

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



MONTENESSORI
SCHOOLS & CENTRES AUSTRALIA

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MONTESSORI

SCHOOLS & CENTRES AUSTRALIA

BOARD MEMBERS IN 2025

JANIS COFFEY

Board Chair

GAY WALES

Deputy Chair

MarComms Chair

Education Chair

HELEN DUNN

Finance Chair

(Jan – May)

SALVATORE

MOTTA

Finance Chair

(Nov – Dec)

CATHY FRANCE

Events Chair

VANESSA AIKINS

LAUREEN BARNARD

AMELIA COBB

HEATHER McINERNEY

DES REUBEN

YAN WU



**MSCA's charitable purposes,
as outlined in Section 6 of our
Constitution are:**

- To advance education by promoting the pedagogical principles and practice formulated by Dr Maria Montessori for the full development of the human being;
- To assist, strengthen, represent and promote the interests of its members in any way whatsoever;
- To support and encourage Montessori education in Australia;
- To foster, promote and sustain a climate in which Montessori education becomes or remains pre-eminent in early childhood, primary and secondary education;
- To support and encourage the establishment and sustainability of bodies delivering Montessori education and programs to ensure more children have access to Montessori education in Australia;
- To represent in a professional manner the collective interests of members to Government at all levels, other regulatory bodies, other relevant peak bodies, media, and the general public;
- To do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of any of the above purposes.

Strategic Goals 2025-2028

This was the first year of MSCA's second Strategic Plan, and our Strategic Goals continued to guide our operations. Although many goals overlap across committees and also the work of the Board, each Strategic Pillar aligns well with our four Board committees. The Strategic Pillars are used to document progress in each committee's annual report.

EDUCATION *and* LEARNING

Reported on by the Education Committee

- TO IMPROVE and maintain Montessori skills by supporting training, professional development, and mentorship.
- TO SUPPORT authentic practice through the Genuine Montessori Pathway.
- TO ADVOCATE for the integrity and accessibility of curriculum documents and provide mapping structures and other relevant resources for the Montessori community.

COMMUNITY *and* CONNECTION

Reported on by the Events Committee

- TO FACILITATE the growth and development of Montessori education.
- TO PROVIDE high-quality learning opportunities and resources for educators, parents, boards and educational leaders.
- TO SUPPORT sustainable Montessori networks.
- TO DEVELOP and maintain positive relationships with other like-minded Montessori organisations.

BUSINESS *and* GOVERNANCE

Reported on by the Finance Committee

- TO ENSURE the continued viability of the organisation.
- TO RETAIN and increase membership of MSCA.
- TO MAINTAIN and model professional and transparent governance practices.

REPRESENTATION *and* PROMOTION

Reported on by the MarComms Committee

- TO GROW awareness and understanding of genuine Montessori.
- TO CONTINUE building the reputation of MSCA.
- TO REPRESENT Montessori on the national stage.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE MSCA BOARD CHAIR

In 2025, Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) continued to strengthen Montessori education nationally through leadership development, professional collaboration, sector advocacy, and community engagement.

Professional development and community engagement remained central to MSCA's activities in 2025. Networking opportunities and professional learning supported the ongoing development of educators and administrators, and helped maintain a high standard of Montessori practice across Australia. MSCA also fostered collaboration through member hubs and workshops, enabling educators to share knowledge and strengthen connections both nationally and globally. Strong relationships with key partners, including Sydney Montessori Training Centre and the Montessori Institute, further enhanced these efforts by supporting high-quality training, professional standards, and sector cohesion.

A highlight of the year was MSCA's annual webinar featuring researcher Dr Alison Demangeon. Her work focuses on evaluating the outcomes of Montessori education through empirical research. In the webinar, Dr Demangeon presented findings suggesting that Montessori students often demonstrate stronger executive functioning, social development, and intrinsic motivation than peers in more traditional educational settings. Her research also emphasises the importance of uninterrupted work cycles, mixed-age classrooms, and carefully prepared environments in fostering independence and deeper learning. The session provided educators with valuable, evidence-based insights and reinforced the relevance of Montessori principles in contemporary education.

MSCA also continued its role in advocacy and representation. Australian Montessori educators were recognised on international platforms, reflecting the sector's growing global influence. In addition, MSCA promoted engagement with major international events, including the Association Montessori Internationale Congress 2026, encouraging participation and professional exchange on a global scale.

A key area of achievement was the continued strengthening of organisational leadership and governance. MSCA acknowledges and expresses its sincere thanks to Amelia Cobb for her valuable contribution and dedicated service during her time as a Director. Her commitment and insight played an important role in supporting the organisation's strategic direction. In 2025, MSCA also welcomed Salvo Motta as the new Finance Director. His appointment brought additional financial expertise to the board and supported the organisation's focus on sustainability and effective governance.

Overall, 2025 was a year of consolidation and growth for Montessori Schools and Centres Australia. Through strengthened leadership, expanded professional learning opportunities, strong sector partnerships, and engagement with current research, MSCA enhanced the visibility, quality, and impact of Montessori education. These efforts position the organisation well to continue advancing child-centred learning and educational diversity across Australia.

In kindness,

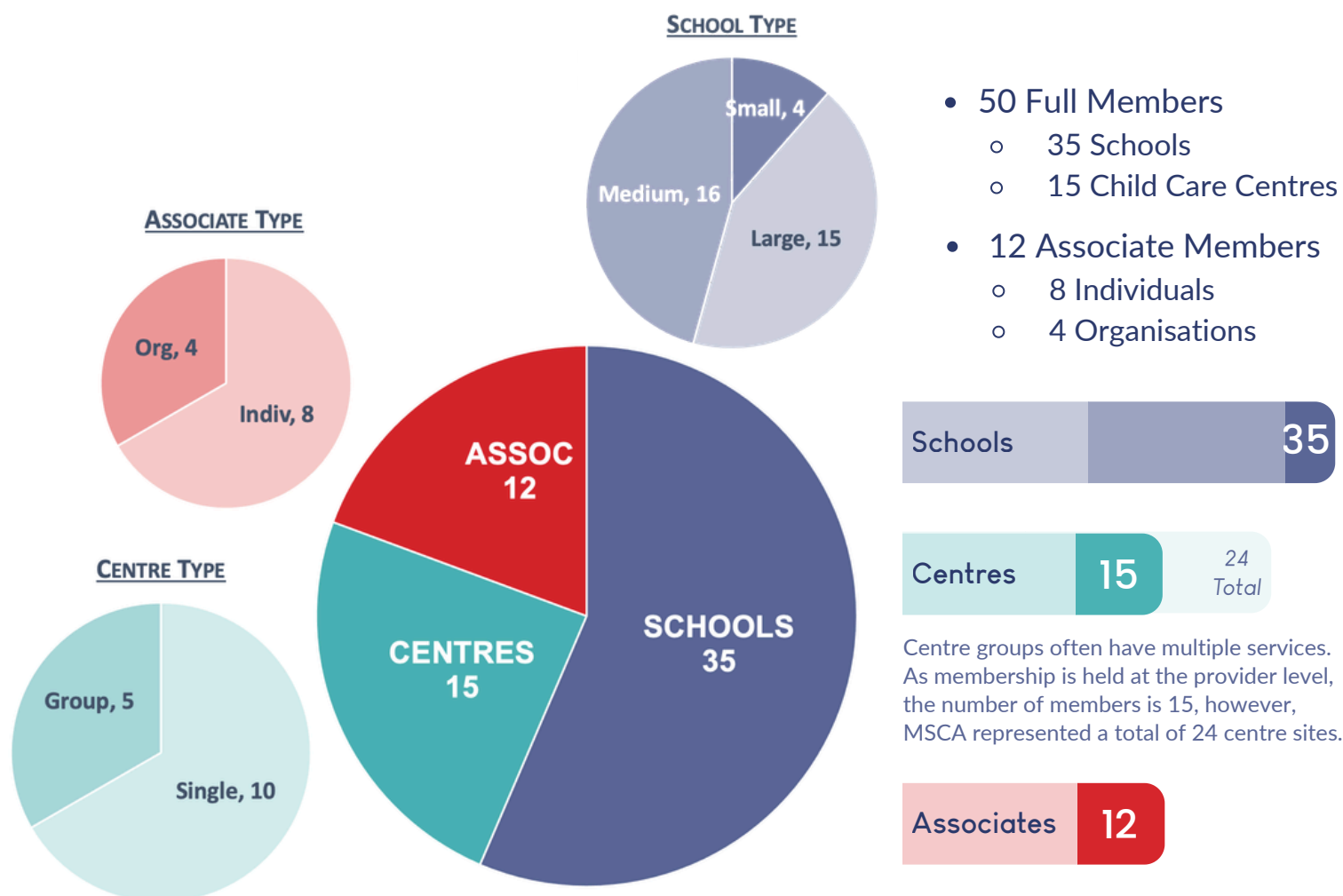


JANIS COFFEY
MSCA Board Chair



2025 MEMBERSHIP

IN DECEMBER 2025, MSCA HAD 62 MEMBERS.



The decrease in membership from 2024 reflects a number of sector-wide circumstances rather than a decline in engagement with MSCA. During 2025, one school closed, a large early childhood centre group entered liquidation, and one organisational associate member did not renew.

Importantly, MSCA also welcomed new members during 2025, reflecting continued interest in and commitment to genuine Montessori practice across Australia.

The school membership base remained remarkably stable, given the broader pressures facing education, and medium and large school categories held steady, reflecting confidence and continuity across our core membership.

The early childhood and associate sectors tend to be more dynamic. Changes in licensing, staffing, and leadership often affect centre membership, while associate member numbers naturally fluctuate as individuals join or leave member organisations and become covered under full memberships.

Rather than focusing solely on member numbers, we recognise that the true value of our membership lies in the strength of engagement, participation in events, member retention, and representation across the sector.

These indicators provide a more accurate and meaningful reflection of our impact. The high school retention rate and consistent participation across our events and programs are strong indicators of a committed and connected membership base.

EVENTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



**CATHY
FRANCE**
Events Chair

Chair: Cathy France

Members: Fiona Campbell, Alice Champion, Janis Coffey, Lisa Fenton, Tamiko de Silva

The Events committee supports progress in the Community and Connection Pillar of MSCA's 2025–2028 Strategic Plan.

In 2025, we continued to offer high-quality events catering to educators, leaders, Boards, parents, and the wider community, and to facilitate opportunities for our Members to network and collaborate. I would like to thank the members of the MSCA Events committee for their time and expertise and for working diligently to deliver a successful, rich and fulfilling 2025 events program.

TO PROVIDE high-quality learning opportunities and resources for educators, parents, boards and educational leaders.

In 2025, we offered three in-person events: the Head to Head Forum (H2H) for Montessori leaders in Sydney, Meeting in the Middle (MiM) for Montessori educators of adolescents in Melbourne and the Grassroots Conference in Brisbane for all educators, leaders and interested persons. We continued to offer numerous online workshops and sessions catering for educators, leaders, parents and those interested in Montessori education, drawing attendees from across Australia and internationally. Our online offerings were broad, addressing current topics that resonated across schools, centres and parent communities, including:

- Maths workshop for 12-18 educators
- Embodying Montessori Principles for Administrative staff
- Teaching Narrative Writing in Montessori 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms
- Montessori: Basics at Home
- The Confidence Paradox
- Montessori Assessment Playbook
- Sensorial Extensions in 3-6 Environments
- Nourishment: Connection, Learning & Wellbeing through Food
- Offering our best to bring out the best in others
- Online Safety & Healthier Screen habits

Our 2025 Annual Webinar focused on 'The Benefits of Montessori' featuring French researcher Alison Demangeon, who spoke about her pioneering meta-analysis on the impact of Montessori education on young children's development and learning. Incorporating a range of perspectives, Amelia Cobb provided a Montessori graduate and a current educator perspective regarding the benefits, while Southern Montessori School SA Principal, Heather McInerney, shared insights from leading a Montessori school co-located with an Aged Care Facility and the benefits of a Montessori approach to students and residents, respectively. Our flagship event, the Grassroots Conference, was held in Brisbane and centred around the theme, "A Story to Tell". Some amazing keynotes, presentations, and stories were told across the two days, with Saturday's keynote speaker Matt Hyde focusing on the importance of storytelling, and Sunday's keynote speaker Susan Feez telling the story of pioneering Montessori educators in Australia. Montessori leaders from across Australia convened at the Head to Head Forum (H2H) in Sydney, enjoying two days of collegiality, learning, sharing ideas and best practice. H2H continues to be a wonderful opportunity for fellow Montessori leaders to build connections, network, and collaborate. It is always pleasing to receive extremely positive feedback from our attendees across our events, whilst also appreciating the constructive and thoughtful feedback and input from participants to help us continue to refine and enhance our offerings to suit the needs of our members.

TO SUPPORT sustainable Montessori networks.

Our Hub Groups were again an additional offering to our members in 2025, providing dedicated space facilitated by volunteer leaders and providing valuable platforms for collegial exchange, sector updates and resource sharing. We thank the Chairs who facilitate these groups and their discussions each term. Hub Groups provide a terrific way for our community to develop and maintain networks, provide collegial support and share ideas and challenges. We thank Melbourne Montessori College for hosting MiM and Northside Montessori School in Sydney for hosting H2H in 2025. These well-established events continue to be wonderful opportunities to develop important, supportive collegial networks that strengthen and enhance the strong Montessori community in Australia.

TO FACILITATE the growth and development of Montessori education.

In 2025, we continued to collaborate with Sydney Montessori Training Centre (SMTTC) and Montessori Institute (MI), supporting these organisations and promoting their courses and work amongst our members, and inviting them to participate in MSCA events. These relationships remain critical in building a nationally connected Montessori sector and supporting training pathways. Prior to the 2025 Grassroots Conference, the MSCA Board spent a day meeting in person, allowing the time to reflect on progress and to finalise our 2025–2028 Strategic Plan to ensure that our organisation is best placed to facilitate the growth and development of Montessori education in Australia.

FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Salvatore Motta

Members: Janis Coffey, Helen Dunn, Cathy France.



SALVATORE MOTTA
MSCA Finance Director

The Finance Committee's work throughout 2025 focused on upholding the Strategic Goals of the Business and Governance Pillar of MSCA's Strategic Plan for 2025-2028.

TO ENSURE the continued viability of the organisation.

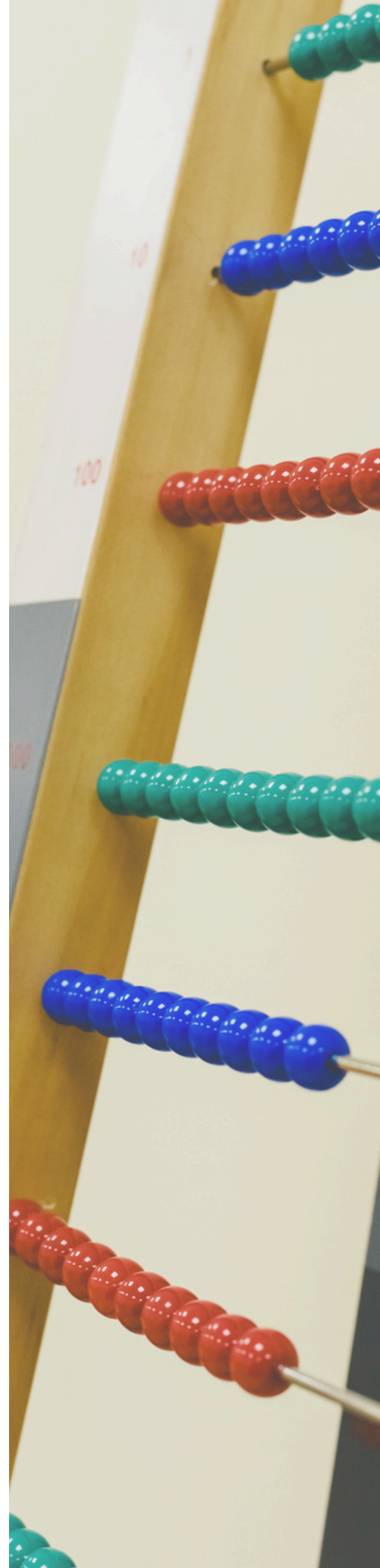
In 2025, MSCA achieved a well-rounded result and demonstrated a strong financial position. We experienced significant growth in demand for conferences and events, while membership numbers declined slightly. Overall, our revenue increased by 7.2% (excluding donations), while expenses remained largely consistent with 2024, rising by only 0.7%. The operational team was strengthened through the appointment of a part-time Executive Officer in November 2025. MSCA maintained sufficient financial resources to meet all financial and legal obligations as they fell due throughout the year, and this strong position is expected to continue in the year ahead.

TO RETAIN and increase membership of MSCA.

Memberships, including schools, centres, associate organisations, and individuals from across Australia and overseas, remain a strong foundation of MSCA's community and success. We extend our sincere thanks to all our members for their continued support and engagement. MSCA remains committed to enhancing our offerings, expanding our tools, and delivering exceptional, focused value to members worldwide. We look forward to continuing to support and grow with you in the years ahead.

TO MAINTAIN and model professional and transparent governance practices.

MSCA continues to enhance its governance framework and financial oversight by consistently reviewing internal policies and procedures. Transparency remains central to our operations. We organise an Annual General Meeting, and our financial statements undergo an independent external audit before being made publicly available via the ACNC charity profile. MSCA upholds strong governance principles across all Board activities and conducts an annual Board Review to promote continuous improvement. Looking ahead to 2026, we are optimistic about the year's opportunities, with a robust calendar of events and strategic marketing activities underway. We extend our genuine appreciation to the Finance Committee and the MSCA Board for their ongoing dedication and support.



EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



GAY WALES

*MSCA Deputy Chair
Education Committee Chair*

Chair: Gay Wales

Members: Vanessa Aikins, Laureen Barnard, Fiona Campbell, Alice Champion, Amelia Cobb, Dr Susan Feez.

The Education committee works closely with the MarComms committee and the Events committee. Our work in 2025 focused on achieving progress in the Education and Learning pillar of MSCA's Strategic Plan.

TO ADVOCATE for the integrity and accessibility of curriculum documents and provide mapping structures and other relevant resources for the Montessori community.

- In 2025, MSCA initiated a landmark curriculum project: the development of a Translation Document demonstrating how genuine Montessori education meets the Achievement Standards of the Australian Curriculum. Unlike a mapping exercise, this resource will show — through rich illustrations of practice — how Montessori Key Lessons address the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards at each stage of learning, making it a practical and meaningful resource for educators in the classroom.
- The Board approved the project in February 2025, with Terms of Reference, a consultation framework, and a detailed implementation timeline established. With permission granted for MSCA to adapt the AMI-approved Norwegian Montessori Curriculum for an Australian audience, this will sit alongside the Translation Document as a complementary handbook, together forming a comprehensive resource for schools, centres, and educators.
- A new initiative to track the post-school pathways of Year 12 Montessori students was developed, with a data collection process designed and demonstrated to the committee.

TO IMPROVE and maintain Montessori skills by supporting training, professional development, and mentorship.

Montessori Parent Guides

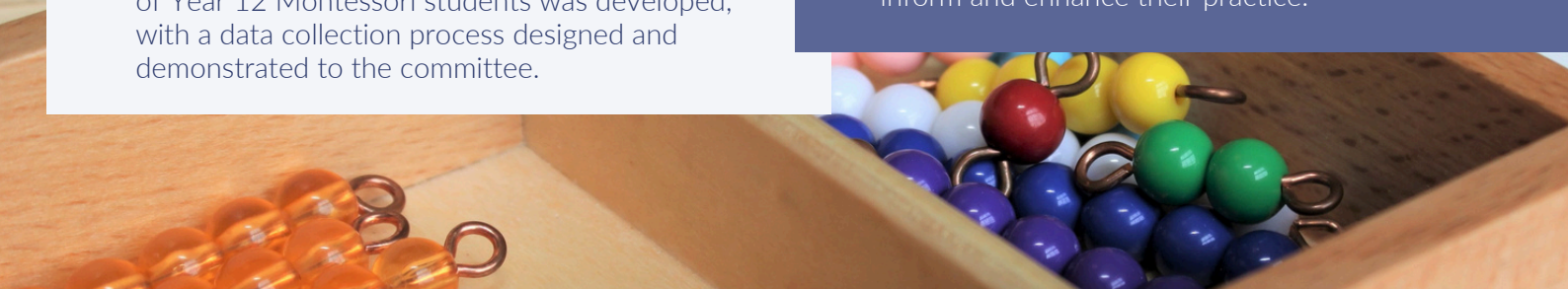
- The Parent Guide booklets have been incredibly successful, and we now have the full complement of Birth to Age 3, Ages 3–6, Ages 6–12, and Ages 12–18 for the community.
- A suite of videos explaining the use of these Parent Guides has also been created for the free use of all MSCA members, to show to their Board and Parents, or for staff training.

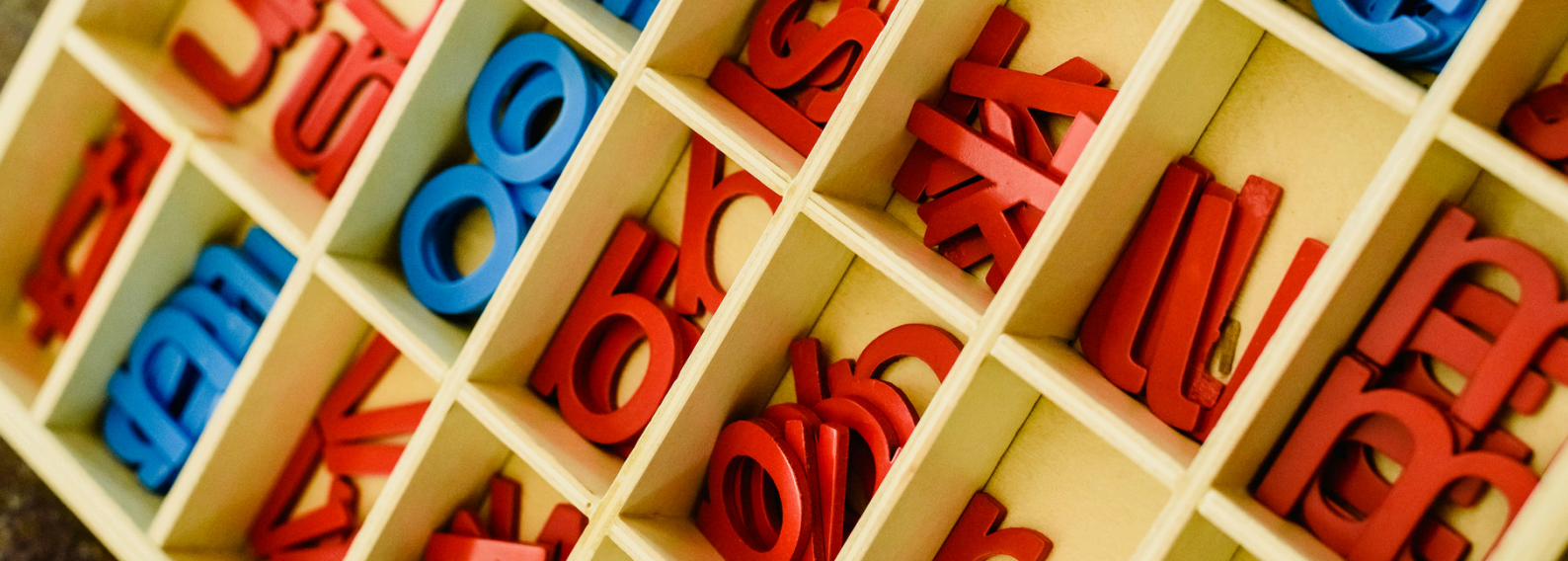
Montessori Orientation Videos for New Staff

- A series of twelve short videos introducing core Montessori concepts was approved, and production commenced. These videos are designed for new and non-Montessori-trained staff across childcare centres, preschools, and primary and secondary settings, and will be available as a self-paced resource.
- Continued strong collaboration with Sydney Montessori Training Centre and the Montessori Institute, while MSCA's termly Hub Groups and other learning networks remained active, supporting professional growth and connection among educators and administrators.

TO SUPPORT authentic practice through the Genuine Montessori Pathway (GMP).

- The GMP expanded in 2025, with more schools and centres joining; three participants achieved Engaged status and six reached or maintained the Accomplished stage.
- Throughout 2025, we focused on creating and testing resources for second- and third-year GMP participants. There are now four stakeholder surveys covering Boards, Employees, Parents, and Students that schools and centres can access to inform and enhance their practice.





MARCOMMS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Gay Wales

Members: Carys Adams, Toni Maddock, Heather McInerney, Annette Moore, Des Reuben, Tamiko de Silva.

The Marketing & Communications (MarComms) committee works in partnership with other MSCA committees to implement a range of promotional activities to support the Representation and Promotion pillar of MSCA's Strategic Plan.

TO GROW awareness and understanding of genuine Montessori.

- Updated use of social media with content designed to inform the wider community about Montessori materials, approaches, and concepts.
- Extended event and workshop promotions beyond the existing membership to non-Montessori educators and parents.
- The Collaborations email newsletter was published regularly, featuring upcoming MSCA events, highlights from member schools and centres, and articles on Montessori practice.
- A contributor guide – "How to Write a Blog" – was developed to make it easier for educators and leaders to share their stories and experiences, with a goal of publishing a new article each month.
- Development of the Consistent Messaging Framework continued, with a workshop outline and supporting booklet progressed during the year.



GAY WALES

*MSCA Deputy Chair
MarComms Committee Chair*

TO REPRESENT Montessori on the national stage.

- The committee actively promoted MSCA's engagement with the upcoming AMI International Congress in Mexico in May 2026, encouraging member participation and global professional exchange.
- MMUN promotion was progressed, with outreach to the working group coordinator.
- Advocacy toward universities and government education departments was maintained, with plans developed to identify and attend relevant pre-service and early childhood conferences.

TO CONTINUE building the reputation of MSCA.

- The MSCA website was substantially improved in accessibility, with updates including text alternatives for images, video captions, correct heading structures, screen reader and multi-browser compatibility, and a minimum text contrast ratio that meets accessibility standards.
- SEO improvements were made to enhance MSCA's visibility in Google search results.
- A new relationship with Nienhuis secured permission to use their material images in MSCA's promotional content.
- The committee explored co-branding opportunities with member schools and centres to increase the reach and visibility of MSCA resources.



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