and development, plus school readiness capabilities, such that children arrive at school 'ready' and are more likely to do well in their future years (https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/education/early-childhood-education-and-care). To promote high quality programs all centre staff are required to be qualified, ranging from certificate to diploma or degree levels. Currently, there is a national workforce shortage of ECE degree qualified staff (https://www.cela.org.au/2019/06/04/building-sustainable-workforce/), yet mandated staffing ratios require two degree qualified staff per 60 children in a centre (ACECQA, 2020).

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) works with all Australian state governments to provide guidance and resources for the early childhood sector to improve outcomes for children. This guidance is informed by the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) (ACECQA, 2020), thus promoting a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement. All Australian early childhood services, irrespective of their operational placements on a university campus, are required to operate under the *NQF* (ACECQA, 2020) and to be assessed to ensure that all services comply and operate with minimum benchmarks and requirements. The *NQF* provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care and outside-school-hours care services across Australia that includes the *National Law* and *National Regulations*, the *National Quality Standard* assessment and quality rating process and national *Learning Frameworks* (ACECQA, 2020).

Researchers have identified the many typical demands of directing an on-campus centre, which included: staff management; financial management; the challenge of identifying a defined role; perceptions of the centre by other university personnel; resourcing; compliance; administration, policy development; and family and community partnerships (McBride et al., 2012; Myers & Palmer, 2015). In addition, McBride et al. (2012) stated that an on-campus director is required to

meet the extra administrative and policy requirements of a university, such as identifying the challenges, opportunities, collaborations and planning required to successfully contribute to the strategic university direction, which includes university teaching and research. The day-to-day organisational, economic and academic constraints may, however, impact a director's ability to reach the potential of the ECC to help meet the demands of university teaching and research activities. In the following two sub-sections, I consider more specifically the sub-themes of centre philosophy, policies and practices as well as the engagement and effectiveness of the centre.

2.3.1 Centre philosophy, policies and practices

On-campus ECCs regularly review and reflect upon centre philosophy, policies and practices to ensure they are aligned to and consistent with those of the university in which they are situated. McBride et al. (2012) stated that services need to reconsider and restructure the approaches adopted to suit the agendas and visions of their universities due to new developments in theory, research and practice. Furthermore, Myers and Palmer (2015) affirmed that the more an on-campus centre director is actively involved in the interactions and activities of university administrators and policy makers, the greater the likelihood the centre is integrated within the university. This promotes an increased alignment of the centre within the management and academic structures of the university. Such literature provides insights for this study about philosophy, policies and practices across ECCs and universities. This is an interesting space in which the university and centre can prioritise in an organisational sense how they can impact one another with implications for the director's role.

2.3.2 Engagement and effectiveness of the ECC

The alignment of a centre within the university organisational structure also impacts the level of engagement and effectiveness of the centre in supporting university teaching and research. In a global context, for example, historically in Japan, on-campus ECCs and schools are an essential part of the set of cooperating schools pledged to teacher training and professional development courses. Currently, these on-campus ECCs and schools maintain a training role and the Japanese Ministry of Education encourages research collaborations with university faculty academics to increase links between research and teacher education (Nishida, 2020). In the US, McBride et al. (2012) examined the challenges to centre effectiveness across the core functions of teaching and research in the university operations. They acknowledged and discussed three defined challenges: the inherent diversity of lab school settings; a shrinking economic support base and identifying

mechanisms necessary to balance service and organisational demands; and, academic activities within the centre's programs. Addressing these challenges for an ECC within a university is critical to effectiveness and engagement.

Another point with implications for centre effectiveness and engagement was reported by Elliott (unpublished) in a position statement about the Arlitt Centre, University of Cincinnati, US. The Arlitt Centre is one of the original US lab schools and integral to the university's School of Education as an ECC. The reality that the centre was physically situated within the School of Education building meant that the teaching and academic staff were regularly in the same space and, thus, collaborative projects and teaching were more likely. This physical co-location, supported by the organisational and management structures of the Arlitt Centre, is replicated within the Australian context, but only in very few settings, to my knowledge.

A number of researchers have also explored the challenges faced by on-campus ECC's, including; financing, modelling quality curriculum, linking to the overall academic mission and disconnections between the functions and models of university lab schools (File, 2012; Myers & Palmer, 2015). These may impact engagement and effectiveness.

2.4 Significance of the director in supporting university teaching and research

Centre directors influence the perceptions, position and integration of an ECC on a university campus. Myers and Palmer (2015) found that, in the US on-campus ECC, childcare director leadership and activities impacted on the internal success and integration of the campus centre. They particularly highlighted the impact of directors on the broader internal university community and explored the degree to which the directors were involved in leadership activities, ultimately assimilating their centre into the university. They examined the campus director roles and opinions that had previously not been explored. The major study finding was that campus centre director's activities do influence the internal success of a centre. The authors clearly articulated and confirmed, from the collated cross-sectional survey data, that the "intentional activities of campus child care director can significantly affect how successful the centre will be within the university setting" (Myers & Palmer, 2015, p. 111). The following two sub-sections, include the consideration more specifically of the sub-themes promoting collaboration and directors' responsibilities.

2.4.1 Promoting collaboration

In addition to their own university role, directors share a role in promoting collaboration between the ECC and the university community in which it is situated as well as the broader early childhood profession and community. File (2012) discussed a number of appealing potentials that may be possible when collaboration exists between directors and early childhood educators with researchers and teaching students. File (2012) also described "the unique position and potentials of lab schools, residing as they do at the nexus of research, education, teacher preparation, and higher education's engagement with families and the wider world" (p. 140). This idea was also explored in research by Cutler et al. (2012) when they examined the role director's played in collaboration and communication between key stakeholders. They identified that the roles of individuals, primarily the director, was of great importance in building professional relationships between lab schools. Their findings demonstrated the positive outcomes that can be achieved through collaboration between lab schools with a similar university teaching and research focus.

Elicker and Barbour (2012) also acknowledged that a productive direction for research in lab schools involves a collaborative approach between a number of lab schools, "such that data can be pooled for more statistical power, more diverse samples, and the study of systematic variations in practice" (p. 140). Thus, the question of whether collaboration and communication with another similar service and key stakeholders could enhance a centre's professional relationships is an important one. The ability of a director to collaborate and communicate between other on-campus ECCs and with their own university departments, both academic and professional, are key components for the degree of successful centre integration within the university.

Cutler et al. (2012) also brought together two lab schools with a similar philosophy and shared perspectives on valuing research and teaching opportunities for preservice teachers. They examined how this collaboration between centres provided the director with a key avenue for successfully promoting and supporting university teaching and research within the university. Cutler et al. (2012) further examined how this collaboration built a community of practice becoming a collective catalyst for change and providing opportunities for both the lab school and the university community. They state that it is far easier to obtain these ideals when lab schools do not go it alone, but join to pursue shared goals. This aspect links with my study and current centre director role, acknowledging that collaboration with another similar service facilitated by the director could enhance a centre's facilitation of university teaching and research strategic goals.

2.4.2 Director responsibilities

Not only do Australian on-campus ECC directors have the same requirements as any other ECC, *The Education and Care Services National Regulations* (hereafter the National Regulations, the National Law and National Quality Framework) (ACECQA, 2020), but their location brings with it the additional university expectations and responsibilities to facilitate and promote university teaching and research. McBride et al. (2012) stated that the demands of providing early childhood education and care can detract from the time and resources directors and early childhood educators require to model best practice, train students and support researchers.

Given the importance of maintaining regulatory approval through assessment and rating processes, I argue we need to understand more about how on-campus ECC directors juggle these responsibilities alongside the time required to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure effective policies and practices are established and maintained to facilitate and promote university teaching and research.

2.5 The roles of an ECC in supporting teaching and research

In the research literature there are two key roles stated for on-campus ECCs: teacher preparation and as a research supportive environment and these as sub-themes are discussed below.

2.5.1 The role of an ECC to support and facilitate teacher preparation

The director of an on-campus ECC plays an essential role in supporting and facilitating university teaching opportunities within the centre. Monroe and Horm (2012) focused on the role of university-based lab preschools in relation to teacher preparation programs. The results were informative for trainee preschool teachers in clarifying and improving their practices; and, also strengthened lab school roles in teacher preparation. The researchers acknowledged within the study that the research was only a beginning step into the significance of how a lab school can serve as an engine to create new approaches to support the improvement and evaluation of early childhood teacher preparation. This is not a new concept, in a research paper published nearly 30 years ago, the authors Barbour and Bersani (1991) cited the benefits of on-campus ECC's in supporting and improving the quality of teacher preparation. Barbour and Bersani (1991) claimed that on-campus ECC's provided a multitude of opportunities. These included reciprocity or mutual exchange and benefits linking research and practice; truly collaborative relationships between

academic and ECC directors and teachers; experimentation including trying innovative forms of practice to inform future policy; and, embedded systematic inquiry. In this study, I am specifically interested in the role of Australian on-campus ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching.

2.5.2 The role of an ECC as a research supportive environment

This second sub-theme identifies how an ECC is perceived by the university community as an environment to support academic research. Barbour and McBride (2017) reported collaborations between researchers and teachers in a University Laboratory School, describing how researchers could use the context of the lab school to understand and investigate how theoretical principles or new theories could be enacted in practice.

However, it can be questioned if an ECC is perceived as a vital and central resource to support the university to reach strategic research goals, a further question is whether the challenges of such support are recognised. File (2012) examined the practices and policies around addressing the challenges, such as the reluctance of management, teachers and families to participate in research. For example, in relation to the reluctance of teachers to support research, File (2012) suggested offering researchers could offer compensation in return for staff interest and time, or offer professional learning benefits, such as tickets to lectures or workshops.

This area of discord, that is, the reluctance of management, teachers and families to participate in research, offers potential for my study. Also, the question arises for me as to why some on-campus directors and staff do not perceive research as a fundamental and central aspect of their roles. This study is intended to clarify the role of an ECC director in facilitating and maintaining a positive research environment in Australian on-campus ECC contexts.

2.6 Positioning this study

This final section positions this study in relation to existing research. This literature review indicates that the study will not duplicate the work of other researchers or their studies. I am, therefore, confident of the originality and need for this research study. The literature is limited, particularly regarding the director's position statement and personal philosophy, the alignment of this position statement to the university strategic plan, the effectiveness of the director's role in supporting the strategic plan and goals through university teaching and research, and the experience and qualifications of the director and their role within university academic areas.

The potential of this study is to provide a comprehensive examination of the roles of university on-campus ECC directors in facilitating and promoting teaching and research. This study details how an ECC on a university campus is positioned within the university's strategic plan, philosophy, policies and resource management. It would benefit the university to formally acknowledge and support ECCs as a core part of a university's teaching and research strategy.

2.7   Conclusion

In summary, this literature review has identified five main themes: a paucity of current studies on ECCs, particularly in the Australian context; the impact of the organisational structure on the capacity of ECCs to support the teaching and research strategies of universities; no studies on the significance of the director in supporting universities' teaching and research strategies; lack of clarity on the role of an ECC in supporting the teaching and research strategy of the university; and, the roles of an ECC in supporting teaching and research.

The research questions stated in Chapter 1 reflect the gaps and themes identified within the literature review. This literature review has highlighted the lack of Australian studies; and, opens the possibilities investigating the role of on-campus ECC directors in promoting and facilitating university teaching and research. Having explored the existing literature pertinent to the research, I will now explore and justify the chosen qualitative theoretical framework, methodology and research methods employed for this study.

Chapter 3   Research paradigm, theoretical framework and methodology

3.1   Introduction

> The theoretical framework affects almost all aspects of a qualitative research study since it provides a lens for seeing and making sense of what to do in the design and conduct of the study. (Anfara & Mertz, 2015, p. viii)

Anfara and Mertz (2015) expand on the statement reproduced in the quote by describing how a theoretical framework invites the researcher to consider the world with an array of thoughts (theory, ontology) that defines a group of questions (epistemology), which the researcher can then investigate in particular ways (research design, methodology and methods). Bringing together the Chapter 1 summary of my professional positioning with the literature review themes discussed in Chapter 2, I now proceed to outline the most appropriate paradigm, theoretical framework and methodology to undertake this study, including reference to ontology and epistemology. The overarching qualitative interpretivist paradigm employed to undertake this study aligns with a social constructivist theoretical framework. Further, I implemented a case study methodology and utilised several qualitative research methods to create the data, including document analysis, paper-based interviews, face-to-face interviews and a researcher journal.

In this chapter, I also elaborate on the case study participants, narrative data analysis employed to construct each case study narrative and the comparative analysis approach. I conclude by noting study ethics and limitations.

3.2   A research paradigm

A researcher needs to make choices about the research paradigm they will adopt, informed by understandings of their ontological position and view of reality and an epistemology about the nature of the knowledge and the practices that created it (Nolan et al., 2013). Punch (2000) acknowledged that qualitative and quantitative research should be recognised as umbrella terms in which a variety of "paradigms, approaches to data, and methods for the analysis of data" are categorised (p. 139). I adopted a qualitative approach. Yin (2011, pp. 7-8) listed five features of qualitative research:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions;

2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people in a study;

3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;

4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to *explain* human social behaviours; and,

5. Striving to use *multiple sources of evidence* rather than relying on a single source alone.

I determined a qualitative approach as the most appropriate for this highly contextualised and socially-constructed study focus based on the above features as aligned with the research questions. In the following paragraphs, I briefly consider ontology and epistemology then outline the qualitative interpretivist research paradigm and social constructivist theoretical framework that guided this study.

According to Yin (2011), ontology refers to one's philosophical beliefs in regards to what constitutes social reality. In this study, my ontological stance aligns with the notion of individual human created realities and my researcher role was, therefore, interpretivist. Such a paradigm was the most appropriate approach because I intended to explore the socially-constructed realities of the individual centre directors (Nolan, 2001; O'Toole & Beckett, 2013); that is, the study participants told of their experiences within their socially-constructed ECC environments.

Epistemology, as stated by Grix (2001, p. 134), is the "theory of knowledge"; the assumption about what is known and the most appropriate way of accessing and collecting knowledge within the research process. In this study, I accepted knowledge is individually socially-constructed and contingent upon human interactions and practices and, therefore, identify with social constructivism as relevant and aligned with the overarching qualitative interpretivist paradigm. Social constructivism within an interpretivist paradigm can offer meanings about the nature of human experience (Cohen & Manion, 1994), "reality is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005, p. 12).

An interpretivist research paradigm invites understandings about "the world of human experience" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36). Defined by Punch (2016), interpretivism is the study of people and their behaviours in relation to the meaning they bring to situations and how they make sense of their world. Further, Creswell (2003) stated that within the interpretivist paradigm, patterns of meanings are developed and built upon as the research is undertaken.

This study focused on the meanings of the directors, their understandings and interpretations of the function and success of the university teaching and research components for an ECC on a university campus. The research was located in educational contexts and concerned with

understanding how others perceive the world around them, involving personal experiences and interactions. The reality is individually socially-constructed and, therefore, an interpretivist paradigm offers guidance because I rely upon the "participants" views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003, p. 8).

3.3   Theoretical framework

Having established an interpretivist paradigm, I considered a social constructivist theoretical framework as most appropriate for this study. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) state that a social constructivist approach to research is to gain insights into human understandings and involvement in their worlds. This study aligns with a social constructivist theoretical framework within an interpretivist paradigm. In this section, I first consider the role of a theoretical framework, then further elaborate a social constructivist theoretical framework with links to the study research questions.

Crotty (1998) defines the theoretical perspective as one of the basic elements of a research process: "the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (p. 3). The theoretical map that conceptualises the study, the analysis and the data interpretations to answer the research question provide structure that supports the research study. By providing a theoretical framework, Nolan (2013) explained, a researcher has provided structure and reliability for the research process rather than simply an exuberant amount of data with no cohesion. With a theoretical framework, the research concepts and ideas are pulled together in a coherent way, providing research credibility; therefore, the researcher and any new evidence and knowledge is required to inform future research practices and policies. Walter (2013) claims that undertaking research without a clearly established theoretical framework fundamentally constrains the value of the research and undermines its validity and rigour.

Social constructivism refers to the belief that people construct their own reality founded on their insights of experiences in society (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). We do not create our own reality, but live together trying to understand the world in which we live, constructing meanings and understandings of this world. Specifically, in early childhood education, theorists such as Bruner (1987, 1992), Piaget (1999), and Vygotsky (1978) acknowledged the constructivist nature of the world, saying that the world in which we live provides people with the capability to construct their own meanings.

O'Toole and Beckett (2013) stated "that each human constructs his or her own reality, based on their perceptions of their experiences within society. These constructions can change as our experiences change, and so does the social context we perceive" (p. 17). Further, Jaccard and Jacoby (2010) noted that construction is related to a distinct time and social context, and that what is perceived as reality alters as the social context differs.

In this study, I employed a social constructivist framework to examine the social phenomena of the ECC director's perceptions about facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. This framework aligns with the elements introduced in the literature review, as discussed in Chapter 2, of the director's role working within the dynamic and complex social constructs of the centre and University. Within this framework as the researcher, I explored the complexity of views and opinions of two ECC directors within their on-campus settings. As Creswell (2003) pointed out, within social constructivist studies, the questions are broad and semi-structured to invite the participants to share their constructed meanings of the situation composed alongside social and historical influences. As the researcher, I also acknowledged and reflected on how my own personal, social and historical experiences affected my interpretations. Therefore, my researcher intent was to make sense of the participant meanings about their social worlds, including their director roles.

Establishment of a theoretical framework, according to Walter (2013), is essential for conceptualising, analysing and interpreting the data to respond to research questions. This study was guided by two main research questions and three sub-questions, as previously noted. As Yin (2009) pointed out, defining the research questions is the most crucial step within a research study. The research questions need to have both substance and form, with the form of the question indicating the appropriate research method for the research. I now build upon these theoretical foundations and take a conceptual view of the research study.

3.4   Conceptual framework

According to Grix (2001, p.133), a conceptual framework "is an analytical tool providing a broad language and form of reference in which reality can be examined". Conceptual frameworks go even further than static models and ideal types by offering interpretations of relationships between events and variables. Figure 3-1 provides a conceptual framework for this study, drawn from the literature review in Chapter 2, and outlines the ideas and concepts discussed and researched,

providing a reference point for the research findings (refer to Chapters 4 & 5) and the comparative analysis (refer to Chapter 6).
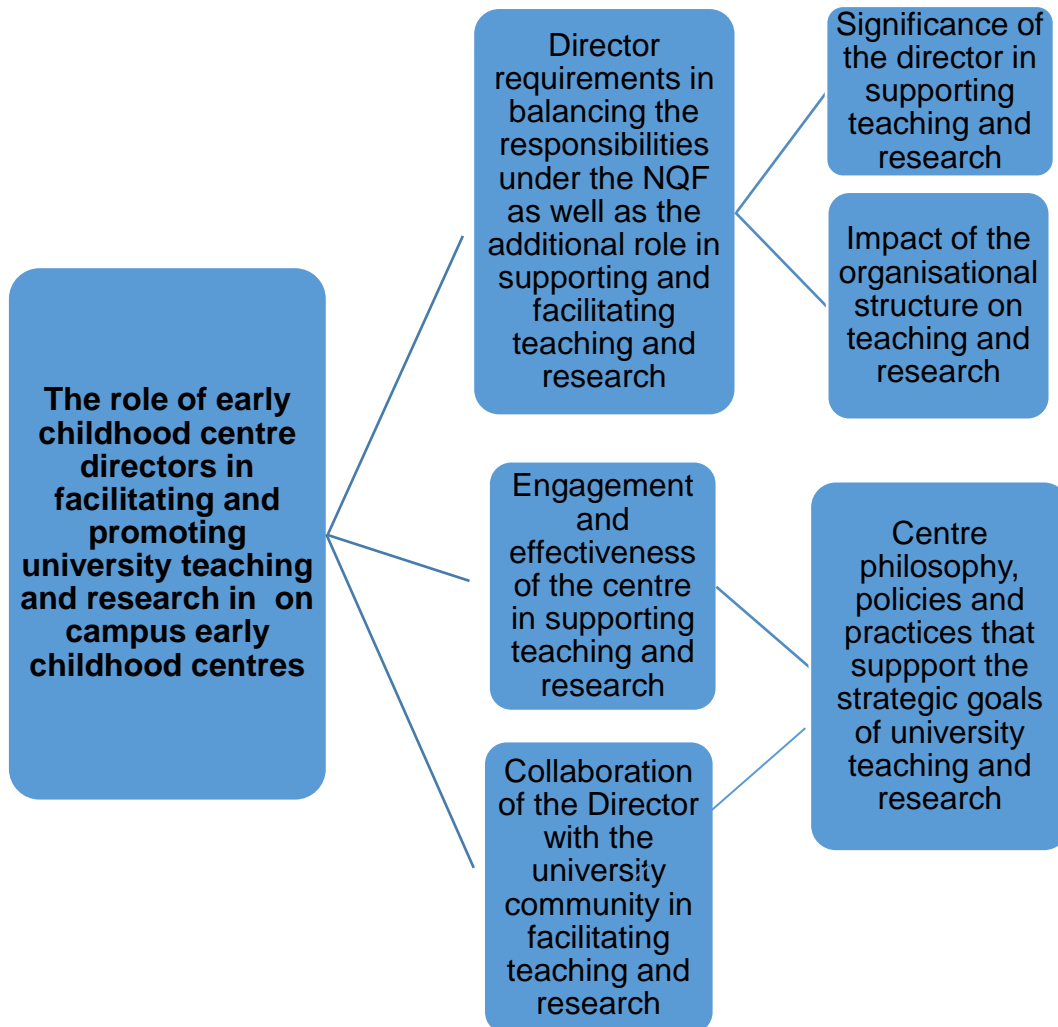
Figure 3-1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework provides the context and structure to compare and contrast the key factors and themes of the case studies based on the two on-campus early childhood directors and their roles in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in their respective ECCs.

3.5 Methodology

Crotty (1998) refers to the methodology as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (p. 3). This research was underpinned by a case study methodology, which, according to Nolan (2013), is utilised to investigate individuals or a small group of participants to develop outcomes only about the identified participant or group in their particular situation.

In this section, I will identify the reasons why case study was the most appropriate methodology and consider the type of case study relevant as being multiple and in-depth.

3.5.1 Case study methodology

A case study methodology was appropriate for this research as I specifically intended to develop understandings of the phenomenon of the centre director's role in supporting and promoting university teaching and research opportunities. This methodology choice aligns with O'Toole and Beckett's (2014) notion that a case study is valuable when the researcher is interested in and intensely involved in the structures, processes and outcomes of a project. Cohen et al. (2018) point out that a case study's strength is in the observation of effects in real contexts, acknowledging that context is a compelling determinant of both causes and effects. As I noted in Chapter 2, qualitative case study methodologies have been previously used in this field of study. For example, Myers and Palmer (2015) employed in-depth case study with open-ended questions to increase understanding as to how ECC directors envisioned the importance of their centre to the university and why. I now consider the relevant type of case study.

3.5.2 Multiple and in-depth case study

O'Toole and Beckett (2014) identify three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and multiple. Stake (1995) noted that it is important to distinguish the type of case study, because the methods utilised will be different depending on the type and the purpose for undertaking the study.

The specific type of case study guiding this research was multiple case study. Quartaroli, Lapan and Riemer (2011) explained that a multiple case study is conducted at multiple sites of similar types of cases sharing common characteristics. The two ECCs chosen were situated on university campuses and both significantly connected to the teaching and research component of their universities. Therefore, I believed these two centres and their directors were suitable cases for this study.

In addition to a multiple case study, the case studies conducted here were in-depth. Such case studies provide opportunities "to delve into things in more detail and discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research" (Denscombe, 1998, p. 31). Undertaking an in-depth case study facilitated a focus on two ECC directors and promoted in-depth detailed narratives of their experiences and perceptions about their role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research at their university campus. An in-depth case study

provided the opportunity to present the data with thick description, the process of paying attention to the fine details, "the collection and study of multiple forms of evidence, in sufficient detail to achieve understanding" (Gillham, 2000, p. 19). Additionally, Yin (2011) noted that thick description transfers the interpretation from researcher-centred to case study-centred perspectives; and thus, more effectively portrays the people, events, and actions within their locally meaningful settings.

In Chapter 2, I outlined how little is known about the phenomenon under investigation and the limited number of possible study sites was a further consideration, so two in-depth individual case studies were considered as the most appropriate choice. The subject of each in-depth case study were directors employed in each university on-campus ECC. Two ECCs were identified and I anticipated these would provide the most useful contexts to undertake the director case studies; additional services would have provided an overwhelming amount of data for this research.

Aligned with the points discussed above, my research questions and the literature available, a multiple and in-depth case study methodology appeared the most appropriate choice. I now consider the case study participants.

3.6   Case study participants

In this section, I discuss features of the study participants, identifying the inclusion criteria employed to purposefully select the two participating centre directors and a justification as to why the two case study participants were chosen.

According to Simons (2009), purposive sampling is undertaken when the aim of the research is to understand and expand insight into the case. It occurs when the researcher selects people to interview who have a crucial role in the case from which you are expected to learn the maximum about the issue in question. In this study, the purposive sampling criteria included directors with extensive early childhood experience, a degree in early childhood education and who are currently employed as a director of an on-campus Australian university ECC. Additional, contextual criteria were the ECC was professionally known to support and promote tertiary teaching and research opportunities, and the centre was not-for-profit and managed within a university structure. An initial online investigation was completed of websites and historical data within early childhood education profession across journals, plus general information gathered from professionals in the field to identify centres and their respective directors to approach to participate in this research study.

The selected directors at three specific centres were chosen as the ECCs were generally known professionally for their support of teaching and research within their university, as well as the directors being known for having a visible role within their university. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) described, purposeful sampling is pursuing participants who can provide rich perspectives on the research topic and yet have enough similar experiences to connect the broad data for analysis. The aim was to promote the most relevant and pertinent data being collected to inform and guide this research. The directors were invited to participate in the study via email, and the aim was to locate two case study directors from the group of three (refer to Appendix B). One director declined the invitation to participate in the study.

3.7   Data collection methods

According to Schwandt (2001, p. 159) the term "method" used in a qualitative study signifies a procedure, tool or technique used by the inquirer to produce and analyse data. Data collection methods in this study included an initial document analysis, an introductory paper-based interview, a second face-to-face semi-structured interview and a researcher journal. In particular, the paper-based interview was to clarify the earlier document analysis findings and guide the later and second in-depth face-to-face interview. The data collection occurred in this order, thus allowing one set of gathered data to inform, guide and build upon the next and reflected an interpretivist paradigm.

3.7.1 Documents

The initial stage of the research study was document analysis, referring to the "various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 60). The document analysis included contextual information from both the centre and university records (centre and university policies, documents and webpages), plus publications, texts and literature reviews. The literature review analysis included reviewing 'the sources of knowledge that already exist about the research topic – usually written scholarship in the form of books and journal articles' (O'Toole & Beckett, 2014, p. 28). Also, publicly available contextual information was gathered and analysed from web content, centre policies, philosophy and pedagogy statements, service management descriptions, the directors' position descriptions including university organisational structure, policies and strategic goals. Appendix G provides the various sources for the documents.

These documents supported my responses to the research questions regarding how many on-campus ECCs there are in Australia, how many were integrated into university teaching and research, and what this looked like in an organisational sense. The document analysis also complemented and informed the next stage of data collection, the introductory paper-based interview, as advised by Gilham (2001), who argued that all the evidence should be woven into a narrative account. The data gathered from the document analysis informed the questions posed in the introductory paper-based interview as well as woven together to construct the director narratives.

3.7.2 Introductory paper-based Interview

A paper-based interview was chosen within this case study research to 'contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon being studied' (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006, p. 271). The intent was to gather an initial thick phenomenon description. In contrast, a questionnaire, as a specific set of questions do not allow the researcher to 'check the veracity or the reliability of the informants. With a questionnaire you can't interrogate or have a discussion' (O'Toole & Beckett, 2014, p. 136). The introductory paper-based interview included a defined number of focused questions. The purpose was to gauge the perceived success of the director and service in supporting teaching and research within their universities; for example, the number of pre-service teacher practicums and number of research project opportunities they participated in. The introductory paper-based interviews were emailed to the two participant ECC directors and responses collated via return email (refer to Appendix E). The data gathered from the document analysis and paper-based interviews then complemented each other and were woven together to inform the final semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews (refer to Appendix F). In summary the initial introductory paper-based interview facilitated building upon the document analysis and then informing, the semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews to develop understandings of the directors' narratives.

3.7.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were undertaken in-depth and face-to-face. The interview questions are provided in Appendix F. Liamputtong (2012) defines an in-depth interview as a way to elicit rich data from the perspective of a particular research participant and on the proposed topic of investigation. These interviews incorporated semi-structured questions to promote rich and complex responses. According to Gillham (2000) semi-structured interviews are the most

crucial form of interviewing and can be the richest single source of data, which eventuated in this study. The interviews were conducted onsite at the ECC at a mutually convenient time for both the director participant and the researcher. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. As the researcher, my interests were to hear the participants' perceptions and attitudes about their role in supporting teaching and research at a university campus.

On later researcher reflection, I noticed how the semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews evolved from a directed question and answer scenario to a narrative or storytelling undertaking. During the initial stages of the first interview, I asked a question and the participant responded, but an organic change occurred during the interview and the format evolved into the participant expanding on responses and telling their story. During the interview, the participants were only prompted by the questions, but then presented their responses as discursive narratives.

I acknowledged that the first interview experience directed me towards approaching the second interview slightly differently. With greater understanding of the interview process, I recognised that the participant required time to answer questions and tell their story and I should only use the questions as prompts rather than attempting to explicitly direct the participant's storytelling. The semi-structured interviews developed into a more unstructured, interactive interview and I sensed the development of a trusting and open rapport with the participants. I initially relied on documents, the paper-based interview and the semi-structured face-to-face interviews, but the process also increasingly directed me towards a more overall interactive data collection approach as some follow up emails and phone conversations were needed for clarification of their responses.

3.7.4 Reflective journal

An additional data collection tool was my researcher reflective journal. This was not only to be another data source but also aligned with the context that I was researching; I felt in some way I belonged to the participant group. The journal was to assist in distinguishing between the data revealed in the research by the directors and my professional perceptions and responses. O'Toole and Beckett (2013) point out that in reflective practitioner research the researcher's testimony will be the focus of data collection, with the reflective journal consisting of raw data, both to be drawn from and to inform the data analysis. As stated in the Chapters 1 and 6, I have extensive experience directing an on-campus centre in an Australian context and I acknowledge my experience as a motivation for this study and a data source within this research.

3.8　Data Analysis

The data analysis was principally guided by a narrative analysis approach. Van Dijk (1993) pointed out that a narrative analysis is used to connect microevents to broader discourses and contexts with the intent of asserting the construction of social experiences through narratives. The data collected from both paper-based and face to face interviews was considered primary, while the secondary data included the document analysis and my ongoing researcher journal.

Because the data was collected in an iterative manner, analysis began from my initial work with the collated documents. The narrative data analysis aligned with the research questions and was recorded in a descriptive manner employing thematic and relational terms to create two case study narratives. The steps and decision-making undertaken during data analysis and data management were recorded, dated and categorised. As I proceeded with data analysis, I constantly sought to interpret meanings emerging from the data, also ensuring that the data was integrated and aligned with my research questions.

I recognised three phases within the data analysis. In the first phase, the document data analysis initially employed ongoing pre-analysis of reflective memos, "gaining new or reshaped perspectives" with these "being either confirmed or contested by the action" (O'Toole & Beckett, 2014). This preliminary analysis of data documents led to the construction of emerging themes and patterns.

In the second phase, a narrative analysis was employed to analyse the interview data, considering each story as a whole and not attempting to code the data (Nolan et al., 2013). Nolan et al. (2013) noted that "this type of analysis takes into consideration the content, form and context of the emerging story" (p. 106), analysing and interpreting the data for meanings, developing hypotheses and ensuring different interpretations have been considered. My narrative analysis focus was the findings encompassing the data from the two directors (refer to Chapters 4 & 5), encapsulating and deciphering the data while maintaining the participants' voices and views as Macintyre (1982) advised:

> If the narrative of our individual lives is to continue intelligibly – and either type of narrative can fall into unintelligibility – it is always the case both that there are constraints on how the story can continue and that within those constraints there are indefinitely many ways in which it can continue. (pp. 200-201)

Throughout this analysis using the interview data, I recognised a "reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualized data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 427). Ensuring these were analysed within a social constructivist theoretical framework guided by an interpretivist paradigm was paramount. The strength of the narrative analysis was that the data from the document analysis was interwoven with the data from the interviews and the reflective memos from my journal to produce an insight into a complex real-world story for each director.

The third phase of the data analysis involved a comparative approach (Quartaroli et al., 2011) where I drew on the two director's narratives to undertake a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences, as shared in Chapter 6. A case-orientated comparative approach was adopted for the purpose of comparing the two case studies, useful when comparing the same types of case with common characteristics (Quartaroli et al., 2011). The ultimate aim of this analysis was to utilise the narratives of the directors as social products influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts (Nolan, 2013) to elucidate similarities and differences.

3.9   Ethical considerations

According to Simons (2009), the ultimate ethical principle in research is to "do no harm" (p. 97). With this statement in mind, I reflected upon this meaning in regard to the individuals, their contexts and the reporting to ensure that respect and anonymity was maintained at all times. Establishing and maintaining trust was an integral initial component with regard to ethical considerations. As stated by Simons (2009), the initial "task is to build relationships and establish conditions of trust with the people you are studying" (p. 101). For all interview questions, I aimed to be respectful, sensitive and portray participant's narratives genuinely and accurately, with no data documented when the participant explicitly asked for it to be kept in confidence.

Nolan et al. (2013) stated that the ethical responsibilities occur throughout the research process, right up to the writing-up stage and relate to "providing a true representation of participants' views or actions, as well as protecting their confidentiality and perhaps anonymising their details" (p. 142). Alternative names or pseudonyms for the participant directors and universities were adopted in this study to promote confidentiality and anonymisation.

This study was also approved by UNE Ethics Authority Number HE18-258 as per required UNE ethics protocols (refer to Appendix A). I followed the required protocols, ensuring participant

information sheets were shared to inform the potential participants about the study and consent forms were signed and returned via email (refer to Appendices C and D).

3.10   Research rigour

By utilising qualitative data, I was able to develop in-depth understandings in response to my research questions and the socially-constructed phenomenon under investigation. The data collection methods were multiple and varied with each data collection method analysed in turn and employed to inform the next method. This promoted research rigour as each method was an opportunity to test previous data analysis with targeted questions. The on-site face-to-face interviews allowed for direct and authentic interactions with participants and reference to the centre context. By utilising multiple methods of data collection over time the robustness of the research was promoted. Liamputtong (2012) supported this notion by claiming that triangulation is the most compelling means for strengthening credibility in qualitative research. O'Toole and Beckett (2013) stated that triangulated data has been corroborated with a minimum of two other independent angles and, therefore, is three times more likely to be correct as uncorroborated data. Through the combination of multiple sources of data collection, I argue that the research study offered richness, intricacy and rigour.

3.11   Limitations of the study

O'Toole and Beckett (2014) state the limitation of a case study is the inability to generalise the data, but then acknowledge this can be a valuable asset in educational studies because case study research can support the understanding of a little-known phenomenon.

A possible limitation in this study is that data was only collected from two case study ECC directors, additional case studies could have been useful, but time factors precluded this. Also, I considered the lack of current and Australian literature in the topic area, which limited the construction of deeper understandings. Another limitation could be to what extent the outcomes can or should be generalised to other ECCs on university campuses, each story was unique and highly contextualised. Whilst there were only the two participants, the richness of the data captured within the case studies provided valuable and significant accounts of their experiences and stories. As stated by O'Toole and Beckett (2014) generalisability is feasible, these stories may resonate in other contexts with other people, thus having currency beyond this specific study.

As the researcher undertaking a qualitative research study, I aimed to maintain my engaged and objective stance during data collection and analysis and be mindful of my past experience within an ECC on a university campus. Case studies can be prone to issues with researcher bias and subjectivity, although attempts are made to address reflexivity (Cohen et al., 2013). Reflexivity has been addressed within the research by acknowledging my background and experience, my role within and in relation to the research and ensuring that all data is accurate and rich and thick in detail and substance. Reflexivity, according to Cohen et al (2018), is "an awareness of, and introspection about, the reciprocal influence of settings, data and researcher" (p. 298) with researchers an inescapable "part of the social world they are researching" (p. 302).

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the study's theoretical framing and methodology. This study is presented as a qualitative case study informed by an interpretivist paradigm and social constructivist theoretical framework. The methods of data collection and analysis have been described in detail allowing the study to be replicated by others.

The following two chapters communicate the research findings for each case study, and then I consider, in the final Chapter 6, comparisons and future implications for on-campus ECC directors facilitating and promoting university teaching and research.

Chapter 4   Peony Early Childhood Centre

4.1   Introduction

The Peony Early Childhood Centre (PECC) was a long day care centre situated on an Australian university campus located in a metropolitan area. The PECC had an established history as an early childhood education demonstration program, which was clearly evident in the data collected during this study. Throughout the data collection period, including the site visit to undertake the face-to-face interview, it appeared that the director, Sarah, had a strong commitment to providing a high-quality early childhood program for the children, families, university and local community. The importance that she placed on facilitating, promoting and implementing university teaching and research opportunities was evident. Overall, I perceived an accomplished, purposeful and focused centre with a unique learning environment specifically underpinned by principles of sustainability, nature play and child-led play (Reflective Journal, July 24, 2019).

In this chapter, I first share an overview, and then respond to my research questions around the role of the director. I share the data findings to initially explore Sarah's role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research and consider the factors she perceived as influential in this role. I then examine how the director's role at the PECC was positioned and integrated within the centre and the university more broadly and whether the policies and practices at the PECC were aligned with the strategic goals of the university teaching and research. Lastly, I consider how the university management, policies and structures supported the integration of the PECC within the university.

My knowledge and understanding of the PECC continued to expand and grow in richness and complexity as data collection was undertaken. I present the data as a narrative analysis, as discussed in Chapter 3. The quoted conversations with the PECC director, Sarah, portray and retain her attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and/or intentions and were utilised to interpret and summarise the data.

4.2   Overview of organisational context

The PEEC can best be described as a medium sized typical long day care centre in a metropolitan location that happened to be on university campus. Table 4.1 lists the key parameters relevant to the centre.

Table 4-1 PECC Overview

Size	50-60 places
Ages of children	Six weeks to five years of age.
Physical location	On-campus at a metropolitan Australian university and physically located within the university's education department precinct.
Operating days/hours	The centre opening hours were 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., five days a week, 49 weeks a year, and closed only on public holidays.
Demographics	High socio-economic status local government area comprising a culturally-diverse community with 46.9% of the population born overseas and, of those, 12.5% were born in China with 24.1% having Chinese ancestry.
Operating capacity	Full capacity with an extensive waiting list at the time of data collection.
Management	The university's education faculty managed, supported and promoted the centre.
Funding model	The centre was subsidised by the university as the centre staff workloads included lectures and mentoring for on-campus early childhood education students. The PECC was not operating as financially independent of the university.

This overview was sought from the centre handbook, centre newsletters, documents from both the centre and university website as well as service agreements and the PECC initial paper-based interviews. A compilation of the PECC features was created during the documentation analysis stage and initial paper-based interviews. Specifically, the following information was sourced from the initial paper-based interview: the PECC was a medium size, 50-60 place long-day ECC located on-campus at a metropolitan Australian university; the university's education faculty managed, supported and promoted the centre; and, the centre was physically located within the university's education department precinct. The centre provided education and care for children of local families, plus university staff and students. At times, this included children of students attending intensive schools or visiting academics for brief periods (The PECC Director Paper-Based Interview, 15/4/19).

The following data was sourced from the centre handbook and website. The children enrolled were from six weeks to five years of age, or the year prior to commencing school. The centre opening hours were from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., five days a week, 49 weeks a year, and it was closed only on public holidays. The PECC was operating at full capacity with an extensive waiting list. In addition, it was located in a high socio-economic status local government area comprising a

culturally-diverse community with 46.9% of the population born overseas and, of those, 12.5% were born in China with 24.1% having Chinese ancestry (idcommunity, 2020). While primarily focused on educating and caring for children of students and families connected with the university, the centre was also open to the diversity of local community members when spaces were available (The PECC handbook & website).

The PECC had a national and international reputation within the early childhood education profession for excellence in research and teaching (The PECC website). It was the demonstration program for the university's education department and provided students, researchers, academics and other educators with premium opportunities for education training, mentoring, observation and research (The PECC website). Information about the PECC staff was identified within the paper-based interview; the staff at the PECC provided lectures, leadership, mentoring and support to train on-campus early childhood teacher education students and others within the early childhood profession. Staff were also expected to undertake teacher training requirements as part of their employment in addition to their typical workload (The PECC Director Paper-Based Interview, 15/4/19).

The centre was subsidised by the university as the centre staff workloads included lectures and mentoring for on-campus early childhood education students (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). Thus, the PECC was not operating as financially independent of the university like many Australian on-campus centres. It should be noted here, the PECC was not the only on-campus centre, the other centre was private and operated quite independently of the university. The centre staff regularly welcomed visiting researchers, students, educators, academics and others who attended the centre to observe, conduct research or be trained and mentored. The primary visitors were from within the early childhood education profession, but a multitude of other professional areas benefitted from the research and teaching opportunities provided by the centre, including speech therapy, linguistics and environmental sustainability (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

There was a university requirement for the PECC to be cost neutral to the university; it was "expected to be self-sustaining" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). I noted some other on-campus Australian early childhood education centres operate completely independently of university administration, often managed by private profit groups. With regard to the Director, Sarah's, comments, I speculated that PECC was required to operate as near to full capacity as

possible and thus, flexibility was limited alongside the corollary that group sizes and staffing must meet budget requirements.

4.3 The role of the director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research

The theme of university teaching and research appeared paramount for the PECC throughout the initial online document collection and analysis. The main webpage consistently referred to aspects of university teaching and research, for example, the PECC "has a national and international reputation for excellence in early childhood education and teaching" supported by additional promotional links for students, academics and educators (The PECC, 2020). When later commencing the on-site data collection, I perceived a sense of Sarah's dedication and commitment to the early childhood education profession. This was evident in the language employed by Sarah when referring to the PECC, fellow educators and the university as a whole. This was further demonstrated by Sarah's references to university teaching and research, her philosophical stance in relation to current pedagogical literature and her own relevant research and publications. Sarah made the comment that the PECC was "known as a site of research" and then added that the university management would like the centre "to become their own generator of research" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

During the face-to-face interview, Sarah specifically acknowledged her commitment to the role of facilitating and promoting teaching and research and the importance of this role. Sarah described that the PECC was a well-established on-campus demonstration centre, with a reputation as such and a long history to be respected and upheld (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). Sarah was adamant when she stated:

> Due to the established reputation of the ECC, it lets Peony have its "own voice". This is a wonderful aspect of the centre, an amazing centre to be part of. The reference to Peony within the early childhood profession summoned amongst individuals' reflective terms such as excellence, reference, research, role model and current. As a team, the question that we always ask each other is "what is the Peony way of doing things". Umm, this then leads to a reference point within the critical reflection of the policies and practices of our centre. Peony is a reference point for early childhood teaching and research. (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19)

Sarah clearly stated the importance that she placed on the university teaching and research practices and policies occurring at the centre. Her strength of commitment was indicated by her feelings of an obligation to ensure the history and reputation of the centre was maintained and continued into the future.

Sarah also stated that she felt compelled to ensure the "public persona" as an on-campus teaching and research ECC was consistently upheld. She asserted that the strong philosophy, reputation, history and traditions of the PEEC had a positive impact on current early childhood teaching and informed future teaching practices. Sarah identified the centre history as foundational and stated:

> I think it is paramount to continue this through the established philosophy, systems, and practices that are embedded, established and effective. Umm, I always feel that these systems and practices are the foundation of this centre, because of the foundation we are always guided by the changes required for compliance or after critical reflection on practices or policies. Because of the public persona and reputation of the ECC teaching and research these components are included in all aspects of communication and enrolments with prospective and new families. The staff just know what to do and always help new staff. (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19)

Sarah aligned the teaching and research reputation of the centre with the importance of advocating and providing quality early childhood programs. The embedded university teaching and research practices were subject to continual critical reflection, evolving practices and staying abreast of changes around pedagogy, policies and practices; the PECC as a whole was an advocate and role model for quality early childhood programs.

Sarah reported providing new families with a tour prior to a child commencing at the centre to explain the importance of the centre in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. She described including, in the new parent overview information, aspects about what a university teaching and research centre encompasses: observations; professional placements and educational exploration days for teacher education students; on site academic research; and, the potential involvement of families and children in the research process, including information sharing; notification; and ethics authorisation (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). This approach with families reinforced both the director's and the centre's role. Sarah acknowledged, through the face-to-face interview that the PECC was "valued and acknowledged for its role as a teaching and research service" as well as being known "throughout the university and the wider community as

a teaching and research service that was consistently utilised for teaching and research purposes" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

The interview responses clearly indicated Sarah's role and commitment to facilitating and promoting university teaching and research with a dedication to continuing the process and practices that had established the centre's reputation. Sarah appeared dedicated to supporting and promoting teaching and research within all aspects of her role.

4.4 The director's perceptions about the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research

In considering the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research, Sarah first cited her previous work and study history. She had previously completed post-graduate studies and held a role as a casual academic while working as the director of a community-based ECC. Sarah reported this background had provided her with the experience and knowledge about the significance of both teaching and research, which were now highly relevant to her new role. Since taking on the role as PECC director, her time had been equally split between the role of director and an academic position within the university's education department (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

Sarah described her responsibility to ensure the reputation and established traditions and practices of the PECC be maintained. She noted a significant influential factor was staffing and stated that "one of the most important contributing factors in facilitating and promoting teaching and research was for the ECC centre to promote and establish higher levels of trained staff than recommended" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The required qualifications for centre-based services with children at preschool age or under benchmarks are set by ACECQA. As a national body, ACECQA regulates that each centre must engage a degree qualified early childhood teacher based on the number and age of children at the service, and stipulates (ACECQA, 2020, para.3):

> **Early childhood teacher**
>
> Centre-based services educating and caring for children preschool age and under must engage or have access to an early childhood teacher based on the number and age of children at the service.
>
> For 60-80 children,

The service must employ or engage a full-time or full time equivalent early childhood teacher, or have an early childhood teacher in attendance for:

- 6 hours per day, when operating for 50 hours or more per week or
- 60% of the time, when operating for less than 50 hours per week.

Additionally from 2020, the service must employ a second early childhood teacher or suitably qualified person in attendance for:

- 3 hours per day, when operating for 50 hours or more per week

or

- 30% of the time, when operating for less than 50 hours per week

These requirements do not apply if the service has 60 to 80 approved places, and employs or engages a full time or full time equivalent early childhood teacher at the service, and employs or engages a second early childhood teacher or suitably qualified person for half the hours or full time equivalent hours at the service.

The PECC well exceeded these benchmarks in that there were two early childhood teachers in each of the three learning spaces, a specialist outdoor teacher who was also an early childhood teacher, and the director, an early childhood teacher with a Master's degree (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). Sarah acknowledged, within the face-to-face interview, that all educators were encouraged to further their qualifications with two ECTs currently studying a Master's in Education. The staffing at the PECC "demonstrates the value of Early Childhood Teachers" in promoting high quality teaching and research (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

Sarah had strong values and was committed to supporting university teaching and research because of her own study background, including her 50% spilt-academic and directing role, a keenness to promote the reputation and established traditions and practices of the PECC and the implementation of above regulation staffing. Sarah's perceptions about the significance and importance of supporting teaching and research were strongly upheld (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

4.5   The positioning and integration of the director within the PECC and the university

Throughout the data analysis, it was evident the role of the director was visibly positioned and integrated within the centre and university to support teaching and research. In particular, Barbour and Bersani (1991) claimed that supporting university teaching and research on-campus requires the academic and centre staff, including the director, to engage in ongoing dialogue as they

develop a collaborative team. The academic staff acknowledged that, together, they were committed not only to teacher preparation, but also to the expansion of innovative knowledge about children's learning and development. Such collaboration and commitment has implications for the positioning and integration of the director in on-campus ECCs. In the following paragraphs, I consider organisational and employment aspects, collaborative academic and collegial links, plus financial arrangements with import for the positioning and integration of the director's role.

4.5.1 Organisational aspects

In this study, Sarah, commented that all PECC staff were "employed under the university agreement", embedding the organisational connection between the university staff and the PECC staff. Sarah also received and requested assistance "through the support of human resource services, facilities services and financial services support" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). Thus, the PECC and Sarah appeared well integrated through the organisational structures, as well as the direct connections with academic areas discussed below.

Sarah stated that the "role of the director is split into two, 50% allocated to the role of director and the remaining 50% as an academic role within the early childhood area. Teaching in the academic program" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The PECC Director role was integrated within the organisational academic structure of the university, enabling embedded collaborative opportunities between the university professional and academic staff and the Director. As claimed by Myers and Palmer (2015), there appears to be connectivity between the roles and activities of the director and the degree of centre integration within the university. They state this is because the roles and activities of the director involve relationships, commitment, support and communication with the wider university, alongside the overall university community perception of the director and successful operation of the campus centre. Sarah acknowledged that the centre and university-supported her role through organisational structures, policies, and practices (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The organisational structure and workflow of the PECC within the university is depicted in Figure 4.1.

The PECC Organisational Structure

University Council

Chancellor

Vice Chancellor

Executive Dean

The Head of Educational Studies Department (Approved Provider)

The PECC Director (Nominated Supervisor & Educational Leader of the PECC reporting directly Head of Ed Studies)

The Department of Education Academic staff

Staff of the PECC
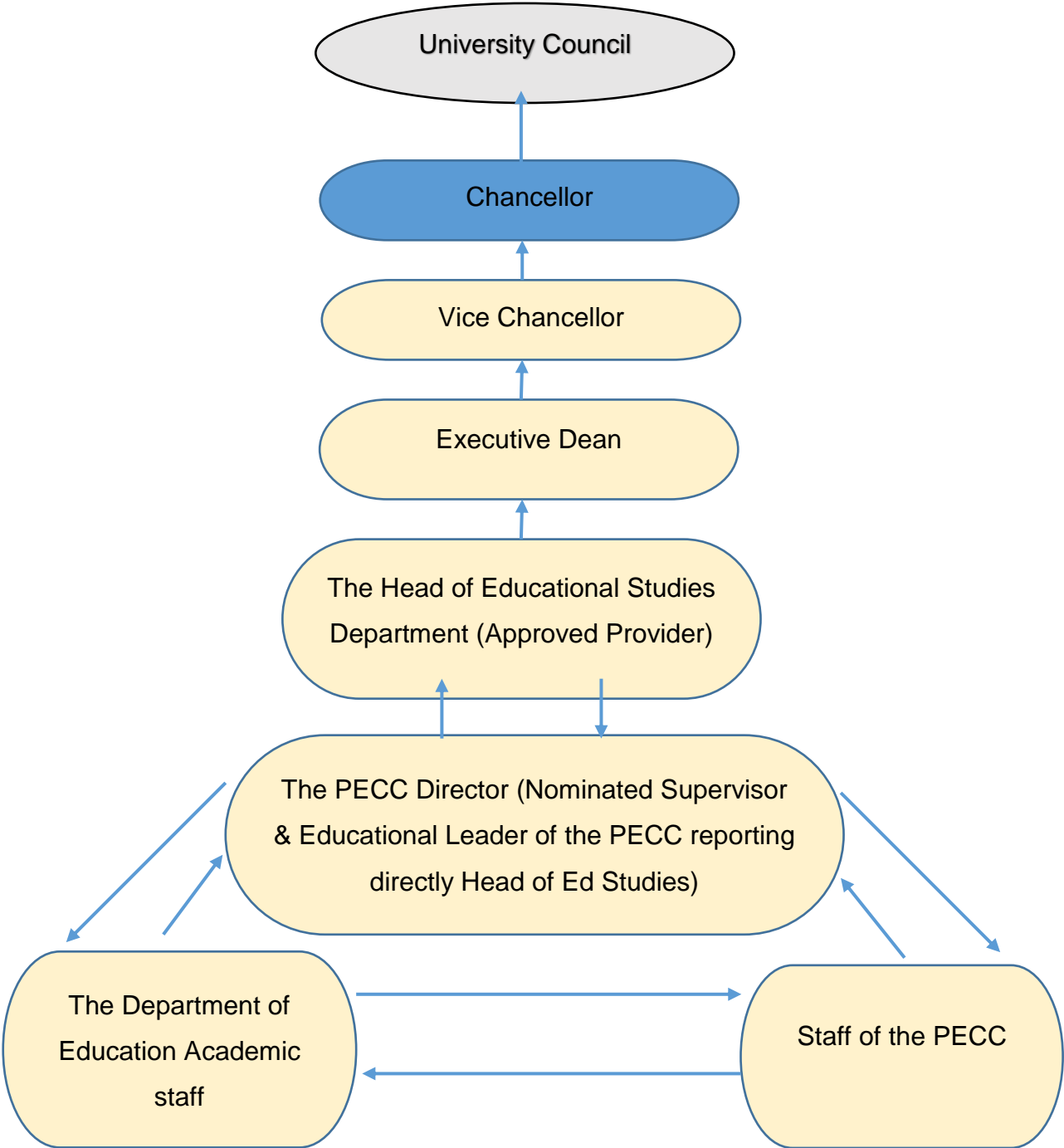
Figure 4-1 The PECC organisational structure and reporting lines

The PECC organisational structure and reporting lines in Figure 4.1 provide a diagrammatical representation, a hierarchy according to responsibilities and interrelationships that occurred both formally and informally. The Director of the PECC was directly linked to the university through

the reporting line to the Head of Educational Studies.-Another link that the PECC and the university had was through the direct reporting lines from the Director to the Vice Chancellor providing more formally embedded links.

4.5.2 Employment aspects

Employment policies also appeared relevant to the positioning and integration of the director at the PECC. Sarah described that both she and the centre staff were employed under the University Professional Staff Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, other private on-campus centre staff were employed under the Children's Services Award and paid above award rates (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). This is important in the early childhood profession as, currently, early childhood teachers are paid substantially less than colleagues within other education sectors, such as primary schools; this information is substantiated by Page, the Chief Executive Officer of Early Childhood Australia (Page, 2019), who stated:

> Pay rates for qualified teachers working in early education settings are well below parity with other parts of the education sector. Degree-qualified early education teachers working in long day care centres are particularly disadvantaged—taking home up to $13 000 a year less than they would if they worked in a school. Early childhood educators are paid as little as $22 an hour which was almost half the national average wage. This was despite there being mandatory qualifications (Cert III, Diploma or Degree), a National Quality Framework and a well-established code of ethics—all the requisite components to be recognised as a "profession". (para. 4 & 5)

It is notable that, irrespective of the employment policy applied, both the PECC and other on-campus centre staff received greater remuneration and better conditions than the broader early childhood field. This likely signified the importance placed by the university on providing and supporting quality early childhood education programs on- campus. Another, more favourable condition for the PECC staff, not offered under the Children's Services Award, was the superannuation, leave entitlements and hours of work (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The staff at the PECC were paid superannuation in accordance with the Professional Staff Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2018 (The PECC webpage, 2018) which stated, in section 15.2, that all university professional staff will offer employer superannuation payments to Unisuper at the rate 17% of Ordinary Time Earnings for permanent staff. While the PECC staff came under the university's enterprise bargaining agreement (Case Study Centre University, 2018), the Children's Services Award, section 20.1 of superannuation legislation the *Superannuation*

Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992 (Cth) provides only 9.5% (Federal Register of Legislation, 2020). This financial commitment by the university, I argue, would encourage the attraction and retention of high quality early childhood education staff. Highly qualified and experienced early childhood staff are well recognised to directly promote high quality early childhood centres and programs.

4.5.3 Academic and collegial collaborative links

Sarah noted that, within the university management structure, her direct supervisor was the Head of the Education Studies and the department included early childhood, primary, secondary and special education academics. Sarah met formally with the Head of Department every two months to discuss items relating to her role of directing the PECC as well as her role as a part-time academic staff member. Also, informal interactions and discussions frequently occurred within common areas, plus networking and other occasions promoted a collaborative approach to supporting and promoting university teaching and research (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The physical co-location of the PECC and education department on the university campus particularly afforded these opportunities. Elliott (unpublished) supports the importance of a shared physical space for the ECC and early childhood academic staff in establishing and maintaining collaborative links. She states that a physical presence evident between the Arlitt Centre and the University of Cincinnati promoted the centre being integral to the School of Education as teaching staff and academic staff shared a common space.

4.5.4 Financial arrangements

The positioning of the PECC within the university structure also included financial arrangements and directives. Sarah explained that the aim of the ECC was to be financially self-sustaining. She outlined that parent fees were currently $150 per day, which assisted in covering the operational costs of the service and recognised these fees as within the average of equivalent daily childcare costs in the local area (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). According to Care for Kids (2020), the average cost for childcare around the PECC was $138.27 per day, 8% lower than the daily fee at the PECC. This evoked further questions about the ability to charge higher fees, linking back to the requirement by the university to be cost neutral, but be at a full capacity with a waiting list. I speculated if this related to the demand for childcare in the area, the reputation of the service and/or the convenience for university staff.

In relation to financial obligations, Sarah also acknowledged that the centre staff produced professional teaching resources to assist with supplementing centre income streams. The PECC contributed an administration fee to the university of $20,000 per annum (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The university covered the costs of structural items, such as the building and repairs, plus utilities, such as power and water. This was the same as the coverage afforded other academic areas within the university campus. Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) point out that a component of a successful on-campus ECC is the securing of various streams of funding through a variety of avenues including the university, which PECC has been able to achieve. Sarah did not discuss or disclose if there were any consequences of not being able to be self-sustaining and cost neutral to the university.

The Director appeared well positioned and integrated within the PECC and the university through the alignment of the director's role within the organisational structure, the part-time academic role and the employment arrangements of the Director and the PECC staff. This integration was also reinforced through the physical co-location of the PECC and the university Educational Studies Department, providing opportunities for both informal and formal discussions, future planning and research opportunities (The PECC Director Paper-Based Interview, 15/4/19).

4.6   The PECC policies and practices in relation to the university teaching and research strategic goals

The policies and practices of the PECC aligned with the university's strategic teaching and research goals. The first strategic priority of the university was a culture of transformative learning in a research-enriched environment (Case Study Centre University, 2020) and this aligned with policies and embedded practices of the PECC, an example is the center's pedagogy. The PECC centre webpage states:

> Share PECC pedagogy. The PECC has a national and international reputation for excellence in early childhood education and teaching. It provides high quality, long-day care program for the community – offering excellent learning, observation and research opportunities for our academic staff and early childhood education students. (para. 1)

Similarly, the university Educational Studies Department staff and management supported the PECC (Case Study Centre University, 2020) through the acknowledgement of the PECC within their teaching and research strategic goals as documented on the university website:

Teach in our simulated classrooms and science labs or work with emerging technologies that are pushing the boundaries of education. You'll also gain access to our internationally recognised on campus the Peony Early Childhood Centre. (para, 4)

The PECC was further acknowledged on the Educational Studies Department's research page, which stated: "Our facilities include – Peony Early Childhood Centre, a long-day early childhood centre with observation rooms for families, students and academic staff" (Case Study Centre University, 2020, para.4).

These university online Educational Studies statements were reinforced by the terminology and reference to university teaching and research throughout the centre website, educator reference materials and family handbook. On the front page of the centre website, there was a statement indicating the importance and significance that the PECC and university together place on promoting teaching and research. The first statement described PECC as having:

A national and international reputation for excellence in early childhood education and teaching. It provides high quality, long-day care program for the community – offering excellent learning, observation and research opportunities for our academic staff and early childhood education students. (Case Study Centre University, 2020, para.1)

The PECC practice of producing research-based high-quality teaching resources and publications was directly aligned to the university teaching and research strategic goals, primarily related to the Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework: 2020–2024 Objective 2 and 2.1 (Case Study Centre University, 2020):

Transformative learning experiences that include dynamic opportunities for engagement with industry and community partners that: 2.1. Nurture students to achieve their aspirations and potential for success in a changing world through a curriculum that is connected, relevant and engaging. (p. 4)

Sarah clarified the centre practice of a separate "Project Account" as an extra income stream to support the costs of non-day-to-day activities. She reported income was received from admission to open days, plus the sale of teaching resources and publications. Any profits were then utilised to develop further publications and resources. Notably, the director stated families were not expected to pay for the additional costs associated with the PECC being a research and demonstration service (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

Sarah further described the centre expectations that all PECC educators were to demonstrate, in their daily work, the importance of supporting and promoting teaching and research at the university (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The PECC practice expectations were directly aligned with the university teaching and research strategic goals, primarily related to three of the Enablers in the Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework: 2020–2024 (The PECC website, 2020, p. 4):

> INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:
> Collaborate with industry and community partners to deliver quality learning experiences designed to develop students' capacity for professional pursuits.
> LEARNING SPACES:
>
> Provide quality learning environments (including physical, virtual and informal) that will promote inspirational, intellectually challenging and inclusive learning and teaching.
> PROGRAM ILLUMINATE:
>
> Provide learning opportunities to develop capabilities for employment, entrepreneurship and recognition of professional achievements that enable students to achieve their potential and become lifelong learners.

The university teaching and research practices were an embedded aspect of the centre and all educators at the PECC were expected to view their role as exemplary and contemporary. Sarah noted how all staff understood that they "can't stay the same" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The centre was professionally known for teaching and research, so all staff recognised their role as integral to a "forward-looking service" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). This research and teaching focused philosophy of the PECC "underpins all aspects of the operations and practices of the centre" (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The PECC policies and practices support the strategic goals of university teaching and research, particularly through the alignment of the PECC with the university's Educational Studies Department. McBride et al. (2012) supports this notion of integration in that the research is practice-focused inquiry involving the collaborative engagement of teachers, researchers, students and children in the contemporary, systematic and intentional inquiry into research, teacher research being able to provide an internal view and production of localised knowledge.

4.7 The university policies, practices and organisational structure that support the integration of the PECC

In the data collection and analysis process, the director's commitment to the integration of the PECC within the university became apparent. There were embedded university policies and practices that supported the importance the university placed on the PECC and its role in university teaching and research. In this section, the university policies, practices and organisational structure that supported the integration of the PECC will be explored. Sarah made a broad encompassing statement in relation to the university, policies, practices and organisational structure that supported this integration. Sarah acknowledged the university management for resourcing the centre with materials and appropriate staffing:

> The university also supports us by providing donations of lots of resources, loose parts, furnishings and all sorts of other items from the university that we can use at the centre. We get paper, folders, paint, and other items areas at the university don't want anymore. We always make good use of these things. The major support the university provides the centre includes access to academic staff, primarily early childhood staff, but also academic staff within a variety of disciplines such as speech, languages, special needs, and other areas. The academic staff with a particular interest and focus of expertise will inform, guide and inspire us at the centre through their interactions, knowledge, and guidance. (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19)

This is quite a unique and beneficial situation when compared to other ECC's in my professional experience. To have a university source for a wide range of donations, as well as academic expertise for staff to draw on, I suggest, can only strengthen the integration and collaboration between the centre director and staff and the university academic and professional staff.

4.7.1 Policies and practices

The aligned PECC and university policies and practices facilitated staff collaboration, another factor essential to centre integration. The university online site stated (Case Study Centre University, 2020):

> Our research was leading the way in ground-breaking discoveries. Our academics are at the forefront of innovation and, as accomplished researchers, we are embracing the opportunity to tackle the big issues of our time'. 'We are also home to some of Australia's most

exceptional facilities - hubs of innovation that unite our students, researchers, academics and partners to achieve extraordinary things.

Collaborative "hubs of innovation" were facilitated by frequent and ongoing sharing practices between academics and educators at the service. As stated previously, Sarah's role was 50% academic, teaching in the university program with opportunities for collaborating, researching, conversing and deliberating with fellow academic peers and then sharing this knowledge with the centre educators. This was perceived as an investment in the centre staff with dual benefits (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19*)*. With this collaboration and knowledge sharing, educators were being informed of and inspired by current and best practices, theories and pedagogies, while centre children and families were benefiting from a high-quality service. Simultaneously, the university was acknowledging and valuing the PECC for its role as a teaching and research service. The centre was regularly utilised for teaching and research purposes and known throughout the university as a teaching and research service. At the time of data collection, the PECC had a number of publications specifically designed for Masters of Teaching students as integral to their studies, and a variety of other resources specifically utilised for early childhood teaching purposes (Case Study Centre University, 2020).

The policy and practice of having the centre integrated within the university was further supported by the physical co-location of the centre with the Educational Studies department building as previously noted. Sarah acknowledged that the physical co-location of the PECC, enabled the PECC staff and department staff to interact both formally and informally. Thus, opportunities for staff networking to develop respectful and trusting relationships potentially leading to innovative university teaching and research collaborations (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19*)*. The connection through the physical presence of the centre within the department precinct was visible to university students and staff, other early childhood education professionals and the public. For example, a report describing, *The Arlitt Children's Centre at the University of Cincinnatti* identified the significance of the physical presence of the centre to the School of Education within the university campus (Elliott, unpublished). Staff being regularly present within the same space to facilitate relationships was valued. Elicker and Barbour (2012) suggest that ECCs based in academic departments can offer unique opportunities for academic and early childhood professionals to collaborate, gain a better understanding of children, develop an in-depth understanding of teaching and learning processes and lead to investigation of new approaches to teaching and learning.

4.7.2 Organisational Structure

The integration of the ECC and the university was further supported by the organisational structure of the university, such as reporting lines and the physical presence of supervisors, subordinates and peers. For example, as previously noted, Sarah had a direct reporting line to the Head of the Educational Studies Department (refer to Figure 4.1), and this enabled formal meetings every two months and informal discussions more frequently (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

One organisational challenge noted throughout the data collection and analysis process was that the PECC was not clearly identified within the collated university documents, such as master plans or enterprise agreements. In detailed online research, I failed to identify any policies that specifically acknowledged the director's teaching and research role within the university or reference to the PECC. Myers and Palmer (2015) argue:

> Research has found that campus-based centres as a whole still need to do a better job of linking to the overall academic mission of a university and to more carefully monitor and manage a centre's mission in regards to the teaching, researching, and service missions of a college and university system. (p. 100)

However, Sarah had been directly involved in linking the centre to the academic mission and strategic planning of the university. Sarah described a number of future teaching and research initiatives that aligned with the university mission, values and strategic direction (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). These included the PECC becoming a generator of research, to develop and carry out research rather than just others coming to the PECC to undertake research in situ. Also, developing a centre research agenda and becoming a leader in the profession was proposed. Sarah indicated she would like PECC teachers to give guest lectures and be acknowledged by the PECC receiving payment for preparation and lecture time. At the time of interview, Sarah was discussing options for these initiatives with the Head of the Educational Studies Department (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) identified a list of eight components for successful on-campus centres, with two of these being securing various streams of funding and building relationships through funding. For example, University of Cincinnati Arlitt Centre received significant research grants from the School of Education, other faculties and external bodies to facilitate ongoing research and support centre operation. As Elliott (unpublished) addresses:

There are ongoing research relationships with a range of UC faculty's e.g. nursing, communication, etc. Typically three or four funded research projects are underway at any time, however, due to a larger than usual staff turnover in 2017, only two projects are currently in progress. These include the Faculty of Communication Sciences that offers a hearing and speech screening service for all centre children, but also receives Headstart funding to research learning English as second language; and, a National Science Foundation-funded three year study of science learning occurring in the Nature Playspace, often there are also mini-grants for graduate students to work with practitioners in rooms and conduct small scale research studies. (p. 3)

The university policies, practices and organisational structure, supported the integration of the PECC within the teaching and research strategic goals and directions of the university. This was achieved in a number of ways, including the academic role of the director within the university and the inclusion of the PECC in research and teaching initiatives. The integration was also achieved through the recognition of the PECC within the university and the early childhood profession as being a centre of innovation and leader in research and teaching opportunities. There was no evidence throughout the data collection that identified the PECC within the university master plan or specific policies. For the PECC to be acknowledged within such documents would have likely reinforced and emphasised the importance university management placed on the incorporation of the PECC within the teaching and research strategic goals and directions of the university.

4.7.3 Exploring the challenges for achieving the potential for university teaching and research

Despite all the positive discussions with the PECC Director in relation to the research questions discussed above, Sarah, described a number of challenges she faced in achieving the full potential of the centre for supporting university teaching and research (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The challenges identified by Sarah included:

Currently my role should be 50% director and 50% academic but I am currently doing a greater percentage in the director's role than the academic role to help support the formation of relationships at the service. I have been doing the academic role as a casual academic for a while and have taught current units before. Because of this I am not doing a huge amount of prep work required for the current units but this will change in the next academic year when I have to teach new units. At the moment I am trying to make myself available as much as possible to staff at the centre. I find it a challenge to meet the university expectation of being

self-sustaining with balancing the required department ratio regulations which means that every time a staff member is absent a casual is required. This is not required in other areas of the university. I feel it is a very bureaucratic environment. The potential for a problematic environment for our centre. I feel another challenge is that I feel I am working with more than one hat. Caring for fellow academics children and then having to negotiate the universities processes. Our centre often does not fit within the universities timeframes and ideas. Our centre does not match the pace and business of the day of other university staff. Often the academic expectations of our centre and our staff do not match and there is a potential for mismatch. These include things like when academic staff want to visit the and it's not a good time because the children are resting or we can sometimes get really short notice, and we don't get adequate time to obtain parent permission or there is overlapping of visits. Our families can also become fatigued with the amount of surveys, they are given and having to participant in research or having to continually or provide permission for their children to participate in research. (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19)

Among the described challenges, the major three challenges appeared to be the university expectations of the PECC being financially self-sustaining, the university bureaucratic environment and unrealistic researcher expectations. To be financially self-sustaining, the aim was to collect income from fees and other sources that was equal to or greater than the management and operating expenditures; in other words, cost neutral to the university. This was to be achieved while ensuring the required teacher to child ratios were maintained. Any staff absences necessitated employment of a casual staff member as a replacement, this was not the requirement in other areas of the university. Sarah also discussed working within a "bureaucratic" environment having to negotiate the university's processes, the academic expectations and potential for mismatch. For example, appropriate times to visit the centre (not during children's rest time), short notice of potential research or teaching requests, work timeframes inadequate and not matching the pace/business of the centre day. Sarah explicitly noted the perceptions of researchers can be problematic, what they seek may not be available or achievable in an early childhood setting (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).

Sarah identified two further challenges inhibiting the centre in reaching its full potential to support university teaching and research:

There is a potential for a possible problematic environment. There is a chance of this occurring when I am working with people and I have with more than one hat. An example of this is that not only am I an academic, and the Director, but I also am caring for my fellow academics'

children. This can cause some uneasiness between my fellow academics and myself when differences of opinions occur. There is also a possibility that families may become fatigued with the amount of surveys, being participants or providing permission for their children to participate. (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19)

Sarah acknowledged the challenges of educating and caring for the children of academics with whom she also worked. She also referred to the concern of families becoming overwhelmed with research, ethics approvals, student observation authorisations and activities occurring at the PECC (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). This is a challenge that the director appeared to overcome through her professionalism and commitment to ensuring that university teaching and research were part of the daily centre practices.

In the above transcripts, Sarah acknowledged the challenges she faced in directing and leading an on-campus ECC. The challenges were unique in having to meet the teaching and research requirements of academic staff, negotiating the priorities, policies and political environment of a tertiary institution as well as meeting the legislated requirements of the NQF (ACECQA, 2020). There are times these requirements are aligned and other times when they produced challenges for the director.

4.8   Researcher reflection

Throughout the data collection phase, I found myself viewing the data through a comparative lens with my own situation. I reflected on how the integration of the PECC within the university was supported by the university management, practices and structure and did this align with my professional experiences. I was able to build upon my understandings of what was happening at the PECC and on my professional experiences as director of an on- campus ECC.

During the interviews, I also discovered my instinctive reaction was to conceptualise and verbally acknowledge comparative statements to the participant's responses. I recognised immediately how this could affect the participant/researcher relationship. It was very early in the interview process that I understood my new role as a researcher and not as a colleague talking to a fellow ECC director. During the in-depth face-to-face interviews, I focused on the director's context and listened intently to the participant's story.

In this chapter, I have explored the role of the PECC Director and it appeared that the directors' commitment, motivation and knowledge had a direct impact on supporting university teaching and

research. The Director had only been in the role for less than a year but already had a depth of understanding of the history, significance and reputation of the centre being a demonstration centre promoting and supporting teaching and research within the university. This chapter has contributed to this thesis by providing an examination of the PECC and, specifically, the role of the director.

In Chapter 5, I will continue to explore the role of ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus ECC's. I aim to capture the insights and experiences of a second centre director, Mary, the Director of the Wattle ECC on-campus at a metropolitan Australian university.

Chapter 5   Wattle Early Childhood Centre

5.1   Chapter overview

The Wattle Early Childhood Centre (WECC) was a medium sized long day care centre situated on the campus of an Australian university within a metropolitan bushland setting. During the site visit and in face-to-face interview, I developed a sense of a centre focused on children's learning, leadership, sustainability and the environment as summarised in my reflective journal. Overall, I also perceived the Director Mary's profound commitment to delivering a high-quality early childhood program for the children, families, university and local community. "I gained a sense of the importance that the director placed on life-long and continual learning for herself and her role in fostering and supporting this commitment and value among fellow educators" (Research Journal 10-07-2019, p. 15). Also, I identified an established and reputable centre with a distinctive learning environment.

The WECC had a long-standing reputation as a centre with an embedded "strengths based approach to learning with a strong focus on outdoor learning and education for sustainability and a range of learning environments" (The WECC webpage, 2019). This was reinforced throughout the data collection process. As with the previous chapter, I share a centre overview and then explore the research questions in relation to the director's role. I initially investigate Mary's director role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research and then proceed to identify how her role at the WECC was positioned and integrated within the centre and the university and if the policies and practices at the WECC were aligned with the strategic goals of the university teaching and research. I then examine how the integration of the WECC within the university was supported by the university management, policies, and structure. Lastly, I contemplate the factors Mary viewed as challenging in this role.

While undertaking the data collection, my familiarity with and understandings of the WECC deepened. The data is presented as a narrative analysis with quoted conversations from Mary to portray her attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and/or intentions. Interpretation of this data invited the construction of a complex real-world story.

5.2   Overview of organisational context

Similar to PECC, WECC can best be described as a medium sized typical long day care centre in a metropolitan location on a university campus. Table 5.1 lists the key parameters relevant to WECC.

Table 5-1 WECC Overview

Size	50-60 places
Ages of children	3 months to 5 years of age, or the year prior to commencing school.
Physical location	On-campus at a metropolitan Australian university.
Operating days/hours	8.00 am to 6.00 pm five days a week, 50 weeks a year, with a two-week Christmas and New Year annual public holiday closure.
Demographics	Located in a high socio-economic status local government area. There was a lower percentage of cultural diversity at the WECC with 22.6% of the population born overseas and of those 2% were born in China with 4% with Chinese ancestry.
Operating capacity	Operated at full capacity with an extensive waiting list at the time of data collection.
Management	Owned by the university and managed by an internal university governing body. Governed by a not-for-profit Independent Childcare Management Body incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act* 1985.
Funding model	Operating financially independent of the university as a not-for-profit centre.

As with the previous case study discussed in Chapter 4, the overview of the WECC was sought from the centre handbook, centre newsletters, documents from both the centre and university website as well as service agreements and the WECC initial paper-based interviews.

The following information was sourced from the initial paper-based interview: the WECC was a medium size, 50-60 place long-day ECC located on-campus at a metropolitan Australian university; and, it was owned by the university and managed by an internal university governing body. The centre provided education and care for children of local families as well as university staff and students. The children enrolled were from three months to five years of age, or the year prior to commencing school, as WECC was a long-day ECC (The WECC Director Paper-Based Interview, 7/6/19).

The opening hours of the centre were 8.00 am to 6.00 pm five days a week, 50 weeks a year, with a two-week Christmas and New Year annual public holiday closure. The WECC operated at full capacity with an extensive waiting list (The WECC Director Paper-Based Interview, 7/6/19). It was located in a high socio-economic status local government area (idCommunity, 2020). There

was a lower percentage of cultural diversity at the WECC with 22.6% of the population born overseas and of those 2% were born in China with 4% with Chinese ancestry (idcommunity, 2020) than evident around the PECC (refer to Chapter 4). I observed the centre was physically located at one of the university campus sites in a residential and semi-rural area. The centre staff utilised the adjacent bushland for teaching and learning purposes (The WECC Enrolment Handbook & website, 2019).

The WECC has a national reputation for a strong focus and commitment to outdoor learning and sustainability. A "Sustainable Living Strategic Plan" guided the centre operation and education for sustainability was integrated throughout the curriculum (The WECC Enrolment Handbook, 2019). The implementation of this strategic plan was facilitated by the targeted allocation of 2% of all fee income to sustainability initiatives. The centre management also demonstrated the prioritisation of sustainability by employing a dedicated education for sustainability teacher. Mary, explained that the sustainability teacher was responsible for:

> Working with the children at the centre and in the outdoor play spaces and the kitchen gardens to observe and document the natural environment and seasonal changes. They also have to look after weeding, mulching and planting as required and to document the curriculum and learning. The role also includes building and maintaining the knowledge and understandings of the staff, children and families of the traditional owners of the land, and for maintaining the centre's Site Environment Management Plan (SEMP). (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

The WECC staff regularly welcomed visiting researchers, students, educators, academics and others to observe, conduct research or be trained and mentored. The primary focus of these visits were placements for early childhood tertiary students from Technical and Further Education training courses (TAFE) (Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care, Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care) and university early childhood education teaching degrees. Secondary students also visited when undertaking work experience to potentially later enter the early childhood profession. Mary stated:

> There are also a number of other professions that benefit from the research and teaching opportunities that we can provide, this is mainly around environmental sustainability and also includes sustainability tours and conference delegates, and also speech therapy students that visit us. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

This overview provides a background about the centre necessary to construct an understanding of the role of the centre director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research at the WECC.

5.3 The role of the Director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research

During my initial online document collection and analysis of the paper-based interview, the notion of university teaching and research appeared limited. For example, the main WECC webpage did not refer to teaching or research, nor was there reference to this in the initial paper-based interview by Mary. Hence, I undertook the on-site data collection stage with the intent to construct a greater understanding of her role in facilitating and promoting teaching and research.

During the on-site data collection visit, Mary demonstrated enthusiasm for and dedication towards the early childhood education profession. This was apparent in the depth of her responses, the references to the value of high-quality early childhood education, and the importance of the centre on the university campus. In addition, this was verified by her responses regarding her perceptions of the significance and importance of facilitating and supporting teaching and research. Mary said, "I chose to work on a campus service due to my own valuing of learning and I have therefore been open to any opportunities available to support teaching and research" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

Mary made the comment that as a "life-long learner" she valued all new learning and then went on to add that they had a motto placed on the wall in the office stating "that there is no such thing as acceptable quality, it can always get better" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). Mary proceeded to specifically comment on the value, role and practices of the WECC in promoting and supporting teaching and research:

> I think the WECC has developed a culture of learning as we have always supported our own educators and others to undertake relevant studies and engaged in projects that promote and value high quality EC practice. As we are on the uni email network we receive regular updates on what is happening on the Campus and with aspects such as research. Talking with families also expands our knowledge of current projects and research. There does need to be a level of interest and being proactive to find out about the teaching and research that is happening on the university campus and the level of engagement and information received also depends on how others see the role of the centre. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

The interview responses signified the director's role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research with a commitment to supporting these possibilities as they arose. As well as an obligation to her own life-long learning, Mary described "developing a culture of learning as we have always supported our own educators and others to undertake relevant studies and engage in projects that promote and value high quality EC practice" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). Although not evident from initial document analysis and paper- based interview, at the on-site interview the Director appeared dedicated to supporting and promoting university teaching and research within all aspects of her centre role.

5.4   The Director's perceptions about the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research

In reflecting on the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research, the Director first cited her former work and study history. She had previously completed various undergraduate and post-graduate studies in a range of areas, such as education, policy and management, sustainability and leadership. She had also held a variety of roles within the early childhood field, including, teacher, assistant director, director, educational leader, assessor and moderator for the Australian National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), supervisor for early childhood education students on university placement and a lecturer in the TAFE sector. Mary reported:

> My background has provided me with the experience and knowledge for developing my management and leadership skills that has allowed me to support and mentor others in the early education profession. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Drawing on her previous work and study experience, Mary appeared to have a commitment to supporting, facilitating and promoting the available teaching and research opportunities. Mary addressed:

> I chose to work on a campus service due to my own valuing of learning and I have therefore been open to any opportunities available to support teaching and research. This has meant an open arm approach to Early Childhood students from all levels as well as other students, visitors and community people who may benefit and learn from what Early Childhood is and does. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Mary's commitment to supporting teaching and research appeared to be underpinned by staffing priorities. In the WECC Enrolment Handbook 2019, it stated that "the Centre employs a variety of educators with a range of qualifications and experience, achieving a balance of professional perspectives. More than eighty percent of our educators have an Early Childhood Teaching Degree or a Diploma of Children's Services" (p. 12). This level of qualified staffing is above requirements as set by the ACECQA regulatory benchmarks under the NQF (ACECQA, 2020). In summary, only 50% of staff are required to have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification to meet the appropriate ratios in a centre-based service, all remaining staff must be Certificate III qualified (ACECQA, 2020). In addition, according to ACECQA (2020):

- Degree qualified teachers are required in centres educating and caring for 25-29 children.
- Employ or engage a full-time or full time equivalent early childhood teacher, or have an early childhood teacher in attendance for:
  o 6 hours per day, when operating for 50 hours or more per week OR
  o 60% of the time, when operating for less than 50 hours per week. (para.3)

The WECC exceeded the above staffing benchmarks in that more than 80% of the educators had an early childhood degree or diploma, rather than the 50% required under the *National Quality Framework* for qualifications (ACECQA, 2020). Mary placed importance on staffing for high quality early childhood education programs and care, and as an enabler for supporting university teaching and research. From my experience and knowledge as a director, I concur with the WECC director, Mary, about placing this importance on the qualifications of centre educators and teachers. Manning at el. (2017) acknowledge Berk's (1985) early work in which postsecondary education was positively correlated with greater early childhood teaching skills, that tertiary qualified early childhood teachers are more responsive, encouraging and inspiring when conversing with young children. Mary acknowledged, during her face-to-face interview, that all educators were encouraged to further their qualifications and a culture of continued professional learning existed. She placed ongoing learning as a high priority within the centre:

> I think the WECC has developed a culture of learning as we have always supported our own educators and others to undertake relevant studies and engaged in projects that promote and value high quality EC practice. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Mary demonstrated the value of early childhood educators (Cert III or Diploma qualified) and teachers (university qualified) through the promotion and encouragement of continual learning, thus fostering the potential for high quality university teaching and research. During the interview she also outlined her philosophy and leadership style that informed her role, including:

> Having a strengths-based approach of supporting staff, encouraging continued upskilling of staff in furthering qualifications and professional development and focus on mentoring and coaching. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

In addition, Mary demonstrated commitment to supporting and promoting university teaching and research through her active involvement in a range of centre research projects. These included action research projects on a variety of topics, such as sustainability, cultural competence, re-conceptualising early childhood, staff/child relationships and young children's learning. During the interview, Mary provided details of the particular seven action research projects the centre had been actively involved in over the past 20 years through various internal and external funding opportunities. These were:

- Primary Caregiving (2001);
- Enhancing Children's Sustained Engagement in Learning (2003-04);
- Strengthening Child: Staff Relationships (2005-06):-
- Healthy Eating and Activity (undated);
- Education for Sustainability (2007);
- Cultural Competence (2011); and,
- Reconceptualising Early Childhood birth-3y (2017 onwards)

(The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

The WECC Director's perceptions of the significance and importance of supporting university teaching and research has been substantiated here. As stated by Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) a component of successful on-campus ECC's is to balance the tripartite mission by aligning teaching, research and service which WECC appears to have achieved. The WECC has provided opportunities for students and staff to increase their skills and knowledge, clear procedures for research and an exemplary early childhood service.   I now analyse the positioning and integration of the director's role within the WECC and the university.

5.5 The positioning and integration of the director within the WECC and the university

During the data analysis it was apparent the director's role was well positioned and integrated within the centre and university, Mary acknowledged her role within the WECC:

> I was appointed to establish the WECC. This was a new service so my responsibilities included everything, licensing, staff employment, equipment and supplies. The Centre opened 25 years ago. For a period of 5 years I worked as the Executive Director managing both centres at the University with Assistant directors at each site. My role included all licensing accreditation and legislative requirements, policies, staff recruitment, liaison with Campus partners; daily administration and management including financial management; staff employment, induction, training, performance management and professional development; centre development, policy development and implementation; annual review of policies and programs; implementation of programs enhancing the learning and development of young children; fostering partnerships with families and the community including establishing and evaluating goals for centre development. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

In this study, Mary commented that the centre was "managed under an agreement with the university to provide a service to staff and students of the university. My position as a director was as a 'visitor'. However, when there were issues of a 'childcare' nature the university would see me for consultation" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

Mary acknowledged that she did not feel fully integrated within the university and, thus, the term "visitor" seemed apt and she was only required by the university when her expertise or experience was needed in relation to a childcare issue. Despite this perceived "visitor" status, the WECC was included within the university through both the organisational structure and direct support, as well as connection with the academic areas. One example of the connections and collaborations was a partnership between the WECC, the university and a local research workplace that offered a specialised industry PhD program and scholarship. The workplace was located on the university site and promoted the centre service as a way to attract international staff and students with children. Mary outlined this as a long term and mutually beneficial arrangement (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

The impact of the Vice Chancellor (VC) on the integration of the WECC within the university was a strong point made by the director. Mary particularly acknowledged the impact that the various VCs had on the integration of the director and the WECC within the university. Mary was asked

how she perceived the integration of their centre within the university and how it was supported or otherwise by the university management, policies and structure. She responded "this has changed considerably over the past 25 years and also varies with the focus/philosophy of the VC" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). The reported shifting VC focus appeared influential for the director reporting lines, the centre integration within the university, funding models as well as her role in promoting university teaching and research.

The organisational and governance structure further influenced how the WECC Director was positioned and integrated within the university. The WECC was governed by a not-for-profit Independent Childcare Management Body incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act* 1985. The body also included centre parent and educator representation. It was established in 1994, and the objects were to:

1.   Conduct and manage childcare and related services for the children of staff, students and other members of the university and wider community in accordance with the Association's philosophy; and,

2.   Do all things as may be incidental to the attainment of these objects. (The WECC, 2020)

There were only the two objects stated within the constitution of this Independent Childcare Management Body. The Independent Childcare Management Body also had a service agreement with the university to operate and manage the WECC. The agreement stated:

> The university provides the premises for a small rental and some funds to support governance, and the Independent Childcare Management Body operates the services. As a not-for-profit entity, all Independent Childcare management Body income goes entirely to operating the centre. Income is predominantly from fees from parents, and the Independent Childcare Management Body strives to balance providing best possible service with the lowest possible fees. (Case Study Centre University, 2020)

Thus, the university owned WECC, but the Independent Childcare Management Body governed the centre as a separately incorporated entity and was deemed not part of the university. The management body was supported in its overall centre governance by the director who was directly responsible for the daily service management, staffing and administration (The WECC Enrolment Handbook, 2019). Mary advised that within this management structure, her direct supervisor was the chairperson of the Independent Childcare Management Body. The Director reported meeting formally with the chairperson every month to discuss items relating to her role (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). The affairs of the Independent Childcare Management Body were

governed by a seven member board including: a person not employed by, or students of the university, and not a parent user of the WECC appointed by the University Council; two persons nominated by the University's Chief Operating Officer, one of whom must have financial expertise; one parent member from each on-campus ECC, selected according to processes determined by the Board; and, the director of both the WECC and the other on-campus ECC (The WECC webpage, 2019).

The 20-year period of service agreement had commenced on 1 July 1995 and, at the time of the data collection in 2019, a new service agreement was being reviewed. There was no data obtainable to indicate that a new service agreement had been reviewed and agreed upon. In summary, the WECC director was responsible for the day-to-day centre management and, importantly, beyond the management body and university, she was supported by a Parent Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG met monthly and discussed and planned centre development, and organised family occasions (The WECC webpage, 2019). The workflow of the WECC Organisational Structure is documented in Figure 5.1 and highlights the WECC organisational and management structure, in particular, the relationships and positioning of the WECC Director with the university governance, the WECC management body and the PAG (as interpreted from the WEEC webpage, 2019). The arrows indicate the reporting and accountability lines, these are bidirectional in relation to communication, practices and policies, plus the development and achievement of strategic goals.

The WECC organisational structure and reporting lines in Figure 5.1 provide a diagrammatical representation of the hierarchy according to responsibilities and interrelationships that formally occurred. The Independent Childcare Management Body was directly linked to the university through a service agreement. Another link that the WECC and the university had was through one board member being directly appointed by the University Council and two members nominated by the University's Chief Operating Officer providing further formal links. The positioning and integration of the director within the WECC and the university was evident.

The WECC Organisational Structure

Independent Childcare Management Body

University Council(1 person nominated by council as member on board)

Chairperson of the Independent Childcare Management Body

Board of Management-7 member board

Chancellor

Vice Chancellor

The Director WECC (Nominated Supervisor)

Parent Advisory Group

Chief Operating Officer (2 persons nominated by COO as members on board- 1 with financial expertise)

Staff of the WECC

Academic Faculties
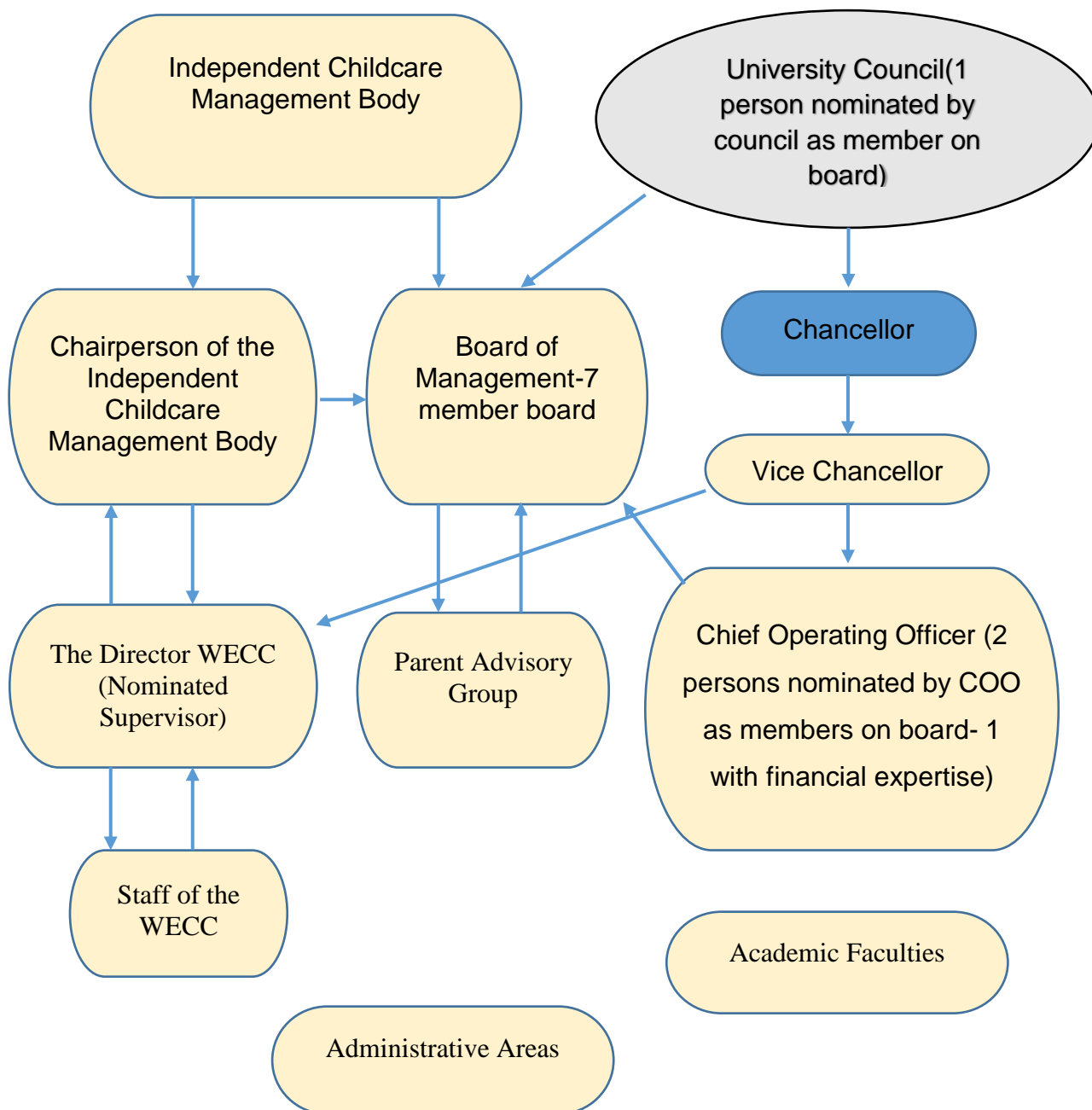
Administrative Areas

Figure 5-1 The WECC organisational structure and reporting lines

5.6 The WECC policies and practices in relation to university teaching and research strategic goals

The policies and practices of the WECC appeared to support the university's strategic teaching and research goals. The university strategic plan stated "Five Pillars to Excellence" which defined and shaped the path of the university's strategic plan. These pillars connected the research and teaching potential with the crucial challenges confronted by changing worlds (Case Study Centre University, 2020). Reflecting on correlations between the "Five Pillars to Excellence" and the centre policies and practices provides an opportunity to identify and review similarities or signs of connectedness. Table 5.2 highlights the similarities between the university strategic pillars and the WECC policies and practices.

Table 5-2 University Strategic Pillars in relation WECC Policies and Practices

University Five Pillars to Excellence	Centre Policies and Practices
1. Connected to the global world of ideas	The WECC is committed to exploring and implementing ways to save water and energy, reduce waste, expand children's environmental education and foster sustainable lifestyles. The approach to education for sustainability (EfS) for young children is an experiential one providing opportunities for child-initiated experiences that support children to learn through discovery, using very day teachable moments. Children are actively involved in growing and monitoring plants, recycling, water and energy saving.
2. A magnet for talent	Awards The WECC is proud to have received an award at the 2016 KESAB Expo as the Early Years site with the greatest reduction of waste to landfill. Between July 2014 and July 2016 we reduced our waste by 43%. In 2011, the WECC received a commendation award for water saving strategies and 'Most Outstanding Site' for Education for Sustainability award from NRM Education. The WECC is proud to be the winner of the gold award in the Schools and Communities section of the Botanic Gardens Native and Sustainable Gardens 2011.
3. Research that shapes the future	The Centre employs an Education for Sustainability Teacher who is responsible for working with children in the outdoor play spaces and the kitchen gardens to observe and document curriculum and learning. Building and maintaining knowledge and understandings of the traditional owners of the land, and for maintaining the centre's Site Environment Management Plan (SEMP).
4. A 21st century education for a growing community of learners	Committed to providing high quality education and care services to the university campus. We foster reciprocal connections between children, families and staff to create a welcoming and safe learning environment. We promote relationships that support children to develop a sense of belonging and community respect and care for each other and the environment. See themselves as confident, adaptable and capable.
5. The beating heart of the city in which the WECC is situated	We recognise and celebrate our diverse backgrounds and the abilities that we all bring to our community. (The WECC Enrolment Handbook, 2019).

There were consistent similarities between the university five pillars to excellence and the centre policies and practices. These alignments were across all pillars and provided the centre with direction as well as support and evidence when the director was required to justify connections within the university academic and/or administrative functions (Case Study Centre University, 2020). The alignments appeared to be a foundation to enable the WECC to thrive and better meet the needs of the students, researchers within an ever-changing tertiary environment. The pillars also identify more broadly trends and priorities in the higher education environment. Barbour and McBride (2017) describe examples of such trends and the importance for on-campus ECC's to be aligned and in-tune with these in order to thrive. For on-campus centres to do well, staff must be cognisant of the ecosystems in which they function and must respond effectively to provide value to the institution they serve, supporting the creation of flexible, engaging and authentic learning environments.

Mary, was committed to attracting and retaining tertiary students and academic staff university-wide by providing education and care for their children. As Mary stated "the service has a role in supporting women/families to return to work and study and in assisting the university in recruiting and retaining both students and academics including those involved in research" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). Further, the *WECC Enrolment Handbook* (2019) expanded on these sentiments:

> The centre also supports people wishing to gain employment in the early childhood field and offers placements for tertiary students undertaking formal training and work experience for secondary students. (The WECC Enrolment Handbook, 2019, p. 12)

In addition, Mary reported informal interactions and discussions about university teaching and research when university academic parents or students were dropping off or picking up their children at the centre. She had the opportunity to discuss with them ideas for future research possibilities, either for themselves or their children becoming research participants, and utilising parent expertise within centre research and projects (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). Such informal discussions were reported to occur regularly, providing opportunities for the Director to actively engage with the academic families to promote and facilitate teaching and research.

Mary discussed further ways in which the WECC linked with the university teaching and research initiatives and noted Education for Sustainability (EfS) was one of the main linking elements. She explained that this included joining the university Fair Trade Committee, attending Eco-training

and participating in the development of the Ecoversity Goals (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). The Ecoversity Goals were described as integral to the university ecoversity campus sustainability program, "Ecoversity is the university's sustainability engagement program. All Ecoversity activities, campaigns and events are geared towards developing a campus culture that values and applies sustainable practices" (Case Study Centre University webpage, 2020). Elliott, (unpublished) acknowledges the significance of a sustainability alignment between an on-campus ECC and the university in which it is situated, noting that the Arlitt Centre and the University of Cincinnati have successfully integrated through a shared sustainability mission and policies. In addition, Mary and staff researched and applied for funds to complete a community garden within the university campus. Mary commented that the main policy and practice of the university was centered around ecoversity and sustainability with the WECC having a strong focus on these areas:

> EfS has been the main element that has promoted links with the Uni. This has involved us being invited to join the Fair Trade committee and attend Eco training provided by the university with the release of their Ecoversity goals. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Mary acknowledged that, although the university did not offer an early childhood degree course, the WECC was valued by the university as supporting research opportunities on-campus as well as other on-campus affiliations. She stated:

> While this university campus does not have an early childhood course our centre is valued, because we support other organisations like TAFEs and universities with their teaching and research. This has meant us having a variety of different students coming here on placement, we have had students such as early childhood, speech therapy, even architect students designing buildings. I have also had other requests for reviewing proposed courses at TAFEs and university. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

This has meant that the WECC receives a variety of on-campus and off-campus students and researchers from a range of disciplines, including early childhood, speech therapy, architecture and others. Also, the research role was acknowledged in the university website:

> The University in which WECC is located is one of Australia's most research-intensive institutions. With world-leading researchers, modern facilities and an innovative culture, we're committed to delivering research that is highly valued by our local and global communities. (Case Study Centre University, 2020)

The WECC policies and practices, therefore, supported the university strategic goals in alignment to the university's "Five Pillars of Excellence", sustainability and ecoversity policies. The WECC Director appeared very committed to providing high quality early childhood education and care in alignment with these. Such alignments beyond the centre, I speculate, may promote a centre culture for continual self-reflection, learning and improvement, and bode well for centre integration within the university. McBride (2012) supports the importance of such alignments, noting that awareness of and responding to the university needs can contribute to an on-campus centre's unique knowledge and abilities to enhance outcomes for children and families, plus university teaching and research.

5.7 The university policies, practices and organisational structure, that support the integration of the WECC

Throughout the data collection and analysis, Mary's commitment to the integration of the WECC within the university became apparent. There were embedded university policies and practices as well as organisational structures that supported and reflected the importance the university placed on the WECC and its role in teaching and research.

5.7.1 Policies and Practices

The university policies and practices that supported the integration of the WECC included the integration of the WECC within the university website. The ECC was accessed from the website, which stated:

> Welcome to Child Care Services
>
> Children's services are offered on the University Campus. The WECC are operated by an independent, not-for-profit association, The University Childcare Services Inc., in premises provided by the University. The centres are available for use by staff, students and the broader community. Full-time and part-time care is provided. The centres are open Monday to Friday but closed on all public holidays and for several weeks during Christmas and New Year (The WECC website 2020).

The WECC is located on the university campus and this is acknowledged and publicised on the university website (The WECC website, 2020). The university also acknowledged on the website the awards that the WECC has achieved, including an award at the 2016 KESAB Expo as the Early Years site with the greatest reduction of waste to landfill (The WECC Website, 2020).

From a more informal perspective, Mary stated during the on-site interview that academic knowledge and current research were consistently shared among adults involved with the service. As an embedded practice, she argued:

> We are able to utilise parent skills and knowledge. Those who work or study at the university. We can use parent skills in having the expertise and experience in assisting us in developing and writing grant applications. There are also connections through the presence of academic parents attending our centre on a daily basis with their children as well as an affiliation with the independent childcare management body and the advisory group which gave us both formal and informal ways to have discussions to occur around teaching and research opportunities. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Thus, opportunities for staff/parent/stakeholder networking to identify skills and expertise, could potentially lead to innovative university teaching and research collaborations.

5.7.2 Organisational structure

First, there were a number of organisational structures that appeared to impact the integration of the WECC within the university. Throughout the document collection and analysis process, the WECC was not clearly identified in university master plans and similar documents (The WECC Handbook and website). Detailed examination of the university master plan, enterprise agreement, policies and website did not identify any reference or connection to the WECC as a support to the university for teaching and/or research. The WECC was only identified on the university website as a childcare centre under student and staff facilities, linking then to general information about the services offered, governance and for families to express interest in centre care, but with no reference to the integration of the WECC within the academic aspects of the university (The WECC Handbook and website). Thus, in a formal sense, there was no reference that visibly demonstrated the integration of the centre within the university profile.

There were also a number of organisational structures that may impact on the integration of an ECC within a university, including the management of centre physical aspects and facilities. The service agreement between the Independent Childcare Management Body and the university stated that the university maintained the building, building fabric, and site services/fixtures and all outside areas, including lawns, garden beds, fences and paths. It also stated that the university did not cover the costs of fixtures, floor coverings or play equipment, but covered the cost of all waste removal (The Child Care Services Agreement, 1996).

Another organisational aspect with implications for centre integration were the centre roles of academic and professional staff. The WECC appeared integrated within the university organisational structure, university staff were described as actively involved in the management of the centre and the centre was located on the university site. For example, Mary noted that the centre board of management consisted of two parent representatives and two university members taking on the roles of the treasurer and secretary as well as an independent chair (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). These positions provided the opportunity for university academic and professional staff to be actively involved in the centre management and operation. Mary also commented on the benefits of having university academic and professional staff involved within the centre, as well as how this positively impacted on being able to facilitate and promote teaching and research:

> The Parent Advisory Group being able to utilise parent skills and knowledge. Those who work or study at the university. For example, parent skills in having the expertise and experience in assisting the service in developing and writing grant applications. I think our centre has developed a culture of learning as we have always supported our own educators and others to undertake relevant studies and engaged in projects that promote and value high quality EC practice. As we are on the Uni email network we receive regular updates on what is happening on the Campus and with aspects such as research. Talking with our families also expands our knowledge of current projects and research as they work on the campus and academic parents often support and encourage us. There does need to be a level of interest and being proactive to find out about the teaching and research that is happening on the university campus and the level of engagement and information received also depends on how others see the role of the Centre. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

With regard to the financial implications of centre integration within the university, I was interested in whether this impacted the centre fee structure and the university expectation of the centre being financially self-sustaining. The WECC fees as of July 1st 2019 were $113 per day, which contributed to covering the operational costs of the service. According to Care for Kids (2020) the average cost of childcare in the local area of the WECC was $100.75 per day, lower than the daily fee at the WECC. This prompted my further questioning with regard to charging higher fees, but being at full capacity with a waiting list. As for the PECC (refer to Chapter 4), I again questioned whether this related to local childcare demand, the service reputation and/or university staff convenience. I speculate, from my own experience, these factors will impact the ability to charge higher fees, but also ask if the ability to charge higher fees than other local centres

was related to being a centre associated with a university. Perhaps, like PECC, a perceived academic advantage by children and families.

Mary did not discuss or disclose the details of whether the university covered the costs of structural items such as the building and repairs and utilities, such as power and water or, in fact, if there were any consequences of not being financially self-sustaining. The WECC had an agreement with the university to manage and operate the centre. Mary stated that "the University provided the premises for a small rental and some funds to support governance, and the Independent Childcare Management Body operates the services" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). As stated earlier in this chapter, income was predominantly from parent fees with the Director consistently needing to balance the fees charged to families to cover the usual staffing and operational costs of an ECC.

The university organisational structure, policies and practices supported the integration of the WECC as a quality centre within the university. This included providing and maintaining the physical centre aspects, acknowledging the WECC service through websites and the Director also commented of the WECC's role in attracting and retaining high-profile academics (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). Mary indicated that the university management valued the WECC in supporting research opportunities and acknowledged the centre's role in EfS, including the Ecoversity Sustainability Engagement Program. Despite all these positive indicators, I could not locate any documents to identify the WECC as acknowledged or formally supported by the university management for its teaching and/or research role at the university.

5.8   Challenges

An interesting aspect of the interview was the Director's comments about the challenges she faced in reaching the full potential for supporting teaching and research and linking to the university strategic goals. Mary acknowledged a variety of challenges and indicated the major challenges included a "combination of lack of support, lack of valuing of what we do, lack of time and lack of funds" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). The remaining challenges identified by the director were categorised under the headings of relational, practical and managerial.

5.8.1   Relational

Mary commented on not being able to fully meet the family's needs, including: not having the available space at the service to support the care needs of families; the language barrier in

communicating with families especially in understanding the Australian child care systems; and, the WECC closing for two weeks over the Christmas and New Year period, yet some families undertaking postgraduate studies requiring care during this time. She also felt there was a challenge when student families do not have flexibility from supervisors and academics in relation to parenting and care needs as well as the challenge of engaging with time-poor families (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). It appeared that Mary was focused on establishing positive relationships with the WECC families and strived to meet their needs.

5.8.2 Practical

Mary commented that as the university campus was primarily established for scientific laboratory and research activities, this was a challenge as it limited the access of children to many areas on the campus. She also stated that being extremely time poor was a challenge, while trying to balance usual early childhood director role requirements as well as the additional workload associated with working at an on-campus centre. Mary also indicated this greatly impacted on her ability to reach her full potential for supporting teaching and research and for linking the centre to the university strategic goals. She went on to add that this also included the time to acquire knowledge to support teaching and research and know where to find out about and connect with teaching and research on-campus (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). As discussed in Chapter 2 (see McBride et al., 2012), the topics of communication and being time poor are acknowledged challenges for on-campus early childhood directors in meeting their full role potential. Being able to balance the requirements of an ECC under the NQF (ACECQA, 2020), in addition to the director responsibilities of a campus centre support this observation.

5.8.3 Managerial

Communication barriers were stated by the Director as the most significant challenges she faced in reaching the full potential for supporting university teaching and research, and for linking to the university strategic goals. Mary commented that this primarily included the challenge of ineffective, unstructured and/or informal communications between academic staff in faculties, university management and the director herself. She considered that this then led to not being visible or acknowledged within the university and, therefore, not being able to effectively link the WECC to campus events and initiatives around teaching and research. She also described how a lack of acknowledgement and support impeded the WECC in grant opportunities, which, if successful, would benefit the university. Mary's concluding comment was the barrier and

challenge of "not being visible or acknowledged within the University and the lack of support and valuing of what we do by university management, academics and staff" (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

The Director acknowledged that these areas inhibited her ability to reach full potential to facilitate and promote university teaching and research at the WECC, something she aspired to achieve.

5.9   Reflection

During the data collection, and in-depth face-to-face interviews, I concentrated on the Director's context, listening and inadvertently viewing the data through a comparative lens. I made no comparative statements, but instead focused on the participant's story. Mary talked enthusiastically about the early childhood education profession, the value of life-long learning and sustainability. All of these qualities also resonated with my work as a director. I particularly valued the quote the WECC director shared by William A. Foster:

> Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

Far removed from early childhood education, William A. Foster was a United States Marine who received the Medal of Honor for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" during World War II during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 (Famous Quotes & Sayings, 2020). Mary acknowledged that the centre had always promoted quality leadership that values the strength and knowledge of others (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

This chapter has contributed to my thesis by providing an examination of the WECC and, specifically, the role of the director. It appeared that the commitment, motivation and knowledge of the director had a direct impact on supporting university teaching and research. The Director had been in the role for an extended time, managing and leading the centre as well as promoting and supporting university teaching and research. I perceived the WECC Director to be dedicated and committed to lifelong learning, supporting this value amongst her staff and also valuing her role in providing university teaching and research opportunities within the centre.

In Chapter 6, I will take a comparative approach to the two narratives, investigating the similarities, differences, synthesising key themes and offering my insights from this study about optimum on-campus environments and ways forward.

Chapter 6   Comparisons and conclusions

6.1   Chapter overview

In this chapter, I offer a comparative analysis based on the PECC and the WECC directors' narratives outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. Using a comparative analysis, I highlight the similarities and differences between the narratives of the two directors (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007).

I consider how the university management, structures, policies and practices moulded these narratives and impacted the roles of the two directors. In particular, I discuss: the qualifications and experience of the director; the role of the director; the physical contexts impacting university teaching and research; the ratios and qualifications impacting university teaching and research; the organisational positioning of the ECC as well as the impact and alignment of policies and practices; and, the alignments of the ECC's within the broader university context.

I identify and discuss the mutual benefits of on-campus ECCs for the ECC and the university, some challenges reported by the directors and then ways forward for creating optimum environments. Finally, I provide recommendations for future research, my own reflections and concluding statements acknowledging the role of ECC directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on-campus ECCs.

6.2   A comparative analysis and discussion of the two centre director narratives

An overarching similarity that emerged was the significant influence of the directors on the integration of the centre within the university at both the WECC and the PECC. As stated in Chapter 2, "the campus child care director's activities do influence the internal success of a centre" (Myers & Palmer, 2015, p. 110). This overarching similarity of significant director influence underpinned other emerging factors and themes. For this study, comparative analysis summarises the key similarities and differences between the two case study director's narratives and informs the pragmatic points discussed in Table 6-1. The list of factors identified as the guides to examine the similarities and differences were derived from the research questions and the common threads throughout the director's narratives.

Table 6-1 Comparative Analysis: Similarities and differences between the two case study director narratives

The university factors impacting the director's role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research	Similarities	Differences	
		WECC	**PECC**
Qualifications and experience of the director	Both postgraduate studies and extensive experience		
Role of the director		WECC director 100% centre director	PECC director 50% University Academic and 50% centre director
Physical location		WECC located on the outer edge of the university campus. Bushland setting with a nature play based outdoor area	PECC located within the physical structure of the education department
Staff ratios and qualifications	Both centres maintained staff ratios and qualifications exceeding the required minimum standards		
Organisational positioning of the ECC		WECC director reported to a university Board of Management	PECC director reported directly to the university Head of the School of Education
Alignments: ECC policies and practices with university strategic goals and within the broader university		WECC policies supported the university's educational and strategic teaching research goals in an informal and unstructured manner WECC was not directly aligned within broader university management, structure of the service, employment awards, physical location, or direct reporting lines	PECC policies with the university in a formal and officially recognised manner PECC directly aligned within broader university management, structure of the service, employment awards, physical location, and reporting lines

Table 6-1 highlights that there were a greater number of differences between the two centres than similarities, even though both centre directors provided the university staff and students with high quality on-campus early childhood education and care. In the following discussion, I consider each of the university factors (left hand column, Table 6-1) impacting the director's narratives in turn. I will now proceed to undertake a further in-depth comparative analysis of the seven identified factors.

6.3 The university factors impacting the director's role in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research

Utilising a case-orientated comparative approach the similarities and differences between the two case study director narratives are explored here in further detail.

6.3.1 Qualifications and experience of the directors

Both directors identified they had obtained undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications (refer to Table 6-1); thus, most likely providing the academic knowledge to work within a tertiary teaching and research environment. This also enabled each director to be a role model for both the ECC staff and visiting students, and to establish connections with academics and the university generally. It is also well acknowledged that qualifications are critical to high quality early childhood education. For example, the *Starting Strong: Engaging young children: Lessons from research about quality in early childhood education and care* (OECD, 2018) noted that extremely qualified early childhood staff are suitably placed to construct enriched and stimulating environments and provide the high-quality pedagogy connected with children's enhanced learning and well-being. In addition, the *New South Wales Department of Education Early Childhood Education Workforce Strategy 2018-2022* (The NSW Department of Education, 2018) reported on a range of findings supporting educator qualifications as a key determinant of high-quality outcomes for children both in early childhood education settings and later in school. Pascoe and Brennan (2017) identified a number of minimum strategies to consider improving the Australian early childhood education quality and workforce with the number one strategy being that of improvement in service leadership capability. The directors' relatively high level of qualifications appeared to position them effectively in their leading on-campus centre roles.

In addition to the postgraduate qualifications, both the PECC and WECC directors had extensive professional experience to guide and facilitate on-campus teaching and research. The directors had undertaken roles within the tertiary university or vocational sector teaching and mentoring of students. Both directors stated, in their interviews, that their formal qualifications and professional experience informed their leadership capabilities, knowledge base, and a broad skill set enabling mentoring and advocacy for staff and visiting professionals/academics (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19; The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19). This suggests a highly qualified and experienced director is well-positioned to advocate, facilitate and promote university teaching and

research in on-campus early childhood centres. This factor was one of the two key similarities between the WECC and the PECC as noted in Table 6-1.

6.3.2 Role of the director

There was a significant difference between designated roles for the WECC and the PECC Directors (refer to Table 6-1). The WECC director, Mary, had a full-time role in managing and directing the centre, whereas the PECC Director, Sarah's role was divided equally between managing the centre and being an academic within the university. This latter role provided Sarah, with direct access to and ready alignment with university teaching and research information, policies and practices and varied personnel within the academic areas. Such connections have the capacity to provide the foundations to more fully support teaching and research within the university. Myers and Palmer (2015) state that a campus director's endeavors directly influence the internal success of the centre and that when a director is engaged in a diverse range of campus activities, it increases the possibility that the centre will experience greater visibility, mutual knowledge of purpose and, ultimately, increased integration throughout the university.

6.3.3 Physical location

With respect to physical location, the ECCs were significantly different: the PECC was co-located with the university education department and the WECC somewhat removed (refer to Table 6-1). In the following paragraphs, I explore the potential implications.

The physical location of an ECC may impact on the quality of care provided and potentially the ability to support university teaching and research. The *Starting Strong: Engaging Young Children, Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* (OECD, 2018) research document stated that:

> The physical location of a preschool might also be related to process quality. The literature review indicated that higher process quality was observed in preschools located in schools than in preschools situated outside school grounds or in independently functioning centres. (p. 43)

The key point here is that, although a school setting is not the same as a university, it is the bigger organisation that is able to provide the support in various ways to ECCs. There is potential for collegiate discussion, resource sharing and joint projects within a university context; I suggest the potential is even greater offering mutual benefits from physical co-location.

For example, at the PECC, being located within the physical context of the university education department, invited staff to engage in formal and informal interactions between the centre and academic staff, fostering frequent discussions and critical reflection about university teaching and research. It also had the potential to encourage acknowledgment by the university academics, centre staff and families, the wider community as well as the early childhood profession, that the centre was an integral component of university teaching and research. Further, university staff and visitors may have perceived the PECCs physical site as indicative of the direct relationship between the centre role and purpose and its positioning within the university. Myers and Palmer (2015) state that the perceptions of the ECC by university personnel may well impact the image and purpose of the centre. The location of the centre is significant and may impact the role of the director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. An example of a successfully integrated ECC is the Arlitt Centre for Education, Research and Sustainability situated at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. Elliott (unpublished) states that as the Arlitt Centre was housed within the School of Education. This allowed teaching staff to be regularly in the same space as academic staff, establishing relationships and providing an important physical presence.

Beyond physical co-location, as the PECC was the identified demonstration program for the university's education department, observation areas were available within the centre. These supported visiting preservice teachers, researchers and early childhood professionals, allowing for meaningful observations of children, thus providing a physical space in which teaching and research opportunities could be facilitated.

The WECC, however, was not co-located within the education building area and was on the outer edge of the university campus, limiting the opportunities for the WECC and academic staff to engage in formal and informal interactions for discussion and critical reflection about teaching and research. However, the WECC was situated in a bushland setting with a nature play based outdoor area employed for research and teaching opportunities. The WECC had a national reputation for a strong focus and commitment to outdoor learning and sustainability with research and teaching benefits for the university including sustainability tours and conference delegate visits. The various aspects of physical contexts discussed above appeared to have impacts for the university teaching and research roles of the director.

Physical co-location with a university education department can provide the ECC director with the optimum environment to fulfil their role to facilitate and support university teaching and research. Notably, an on-campus ECC is subject to the same requirements as any other ECC, but

the physical location brings with opportunities to be part of a larger organisation, significantly leading university teaching and research. An ECC physically located within the precinct of the university education department provides opportunities for interactions between the centre and academic staff, and the potential for the ECC to be regarded as an integral component of university teaching and research.

6.3.4 Staff ratios and qualifications

Both centres maintain staff ratios and qualifications exceeding the required minimum standards (refer to Table 6-1) and this has impacts for both the directors and staff in facilitating university teaching and research. I initially address staff qualification and ratio findings and literature, then discuss the likely impacts for university teaching and research.

The staff at both centres exceeded the minimum qualifications as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. There is support for the highest possible levels of qualification in the early childhood education field and this links directly to promoting high quality programs. For example, in their *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools Through Early Childhood Interventions,* Pascoe and Brennan (2017) argue:

> The quality of the workforce is critical to early childhood education achieving the desired learning outcomes. The single most important element of service quality is the interaction between child and educators, and training and qualifications improve these interactions. (p. 83)

In addition, Pascoe and Brennan (2017) identified a number of minimum strategies to consider improving "quality and workforce", the second strategy being pre-service training quality and content. Also, Torii, Fox and Cloney (2017) claim that a quality centre can be defined by the characteristics of the staff, with the most important factor being the amount of and content of teacher education and ongoing, embedded and evidence-informed professional development. Stating that highly trained staff are increasingly likely to identify children's interests, appropriately communicate with children, react suitably and attentively to children's needs and design, plan and implement appropriate personalised learning opportunities.

In this study, each centre exceeded the *National Quality Standard* (ACECQA, 2020) by employing a higher percentage of educators with early childhood teaching degrees or diplomas in children's services. Fenech et al. (2012) after undertaking a critical analysis of the NQF (ACECQA, 2020) stated that their research:

Demonstrates the value added benefit of teacher qualifications to the provision of quality early childhood education and optimal developmental outcomes for children. The employment of a core of university qualified teachers on staff was a significant contributor to their high quality ratings. (p. 7)

With respect to ratios, both centres had additional degree qualified Early Childhood Teacher's (ECT's) in each play space, higher than required under the *National Regulations* (ACECQA, 2020). Both centres also implemented above the required national teacher/child ratios and ECT requirements for the numbers of children attending (ACECQA, 2020). As stated almost two decades ago by Ceglowski and Bacigalupa (2002), low adult/child ratios are associated with higher quality early childhood settings; and, this has not changed. Similarly, the 2018 OECD research document stated:

On the topic of ECEC settings' quality standards and governance, the majority of the evidence summarised demonstrated that smaller ratios and group sizes were associated with positive staff-child relationships. (p. 43)

Staff ratios and qualifications exceeding the required minimum standards (refer to Table 6-1), I argue, are directly linked to enabling the director to effectively support and facilitate university teaching and research.

The "above the norm" staff ratios and qualifications outlined, also visibly demonstrated that, for both the PECC and the WECC, high quality early childhood education was valued by the centre community and university. In this context, best practice was facilitated for teaching students and supporting research. Similarly, both directors valued lifelong learning and encouraged this among their staff to promote a high quality ECC – arguably a strong basis for university teaching and research. The directors embedded supporting teaching and research within the on-campus ECC by accepting and supporting students and researchers from a wide range of disciplines. By focusing on lifelong learning, the directors had established their role within the centre as the guiding force, not only supporting university teaching and research, but also embedding and establishing the philosophy and practices of the centre by prioritising teaching and research.

Exceeding the qualifications and ratios combined with the director's guiding force appeared to have a direct correlation to the director's role in ensuring high quality education and care to facilitate and promote university teaching and research. These points respond to the research questions as how the ECC director perceived the significance and importance of university

teaching and research and how the ECC policies and practices supported the strategic goals of university teaching and research.

6.3.5 Organisational positioning of the ECC

A key finding was the contrasting organisational positioning of the centres (refer to Table 6-1) and how this appeared to have a direct impact on the director being effective in facilitating and supporting university teaching and research.

For example, the PECC, as argued in Chapter 4, was managed and operated directly through the university, providing direct links to supervisors, academic staff and support staff. The Director, Sarah, consistently referred to the centre being "known as a site of research". The implications of this title, the reputation and the history of the centre appeared to inspire the director to continue to formulate and reflect on centre policies, practices and initiatives. Sarah, held an equally split role between director and academic and was employed under the University Agreement at the same level as the university academics and professional staff, which further embedded the connection between the PECC and the university (refer to Chapter 4). By contrast, at the WECC Director, Mary, was employed under the Children's Services Award 2010 (refer to Chapter 5) and reported to the chairperson of an Independent Childcare Management Body, which did not embed a direct and formal link within the university organisational structure.

Drawing on the literature available, the organisational positioning of an on-campus ECC influences the ability of the director to facilitate and promote university teaching and research. The director of an on-campus ECC plays a crucial role in developing and maintaining productive relationships with the university professional and academic staff. For example, Myers and Palmer (2015) found:

> Moderate and high correlations among the variables of communicating the mission, collecting and reporting data, and formal and informal interactions with top-level administrators. Regression analysis revealed that informal and informal interactions by the director with administrators positively influence integration, as well as the entire director activities grouped together. Thus, our major finding is that the campus child care director's activities do influence the internal success of a centre. (p. 15)

Myers and Palmer (2015) also stated that their data revealed that the activities of the director in communicating the vision and formally interacting with university staff, led to a greater level of centre integration within the university. Their research identified that the crucial role of the

director in fostering and sustaining the relationship with university staff was through the director's continuing and sustained communication alongside nurturing these critical relationships.

Thus, I argue the directors need to be active participants in the university system and commit to ensuring that teaching and research opportunities are explored, fostered and maintained within their centres. This requires dedication, developing relationships, organisational skills and the commitment to reach the potential of the teaching and research that the ECC can offer the university. The PECC Director had an active role within the academic area and through this and their commitment to teaching and research they appeared well able to develop and maintain a direct relationship with the university staff and management. This ultimately may have benefited the university in meeting teaching and research strategic goals. Elicker and Barbour (2012) state that on-campus ECCs situated within the organisational structure of academic departments can:

> Provide unique opportunities for faculty and experienced early childhood professionals to collaborate; to better understand young children's experiences in early schooling; to investigate teaching and learning processes in depth; and to experiment with new approaches to teaching, learning and working with families. (p. 142)

In summary, an on-campus ECC, when situated within the organisational structure, such as academic departments, and aligned with the strategic university directions can promote and facilitate teaching and research opportunities. The study of the PECC and reflection of my own personal experience suggests the alignments and support that an on-campus centre receives can positively impact on the effectiveness of this integration and the centre achievements. I perceived that the PECC was integrated within the university through the physical centre location described above, the positioning of the director within the organisational structures, as well as the recognition within the university policies and practices; these were all factors emerging from the director's narrative.

The WECC was significantly less integrated within the university when using to the same criteria of factors that enabled the PECC to be integrated. The physical locality, organisational structure and recognition of the university staff appeared to hinder the WECC Director in fully facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. However, from observations of the services and interview responses, both services appeared to be respected by the university management and staff in their role of providing high quality early childhood education and care for the children of staff and students.

6.3.6 Alignments: The ECC policies and practices with university strategic goals and alignments with the broader university

In summary, the PECC practices were formalised and structured within the policies of the centre, whereas the WECC practices were not clearly defined in the policies (refer to Table 6-1). At the PECC, policies and practices were aligned with and supported the strategic goals of the university teaching and research in a formal and officially recognised manner. By contrast, the WECC policies and practices, while supportive of the university's strategic goals, did so in an informal and unstructured manner. In particular, the strength of the policy and practice alignments for the PECC with the university were demonstrated by:

- The numerous references throughout the PECC university webpage connecting the centre and university to research and teaching and the role of the centre in supporting university teaching and research initiatives and programs;
- The PECC policies and practice on research, teaching and visitor interactions which aligned with and supported the university teaching and research strategic goals; and, the PECC produced teaching resources that promoted and substantiated the facility as a centre of excellence and assisted in elevating the university's teaching and research significance within the early childhood education field (refer to Chapter 4).

These alignments potentially offer a model for other on-campus ECC's and universities. When an on-campus ECC is effectively aligned and formally managed and organised within the university structure, policies and practices, I assert the university teaching and research goals can be readily promoted and facilitated and the centre can reach its full potential.

The alignments of the ECC within the broader university were crucial and impacted the director's role in various ways. First, as stated in Chapter 4, the PECC and university were clearly aligned, both acknowledging the role the centre played in supporting teaching and research among the wider university community and families. The PECC Director, Sarah, communicated to the centre teachers and educators the role of the service within the university community. The PECC was aligned with the university through the management structure of the service, employment awards, physical location, and reporting lines. This alignment was a vital and extremely critical theme that arose from this study. The significance of the centre being effectively integrated through these alignments positively correlated with the support the centre staff provided in teaching and research, the fundamental basis of a university. File (2012) states that by pursuing a multilayered

mission that comprises research and teaching, university on-campus centres have helped define early childhood education as scholarly work.

Second, another broader alignment factor was the employment awards and the differences between the PECC and the WECC (refer to Table 6-1). The question remains whether the awards that the directors and staff were employed under (either the university award for the PECC or the children's services award for the WECC) had an impact on their roles supporting university teaching and research. Notably, the university award provided staff with enhanced conditions over the Children's Services Award 2010 (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2020). It would appear that if the ECC director and staff are well recompensed and in accordance with their qualifications and experience, they will, ultimately, or are more likely to, strive for and aim to support and facilitate university teaching and research opportunities.

Third, the university management structure had implications for broader alignments. As revealed in Chapter 5, the WECC was not managed directly through the university management structure and the director often referred to facing challenges in gaining access to academic staff, support staff and university teaching and research opportunities. With respect to directors' roles, as opposed to the PECC Director, the WECC Director did not have an academic role and was not involved officially within the academic aspects of the university. The WECC Director acknowledged the impact of the Vice Chancellor (VC) on the integration of the WECC within the university and that the depth of this alignment could change depending on the VC at the time.

In summary, this comparative analysis approach has identified similarities and differences between the two case study director narratives. The university factors impacting the directors' narratives for both the PECC and the WECC and were centred on the qualifications and experience of the Directors, role of the director, physical location of the centre, ratios and qualifications, organisational positioning of the ECC, the alignments of the ECC policies and practices with university strategic goals and within the broader university.

After acknowledging these similarities and differences between the centre and the university the concept of mutual benefits for the on-campus ECC and the university emerged.

6.4   Mutual benefits: On-campus ECC's and universities

This research has identified numerous mutual benefits for on-campus ECCs and the university in which it is situated. These benefits may flow through to the early childhood profession, the

students and staff of the university, the staff, children and families of the centre and the wider community. The particular benefits substantiated by this study include supporting and facilitating the strategic university teaching and research goals, attracting and retaining university students and staff and enhancing the professionalism of the EC sector. Barbour and McBride (2017) state that it is not sufficient for an on-campus ECC to only provide exemplary services to young children and their families, they also represent the entire academic enterprise, including carrying out research on early education and child development, developing the upcoming generation of early childhood professionals, and actively participating with the community to enhance people's lives. Engagement in research and tertiary teaching is the defining difference between on-campus ECC's and those in the wider community.

6.4.1 Supporting and facilitating the strategic university teaching and research goals

When an ECC is aligned and integrated within the university, the ECC becomes a rich resource for the university to utilise, support and publicise as a teaching and research asset. Both Directors referred to accepting, facilitating and supporting early childhood teaching students as well as university students from other disciplines to assist the university to meet strategic teaching goals. The PECC Director, Sarah, referred to the centre as a demonstration program with 25 years of history supporting teaching and research as a demonstration service (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). Sarah commented on the opportunities to support and facilitate the university teaching goals that were embedded in the policies and practices of the centre with lots of opportunities for students from a variety of disciplines to undertake observation days and practicums. McBride et al. (2012) state that developmental research undertaken at on-campus ECCs can focus on the real experiences and happenings of children and families and lead to developments and reforms in university teaching and learning practice. This, in turn, has implications for teaching students who are more likely to experience leading research-based practice during placements and visits.

On-campus ECCs appear to be ideally located as a resource for academic staff and students at the university to undertake research in a variety of disciplines. From this study, it has emerged that the director is well positioned to facilitate and promote university research. File (2012) argues that lab schools are uniquely suited for research involving close analysis of teaching and learning in context and research that may be integrated with the teaching and service missions. She also noted that lab schools can provide supportive environments for in-depth examination of young children's

experiences and learning, often using qualitative research methodologies, and by developing closer teacher-researcher collaborations (File, 2012).

6.4.2 Attracting and retaining university students and staff

An on-campus ECC can be utilised by a university in a multitude of positive and constructive ways, including supporting university endeavours to attract and retain students and staff. This might be academic and professional staff, undergraduate students, post graduate students, international students and shorter-term university visitors. McCorriston (1992) listed internal and external benefits of on-campus ECCs, including employer-sponsored child care benefits for campus employees and onsite child care services for employees and student-parents. The Director at the WECC, Mary, acknowledged the centre's role in attracting and supporting students and staff at the university:

> A lot of research students and post graduate students of this university have children at this centre. And a lot of these families are international families of international students. Our service has a role in supporting women and families to return to work and study and we assist the university in recruiting and retaining both students and academics including those involved in research. Having on-site childcare has in the past attracted some high-profile academics. The availability of our service has been promoted by the university to attract international staff and students. (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19)

The advantages include care and education for children in close proximity to the student and staff member parents of the university, promoting parents returning to work sooner and feeling comfortable and secure within their work environment. Keyes and Boulton (1995) stated:

> That earlier research has revealed that campus child care curriculum can offer an answer to the challenges of delivering quality early childhood education, advocates for children and operates as a model for the community, as well as providing resources for other departments on the campus. (p.100)

6.4.3 Enhancing the professionalism of the sector

The ECC on-campus location can be used to enhance the professionalism of the ECE sector through contributions to university teaching and research as well as the acknowledgment of both the ECC and university as recipients of awards or nominations. As noted in both Chapters 4 and 5, the directors described a variety of awards and nominations that the ECC had received which the university could promote. For example, the PECC produced a wide variety of resources for

the early childhood education sector, including e-books, DVD's, and chronicles covering learning environments, pedagogy, programming and building relationships. The PECC Director, Sarah, expressed a keenness for the centre to become their own "generator of research", to develop and carry out their own program of research rather than just others coming to the service to undertake research (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19); that is, for the PECC to set their own research agenda, leading the way, becoming a leader and advocate for the early childhood profession (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19). The WECC Director, Mary, also stated that much research had been undertaken at the centre and that she actively sought out possible research, primarily action research projects (The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

6.5   Beyond mutual benefits, some reported challenges

There are a multitude of challenges that the director of an on-campus ECC may face that affect the success of the service in supporting university teaching and research strategies. A key challenge reported by the PECC Director was the university management expectation that the PECC should be self-sustaining, requiring a balancing of centre income and expenditure, university employment awards and the NQF requirements of ACECQA (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19).   Also, both directors described operating within the "bureaucratic" environment of a tertiary institution as challenging, including the centralised and hierarchical structure and complex university administrative procedures. In the research arena, both centres were faced with meeting researcher expectations about conducting research in an ECC. For example, what researchers sought may not have been available or achievable within the regulatory and programming constraints of an early childhood setting (The PECC Director Interview, 24/7/19; The WECC Director Interview, 7/7/19).

The Directors also alluded to some relational challenges, for example, when caring for fellow academics' children. This potentially exposed differences in pedagogy, principles and practices and directors were challenged to address these differences professionally and with understanding, respect and confidentiality. As stated by Waniganayake et al. (2017):

> To build relationships with families the intentional leader must first value the importance of diversity and alternate ways of thinking. The leader needs to feel confident and be able to articulate the setting's philosophy and the policies that reflect these values, and provide space and time for relationships to be created and nurtured. (p. 206)

In addition, families in these demonstration and research centres may become fatigued with surveys, being research participants or providing permission for their children to participate in research and teaching opportunities.

Being on-campus created for the directors' additional responsibilities beyond those of directors in typical suburban ECCs. Both directors acknowledged that their biggest challenge was to integrate within the academic areas to assist and align with promoting and supporting university teaching and research. They also acknowledged an aspiration for the university management to recognise, promote and support the ECC as a resource and a facility that benefitted the university with teaching and research opportunities.

In summary, while challenges were forthcoming from both directors, they both articulated a strong commitment to their role as an ECC director and acknowledged the additional responsibilities they felt in directing an on-campus centre. Both directors highlighted the importance of supporting and promoting teaching and research within the university as a crucial component of their role. From their shared insights, both positive and negative, I can now outline ways forward to create optimum environments for an on-campus ECC director to facilitate and promote university teaching and research.

6.6   Ways forward: Creating optimum environments

My question remains: What are some ways forward to create optimum environments for early childhood directors to facilitate and promote university teaching and research in on-campus ECC's? The following responses provide my interpretation of possible ways forward encompassing Wilcox-Herzog and McLarens (2012) components of successful on campus ECC's.

6.6.1 Provide a well-defined mission and educational pedagogy

Wilcox-Herzog and McLarens (2012) state that the mission needs to be clear and easily accessible and comprehensible to members of the campus community. Defining strategies, policies and practices for achieving the mission and processes for recording accomplishments.

A clear centre philosophy includes curriculum and program based on current policy (e.g. *National Quality Standard* (ACECQA, 2020), *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (DEEWR, 2009)), theory, research and, potentially, a well-established, embedded legacy. In view of external benchmarks, on-campus directors are continually aiming high and critically reflecting on how to be consistently above the minimum standards and

requirements set by the *National Quality Standard (*ACECQA, 2020). As recognised research and demonstration centres, leading best practice in the professional field seems almost obligatory.

Not only do on-campus ECCs strive to provide exemplary early childhood services, they must also incorporate university teaching and research within their mission and pedagogy, representing "the total academic enterprise: conducting research on child development and early education, preparing the next generation of early childhood professionals, and engaging with the community to improve people's lives" (Barbour & McBride, 2017, p. 95). Incorporating and embedding this tri-part mission within the on-campus centre pedagogy, policies and practices and communicating these integral aspects of the centre to the university community and the wider early childhood profession.

6.6.2 Align the ECC with academic programs

For an on-campus director to move a centre forward and support and facilitate university teaching and research, I believe an essential component is to both effectively and formally align the teaching and research of the university with the centre. As Wilcox-Herzog and McLarens (2012) address:

> By aligning teaching, research and service within a particular philosophical or curricular approach by providing opportunities for students and staff to increase their knowledge and skills (teaching), having clear policies and procedures for research and providing information to the community at-large and exemplary early childhood services as a showcase (service). Develop links with academic programs on campus by aligning curriculum with college coursework to maximise student learning experience. These links need to be deliberate, intentional, and maintained for the laboratory school to have salience in the institution. (p. 3)

The close physical proximity and accessibility of the ECC to the academic precinct is key to the successful integration of the centre with university academic programs, creating optimum environments. The centre infrastructure must also provide adequate space to allow for not only high-quality teaching, but also observational spaces and dedicated areas for additional professional visitors. Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) state that an adequate and well-furnished space is a conducive and essential component.

The organisational alignments or links of the centre to the academic areas within the university are fundamental for the on-campus ECC director to facilitate and promote university teaching and research. Myers and Palmer (2015) note that for an ECC to be successfully integrated within the university, their directors must pursue integration and support by administrators, academics and

management through the diligent building of communication and relationships with upper-level executives. Staff roles can be interconnected within the academic discipline area, such as education, but also potentially beyond in related disciplines like psychology, sociology and medicine. Both formal and informal networking are essential components to move ECCs forward, by "building relationships through networking with key players and potential advocates. Such networking can lead to fiscal support as well as non-monetary resources" (Wilcox-Herzog & McLaren, 2012, p. 3).

6.6.3 Promote financial stability

Wilcox-Herzog and McLaren (2012) maintain that securing various streams of funding is another factor in moving forward to establish a successful on-campus ECC. For example, multiple income streams are possible, such as the sale of teaching and research resources identified by the PECC Director. Both directors mentioned that applying for grants was an integral part of their role in adding additional funding and resources to their centres.

6.6.4 Define director roles

On-campus ECC directors play an essential role in supporting and facilitating university teaching and research, they are a resource that universities often undervalue and under-utilise. The directors in this research had differing roles within the university context. This research has indicated that a combined academic/director role is optimal. In this study, it provided the director with greater opportunities to communicate with and form relationships with university academic and professional staff to promote and facilitate teaching and research.

6.6.5 Promote staff qualifications and ratios

These have a direct correlation to providing the environment for an on-campus ECC director to effectively facilitate and promote university teaching and research. For a director to meet full centre potential additional staffing above legislated requirements, both in number and qualifications, as well as higher adult to child ratios, is required; and, this was evident in both centres. Pre-service and in-service upskilling of staff must also continue to promote and support the staff, above the minimum NQF external benchmarks (ACECQA, 2020).

With regard to creating an optimal environment, I offer an organisational chart to provide a diagrammatic overview, Figure 6.1.
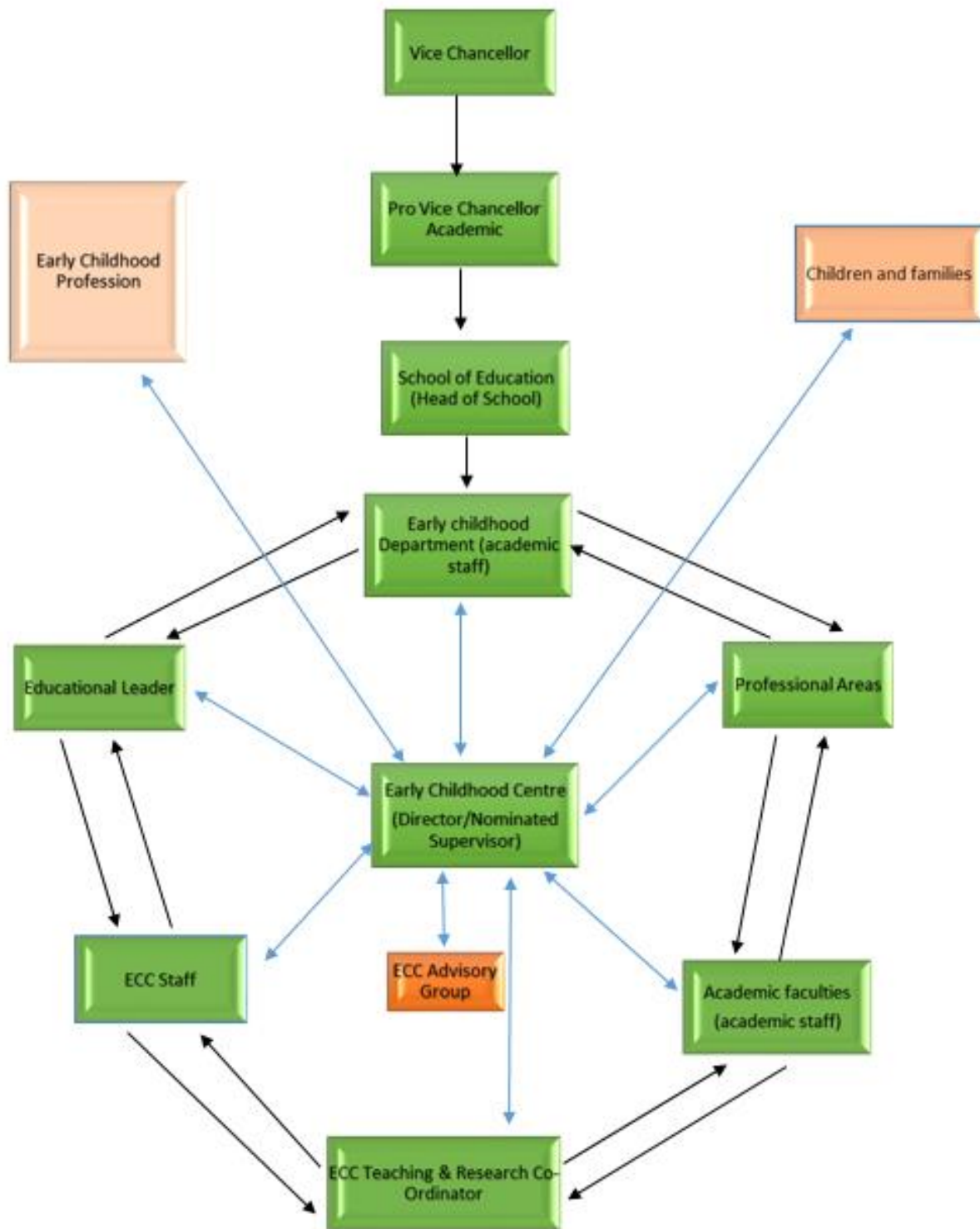
Figure 6-1 Envisioning an optimal organisational structure

The diagram outlines a management and organisational structure that I consider optimal to support an on-campus ECC director in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research. Key aspects of the diagram include the alignment of the director and the centre within the management and organisational structure of the university, inviting collaboration, formal interactions and aligned policies and practices, thus increasing the potential for the ECC director to meet the university's goals. The ECC director can permeate the academic departments, professional areas and contribute to decision making and becoming visible. According to Barbour and McBride (2017), if this transpires, a greater movement and collaboration among staff, information, goals and activities occurs, with more complex, multi-disciplinary and integrated approaches happening, which would benefit all with better outcomes for children, families and the professionals. The organisational structure directly impacts the director's role and requirements for the ECC and, in return, the ECC "must respond effectively if they are to provide value to the institution and professions they serve" (Barbour & McBride, 2017, p. 96).

There are also key messages here for university management with regard to alleviating the structural challenges faced by on-campus ECC directors and impacting on their role. The aim is to acknowledge, promote and support the ECC as an important and integral part of the university organisational structure and a resource that provides high quality early childhood education and care for the university staff and students. It is also an essential part of the university in facilitating and supporting teaching and research opportunities with optimum environments desirable and achievable for mutually beneficial outcomes.

6.7   Recommendations for future research

This study has provided a current and uniquely Australian perspective to contribute to the identified research gap around the role of on-campus centre directors in supporting university teaching and research. Further, Australian research in this area could provide direction to inform future policy and practices at Australian on-campus ECC's. This research could offer university management and academic staff recommendations on how to promote the significance of on-campus early childhood services and the director's role in supporting the university to achieve strategic teaching and research goals.

Future research could include a combined study involving a number of directors across a number of on-campus centres in both overseas and Australian contexts. Diversifying the participants and

collaborating with international researchers could deepen and broaden understandings and perspectives. Elicker and Barbour (2012) also suggest:

> A productive direction for future research would involve collaborative research across a number of lab schools, such that data can be pooled for more statistical power, more diverse samples, and the study of systematic variations in practice. (p. 140)

Three key themes kept recurring throughout the study based on the research findings: 1. how the on-campus location influenced the director's ECC leadership role; 2. how the director engaged the ECC in teaching and learning; and, 3. how the director engaged the ECC in research. These three themes provide a basis, direction and questions for future research in this area.

6.8 Researcher reflections

At the conclusion of this study and during subsequent reflection, the only aspect that I suggest would have added richness to the data was in relation to the semi-structured interviews. Having not visited either EEC or met the directors prior to the interviews, time during the interview was taken up with introductions, tours of the centre and generalised introductory information. If time and costs had permitted, a prior introductory meeting would have been useful; and then, the interview could have solely focused on gathering the specific data related to the research questions.

As a centre director, I personally reflected on my role advocating, managing and leading the centre. After completing this study, I now see my role as a more defined communicator, relationship builder and advocate for the purposes and significance of the on-campus ECC. I have a clearer and more distinct perceptions and beliefs about my role and my directorship experience does align with the data and literature throughout this study. Moreover, it invigorates, excites and encourages me to continue to move forward with the notion of a newly envisioned on-campus centre. As director, I see my role as pivotal to supporting and facilitating university teaching and research. Myers and Palmer (2015) indicate that a holistic model is required and an involved director increases assimilation throughout the university.

I also have a greater awareness and insight of the university factors impacting the director's role in facilitating and promoting teaching and research, including how experienced and qualified on-campus ECC directors navigate both the opportunities and challenges these factors represent. Listening and becoming familiar with the directors' narratives provided a relatable story, offering insights to pursue my objectives with confidence and purpose.

Creating change and keeping motivated in a bureaucratic environment of a tertiary institution, with the hierarchical structure and complex administrative procedures, will be the biggest challenge that I face. However, I proceed with confidence and determination, knowing that other directors face similar challenges, but continue to value and construct quality ECC environments that facilitate and promote university teaching and research. Knowing that these directors influenced not only their own community, but also the wider early childhood profession, my continued development of professional relationships in my own sphere of influence will continue to expand beyond my centre.

6.9   Concluding statement

The purpose of this study was to begin to understand the role of on-campus ECC directors and included two case studies of director's roles and their engagement in Australian university teaching and research. Each of the director's narratives was captured through interviews and constructed through narrative analysis to respond to the guiding research questions. This study has revealed the director's role in university teaching and research was greatly influenced by their perceptions of the importance of university teaching and research as well as a range of contextual factors. The document analysis provided a backdrop to this study and indicated the university's perceived importance about the integration of the centre.

The pivotal policy and practice alignments between the on-campus centre and university organisational structure has an impact on the centre meeting and achieving strategic university goals. Such a comparative case study has offered deeper understandings from different perspectives, although the director's narratives were often underpinned by similar aims, values and concerns.

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Appendices

Appendix A Ethics approval

University of
New England

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr Sue Elliott, Dr Brenda Wolodko, Ms Yukiyo Nishida & Mrs Galia Urquhart

School of Education

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: The role of university on-campus early childhood centre directors in facilitating and promoting teaching and research

APPROVAL No.:   HE18-258
COMMENCEMENT DATE: 01 November, 2018
APPROVAL VALID TO: 01 November, 2019
COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project.   The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address: http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.

Jo-Ann Sozou
Secretary/Research Ethics Officer

01/11/2018   A18/57

Appendix B Introductory email to directors

Galia Urquhart
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 0 2 6773 3173
gurquha3@myune.edu.au
www.une.edu.au

Dear Director

My name is Galia Urquhart and I am currently conducting research as part of my Master in Education (Research) in the School of Education at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr Sue Elliott, Dr Brenda Wolodko and Dr Yukiyo Nishida.

This research aims to explore the role of the director of on campus early childhood services in supporting university teaching and research opportunities.

I wish to invite you to participate in this research, as the Director of an on campus Early Childhood Centre that is known within the Early Childhood Profession for supporting teaching and research. The expectations would be to complete a paper based interview that would be emailed to you as well as an in-depth face to face interview that would take place at your centre. This research is to be conducted October 2018-January 2019.
This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No………., Valid to ../../….).

I will contact you by phone next week to seek your response to this invitation. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact me on 02-67733173 or gurquha3@myune.edu.au

Yours Sincerely

Galia

Galia Urquhart
B. Education. (UNE), Grad Dip Ed (QUT),
Director/Nominated Supervisor
Yarm Gwanga Preschool & Early Education Centre

University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351 Australia
Phone: 61 2 6773 3173
Email: gurquha3@myune.edu.au
www.une.edu.au
CRICOS Provider Number: 00003G

Appendix C Consent form for participants

Galia Urquhart
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3173
gurquha3@myune.edu.au
www.une.edu.au

CONSENT FORM

for

PARTICIPANTS

Research Project: The role of early childhood centre directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on campus early childhood centres.

I, ……………………………………………………………….., have
 read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants   Yes/No
 and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at   Yes/No
any time.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be quoted   Yes/No
and published using a pseudonym.

I agree to have my interview audio recorded and transcribed.   Yes/No

I would like to receive a copy of the transcription of the interview.   Yes/No

I am older than 18 years of age.   Yes/No

……………………………..   …………………………

Participant   Date

……………………………..   …………………………

Researcher   Date

Appendix D Information sheet for participants

Galia Urquhart
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3173
gurquha3@myune.edu.au

INFORMATION SHEET

For

PARTICIPANTS

I wish to invite you to participate in the research project, described below.

My name is Galia Urquhart and I am conducting a research project as part of my Master of Education (Research) in the School of Education at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr Sue Elliott, Dr Brenda Wolodko and Dr Yukiyo Nishida.

Research Project	**The role of early childhood centre directors in facilitating and promoting university teaching and research in on campus early childhood centres**
Aim of the Research	The research aims to explore the role of the director of on campus early childhood services in supporting university teaching and research opportunities.
Interview	I would like to conduct an initial paper based interview that would be e-mailed to you, followed by a face-to-face in-depth interview with you at your Early Childhood Centre. The initial interview will take about 30 minutes to complete. The face-to-face interview will take approximately 40 minutes to a maximum of one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.
Confidentiality	Any personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure your anonymity. If you agree we would like to quote some of your responses. This will also be done with pseudonyms to ensure that you are not identifiable by name, but you may still be potentially identifiable in the data.
Participation is Voluntary	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to stop participating in the study at any time without consequence and without needing to provide an explanation.
Questions	The questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, and will enable me to enhance my knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by on campus early childhood service directors in supporting teaching and research opportunities.
Use of Information	I will use information collated as part of my Master of Education (Research), which I expect to complete in December 2019. Information from the interviews may also be used in academic journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At the completion of

	the research the report will be provided to the Dean of HASSE. At all times, I will safeguard your identity by use of pseudonyms, however, you may still be potentially identifiable.
Upsetting Issues	It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact your local Community Health Centre (the phone number will be added here for each participant as to their local phone number) or Lifeline on 13 11 14.
Storage of Information	I will keep all hard copy notes and recordings of the interviews in a locked cabinet in my office at the University of New England's Yarm Gwanga Early Childhood Service. It will also be kept on a password protected computer in the same location. Only the research team will have access to the data. All electronic data will be kept on cloud.une.edu.au, UNE's centrally managed cloud server managed by the research team.
Disposal of Information	All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hard copy materials. The principal supervisor, Dr Sue Elliot, is the person who will be responsible for destroying the data.
Approval	This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No………., Valid to ../../….).
Researchers Contact Details	Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at gurquha3@myune.edu.au or by phone on (02) 6773 3173.

You may also contact my supervisors'. My Principal supervisor's name is Dr Sue Elliott and she can be contacted by email at sue.elliott@une.edu.au or by phone on (02) 6773 5087. My Co-supervisors are Dr Brenda Wolodko, her email address is bwolodko@une.edu.au and phone number (02) 6773 2021 and Dr Yukiyo Nishida, her email address is yukiyo.nishida@une.edu.au and phone number (02) 67734299. |
| **Complaints** | Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact:
Mrs Jo-Ann Sozou
Research Ethics Officer
Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Tel: (02) 6773 3449
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Kind Regards,

Galia Urquhart |

Appendix E Initial paper-based interview

Galia Urquhart
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3173
gurquha3@myune.edu.au
www.une.edu.au

University of
New England

Initial
Paper Based
Interview
Interview

I wish to invite you, to participate in this research, as the Director of an on campus Early Childhood Centre that is known within the Early Childhood Profession for supporting teaching and research. The expectations are to complete the following paper based interview and it will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Questions	
1. What is the name of the Centre in which you are the director, the university in which you are situated and the location of the university?	
2. What is the physical location of the centre within the university site?	
3. How many early childhood centres are on the university site?	
4. Is there an Early Childhood academic school/faculty located at your university? If so what does this encompass? What do they offer?	
5. What is the management structure of your centre? Who is the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader?	
6. As the Director of the service who is your supervisor and where are you located within the organisational structure of the university?	
7. Do you see your centre as different to the other typical early childhood centres in relation to the purpose and management structure?	
8. What is your role within the centre?	
9. Does your role extend to an academic role? If so, what are your responsibilities as an academic in the early childhood area?	
10. What are the affiliations and/or connections between the centre and the Early Childhood academic area and academic staff?	

| 11. What are the affiliations and/or connections between the centre and the other academic areas within your university? | |

If you could please return this paper based interview by the 9ᵗʰ December which allows a two week timeframe for the interview to be completed. If you require a longer period of time or have any queries regarding the interview please do not hesitate to contact me on 0267733173 to discuss this. Can you please return the completed interview to gurquha3@myune.edu.au. Thank-you for completing this paper based interview, I look forward to seeing you at the face-to-face interview.

Kind Regards, Galia

Appendix F In-depth face-to-face interview

> # Face-to-Face
> # In-depth
> # Interview

Welcome and settling in: I will introduce myself again and provide the background and further detail about the aim and significance of the research. I will also thank the participant for agreeing to be part of the research and being interviewed.

I will provide information to the participant explaining that the interview will be recorded. After waiting for an appropriate amount of time I will give the participant a reminder that the voice recorder will now be turned on. I will explain to the participant that during the interview I may take notes. This will provide comments, prompts and suggestions to remind me of our conversation and your comments.

I will explain that the interview will take from 40 mins to one hour and provide the participant with an overview of the interview process that is about to occur.

Clarifying the format: I will explain to the participant that I have a list of questions directly related to the research topic, but that they are free to clarify and explore whatever is relevant to them about this topic. Explain that I am very interested and eager to hear their thoughts and reflections on this topic.

QUESTION	COMMENTARY
So I can develop a greater understanding of your position can you please describe your background and role within the centre. What are your qualifications? What is your work history and experience within the Early Childhood profession? What is your role in the centre?	
Broadly, what is your role in promoting and supporting teaching and research at an on-campus early childhood centre?	
Please outline your philosophy and leadership style that informs this role.	
How do you perceive the significance and importance of facilitating and supporting teaching and research?	
How does your service promote and support the teaching and research at the university in which you are situated? Let's discuss these in more detail and can you please provide some examples. How do you: Promote teaching? Support teaching? Promote research?	

QUESTION	COMMENTARY
Support research?	
What is the position of your centre within the university's organisational structure?	
How might the policies and practices of your centre support the strategic goals of your university's teaching and research?	
What assistance might your centre receive from the university to facilitate your centre's support for teaching and research? Including such aspects as: funding sources management staffing other	
How do you perceive the integration of your centre within the university is supported or otherwise by the university management, policies and structure?	
How do you manage any challenges of balancing management responsibilities and academic priorities in supporting teaching and research?	
What barriers might you face as the director in reaching the full potential for supporting teaching and research in your centre?	
How do you see your role as director in the future, in facilitating and promoting teaching and research? How do you see in your role in this regard?	

Conclusion: Thank the participant for the time in undertaking the interview. Reassure the participant that as the researcher I value and respect their thoughts and ideas on this topic and appreciate the time that they have made available to complete the interview.

Appendix G Sources for document analysis

- ❖ The WECC Webpage
- ❖ The PECC Webpage
- ❖ The WECC University Webpage
- ❖ The PECC University Webpage
- ❖ The PECC Family Handbook
- ❖ The WECC Family Handbook
- ❖ The Early Childhood Australia Publications- where PECC/WECC were featured
- ❖ The WECC Service Documents
- ❖ The PECC Service Documents