



# 2018

## ANNUAL REPORT







“The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult.”

~ Maria Montessori







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# INTRODUCTION

The Montessori approach to education provides an extraordinary opportunity for young people to develop to their full potential in a positive, supportive environment encouraging independence, enquiry, and freedom to grow. Our whole school reflects the ideals set in our classrooms— we value high standards, sharing of knowledge, perpetual education, individuality, community spirit and respect. Collaborative relationships with parents are critical, and together we create a community centred on ensuring Montessori schooling fulfils its role as a recognised leader in individualised learning.

Based on our Montessori philosophy, CMS caters for over 200 children from birth to twelve years of age. The Montessori curriculum is an integrated one where all aspects of a child's learning (e.g. music, writing, reading, mathematics, science, art, craft, culture, and physical activity) are presented as part of an interrelated whole. We implement the National Montessori Curriculum whilst adhering to the Australian Curriculum and complying with Montessori Quality Assurance Program (MQAP) expectations, ACECQA requirements and the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

This document addresses our accountability requirements, both educational and financial, as set out by the Commonwealth Government.

“We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit.”

~ Maria Montessori



## OUR VISION

'To continually extend the opportunity for every child to have a Montessori education that provides for them to develop to their full potential.'

## OUR LOGO

Our logo uses various symbols representing the education provided by Canberra Montessori School, with icons illustrating Science, Life, Ideas and an Open Book. The logo was chosen to reflect the professional and up to date approach to education delivered by CMS whilst the primary colours and symbols also are reflective of an early learning environment.



Science



Life



Idea



Open Book



# MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD

Dear CMS Community,

I can hardly believe we're already so far into 2019 at this wonderful School. Reflecting over 2018 brings a smile for me as I look to the amazing teaching, admin and executive staff our children are guided and nurtured by daily; to be their most natural and independent selves. This is a team truly united, warm and happy, and no Board could ever ask for more of its School leaders and teams.

I am also warmed by the peaceful feeling experienced when I walk amongst the beautiful physical enhancements we're continuing to see pan out across the amazing environments our children explore daily, both inside their classrooms with new floors, wall paints and considerable investment into new Montessori materials, as well as their gorgeous outdoor learnscapes. Investing in these areas has been a key goal from our Principal since arriving in the final term of 2014, and I am glad to see them continuing to come to fruition. Naturally, being Anthony and team, there will always be more on the horizon to further enhance the experiences of our children, and we can all enjoy seeing these continue to unfold in the years ahead.

As a Board, our core focus is on governance, finance and compliance; and with a small yet dedicated Board team this year we have made small inroads across all areas. We have also strengthened our sustainability and efficiency through annual scheduling and forward planning.

In governance we served this year with more than 50% non-parent/professional Board members, supported the school to make considerable structural changes, enabled a term-long and incredibly well-deserved break for the Principal who was lucky enough to secure a temporary posting in a remote community for that period, and began the scheduled review of the Strategic Plan, including staff and parent input through workshops and parts of the online surveys.

In finance we set a budget with enhancements based on sustainable financials for the present and future through fees that better enable the expensive nature of quality education delivered in a Montessori School, affordable plans for capital outlays and quality maintenance of our amazing



## Members of the Board

Tara Wood—Chair  
Felix Pirie—Deputy Chair  
Tanya Collins  
Martin Drinkwater  
Christine Harrison  
Rose Nairn  
Samantha Scott





# MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL

## BOARD cont./...

physical environment. We also collaborated with the School to support diversification of income to better manage financial peaks and troughs through expanded school services from 2019 and beyond.

In compliance we have a new audit plan underway following further collaboration with the School, and although this has been a key strength of our Principal and team over recent years, Board is now catching up administratively and we look forward to seeing the results of their self initiated mock Registration Audit next term. This work, underpinned by significant effort from the School, will better enable Board to be on the front-foot in providing assurances in this regard for Community moving forward.

We will continue our plan for the final stage of feedback on the new Strategic Plan post-AGM, and look forward to consulting Community further for this year's review of the Constitution. Again in this work, we will look to greater consultation, simplification and alignment with vision and values.

My warmest gratitude goes to the Principal, entire School Team and Community for an amazing year gone-by and wonderful years ahead.

**Tara Wood**  
**CMS Board Chair, Canberra Montessori Society**



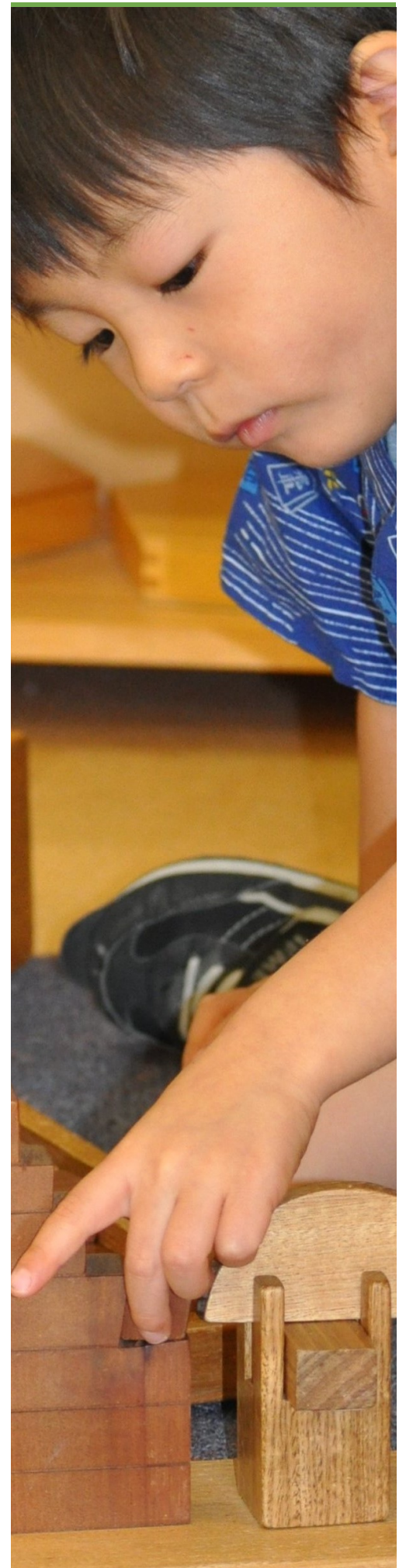
## MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL

Our school has been on a journey of strategic improvement over the course of the last few years and 2018 has been seminal in cementing a strong collegial culture. This culture has enabled the bedding in of high expectations in regards to our professionalism and capacity to increasingly evidence personalised outcomes for our children. Whilst our core commitment is to the children, our success is premised on the ability to run an effective educational business. This strategic change in culture came at a price, including staff transition, expenditure on materials and our 'prepared environments', professional development opportunities and unfortunately some loss in enrolment. Those families who have stayed the course through this change management process can testify to the strength and unity of our collegial team, the enhanced service delivery, and the innate desire of all our staff to ensure we provide 'simply the best for each child'.

Whilst our change management process has now essentially run its course, the school remains committed to a path of continuous improvement. We are striving actively to improve our already enhanced service delivery, and welcome constructive feedback from our community to this end. We also work weekly as an entire staff to build capacity in our team, explore our strengths and address any identified challenges to ensure we are delivering on our promise of 'simply the best' Montessori pedagogy.

With a renewed and focussed strength in community, guided by our professional team, we envisage we will see our school leap forward. The work our staff undertake in wider educational circles evidencing the effectiveness of our pedagogy, our combined commitment, 'word of mouth', increasing enrolments and growing interest in our personalised educational philosophy, will see our school continue to move from strength to strength.

**Anthony Vandermolen**  
Principal, CMS







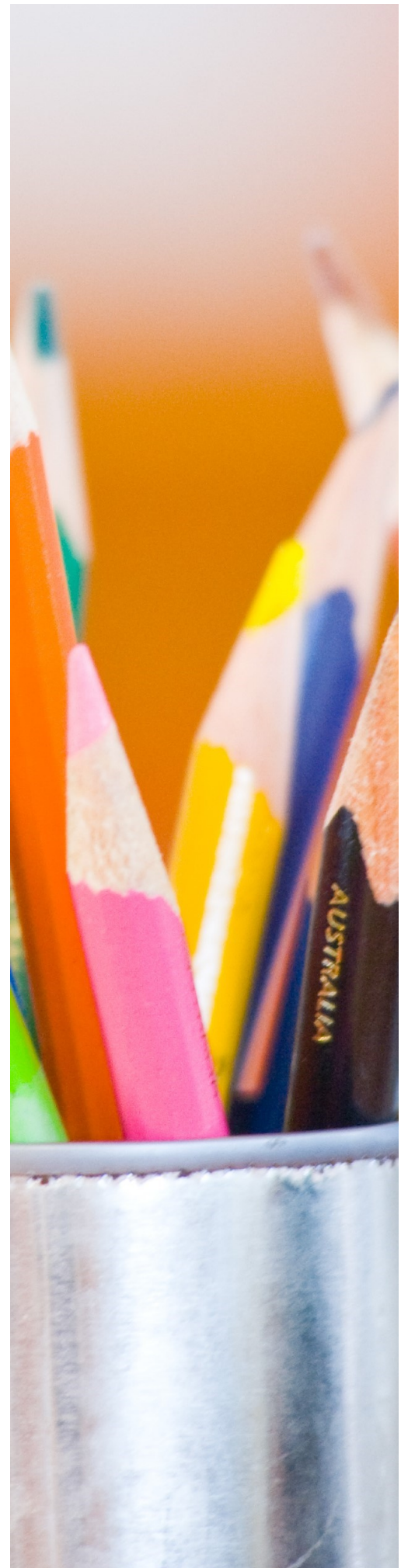
## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Effective communication between CMS administration, staff and parents is of prime importance and takes place on a continuous basis. Strong communication is essential in linking the home and school environments of the child and in building a working relationship between the teacher and the parents.

Open communication begins before school even starts. Welcome letters are sent home, phone calls to parents are made, and frequent newsletters are sent home, all in an attempt to open the lines of communication. These are not only informative, but they help set the stage for open dialog down the road. Parents are always grateful to hear how their children are settling in and progressing. The communications are clear, and any issues of concern or dissatisfaction are addressed in a formal manner, as they arise, using our Communication Pathways to ensure they are dealt with effectively and by the most appropriate person, and making sure positive outcomes are achieved at all times.

A more recent strategy for effective parent-teacher communication and increasing its efficiency has been incorporating technology into the classroom through *Transparent Classrooms*. This platform is used to build strong communications with parents about their child's everyday progress.

In addition, in 2018 a comprehensive survey of Parents was undertaken, together with surveys following various school events, and the feedback was used to inform future development and areas of focus. Regular contact between the Principal and the Board and with various school committees ensures the school remains in touch with the feelings of the broader school community.





# NAPLAN 2018

## (National Assessment for Literacy & Numeracy)

In 2018, 13 Year Three and Year Five children sat the NAPLAN tests. The nature of these is hugely different to anything experienced in a Montessori prepared environment, and so the children enjoy taking these tests. Unlike many other schools, at CMS there is no preparatory work ahead of NAPLAN week, and so the children may have not experienced these conditions before. As a school, and a philosophy, standardised testing isn't something that is given any weight or importance. Rather, the children work towards mastery over time.

The children are encouraged to do the best that they can, and the school has reviewed the test scores, using the data to build a clearer picture of where each child is at on the learning journey, but that is as far as it goes, it is a measure of a point in time, and on another day, the children could have performed better, or not fared so well as they did.

For more information please visit : <https://myschool.edu.au/school/49991/naplan/numbers>





## WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Our CMS team is comprised of teachers, support staff and members of administration. CMS has no indigenous or Torres Strait Islander staff members. All teaching staff have the required teaching qualifications and have or are working towards their Montessori diplomas.

In 2018 the Executive Staff consisted of the Principal, Director of Students & Technology and Business Manager, who were supported by a small administrative team. All staff are responsible to the Principal who has general operational and day to day management responsibility for the various activities of the School.

### Our Staff

#### Administration

Anthony Vandermolen—Principal  
Rael Matthews—Director of  
Students & Technology  
Amy Duan—Business Manager  
Judy McGowan  
Tonia Lewis

#### Directors

Louise Draper  
Leharne Fountain  
Aileen Frost  
Ros Hartley  
Halima Khurram  
Darcy Loughton  
Tom Ransom  
Paola Tonel  
Glen Watson

#### Assistants

Veda Limaye  
Viv Moir  
Sukhi Sahota  
Taryn Smith-Hardy  
Stephanie Viegas

#### OHSC

Taryn Smith-Hardy  
Kylie Hunter

#### Grounds & Maintenance

Vic Micallef



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2018

Throughout 2018 staff were focussed on our school improvement agenda, ensuring our Montessori is... 'simply the best for each child'.

To this end, our collegial team engaged with timetabled pedagogical meetings, classroom observations, discussion of the needs of our students, mentoring and coaching, along with weekly staff meetings where elements of our agenda focussed on whole school improvement. A cultural practice of reflection and collegial discussion has been embedded into our practice and this has strengthened the intrinsic support our staff feel, positively impacting outcomes for our students. Our staff have also implemented a range of opportunities to strengthen our community through parent education aimed at connecting, engaging and communicating more effectively.

As a staff, we attended the Montessori Australia Refresher weekend in Sydney, enabling opportunity to network, gain new professional knowledge and refine practices. This collegial team approach/structure continues to serve as a valuable tool to enhance school outcomes and strengthen collaborative practices across our school.

CMS is committed to supporting the on-going learning journey of all staff members to increase the depth and understanding of Montessori principles.

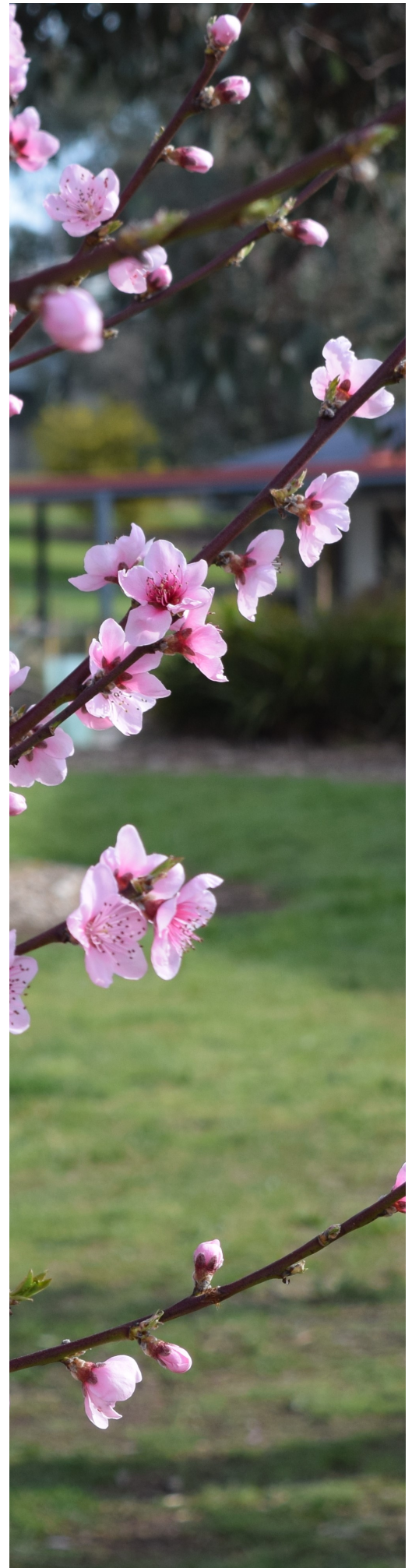
All directors are TQI registered and hold or are working towards appropriate Montessori qualifications. All assistants have a Certificate III in Early Childhood as a minimum requirement.





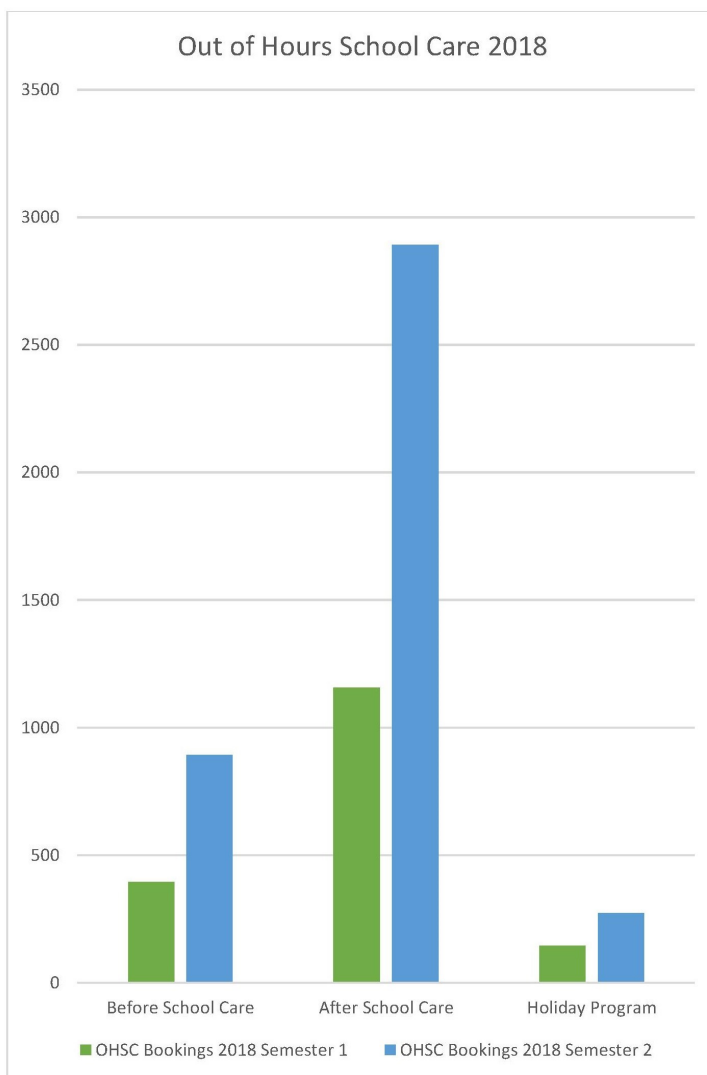
# STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2018

Attendance Summary by Year





# OUT OF HOURS SCHOOL CARE







## STUDENT ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The very nature of the individualised education we offer in the Montessori classroom meets the needs of every child. The didactic materials provide the control of error, allowing children to check and analyse their own work and problem solve, whilst also providing required stretch and challenge.

Montessori classrooms seek to foster independence and to support children in moving towards mastery of self and the environment. Here children engage in hands on learning in an environment carefully prepared by an educator trained to work with children of specific age groups. Lessons are given with materials designed by Dr Maria Montessori to children of mixed ages. The children can then choose their activities, allowing them to make discoveries about language, mathematics, biology, geometry, motor skills, art and music. The Montessori environment is specifically designed to support learning through repetition and practice and that process leads the child towards mastery.

Repetition is a key of the 'Sensitive Period,' which Montessori characterised as a time when children are most likely and willing to learn a key skill or knowledge with ease. The morning uninterrupted 3 hour work period allows the opportunity for the repetition of activities and for children to develop the concentration and self-discipline required for more advanced work. In addition, the Montessori materials are multi sensory, scientifically built learning tools that teach the children how to problem solve and self correct through repetition and practice.

Whilst the child's environment provides the educational platform for success, it is important to acknowledge that some children have additional needs that can require additional support further to that which the classroom provides. To ensure the absolute best for every child, during 2018, we designed and implemented a comprehensive Student Welfare system. Through this, every child is regularly observed and discussed from a holistic perspective by Classroom Directors and the School's educational leadership. The outcome is, working closely with families, appropriate strategies and interventions can be implemented and then tracked to ensure that every child is making progress. Where necessary, this may include the creation of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), in liaison with all key stakeholders, to document individual needs and adjustments, and reportable outcomes.

**Rael Mathews**  
Director Students & Technology

“The difference in the reaction between deficient and normal children, in the presentation of didactic material made of graded stimuli, is plainly seen from the fact that the same didactic material used with deficient makes education possible, while with normal children it provokes auto-education.”

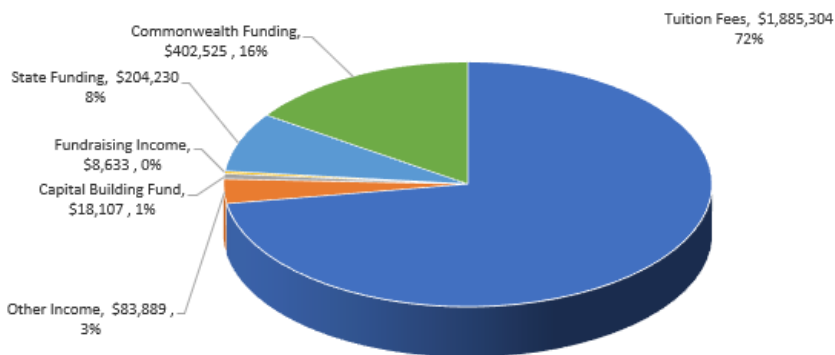
~ Maria Montessori  
The Montessori Method



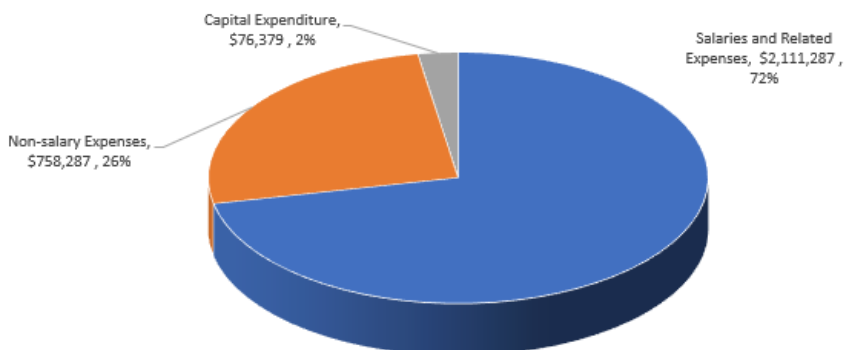


# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**2018 School Income by Funding Source**



**2018 Recurrent/Capital Expenditure**





## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP/ ENGAGEMENT

### **Building purposeful internal and external relationships, networks and partnerships:**

Under Principal direction, many relationships and networks are prevalent at CMS. Contributing at a national level via the Montessori Australia Board, Anthony now can go beyond the boundary of school and support effective change for Montessori education in Australia and internationally.

CMS continues to support the Karinya House Home for Mothers and Babies by offering two PTP places and one school place as supported by the Bursary Program. CMS is proud to be one of 20 corporate and community sponsors of Karinya House in the ACT.

Each year CMS involves the children in Camp Quality week which culminates with Spiky Hair Day when funds are raised for children with cancer. This year funds were also raised to support Assistance Dogs Australia.

