



Annual Report 2022





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“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





Who we are:

Our History, Vision and Mission

In 1980, a group of parents came together with a common purpose: they wanted to start a Montessori school in Canberra. These parents formed the Canberra Montessori Society that year, and in 1981, they established Canberra Montessori School. The initial 3-6 program was extended to include a primary school in 1996, which was situated at the school's Yarralumla campus.

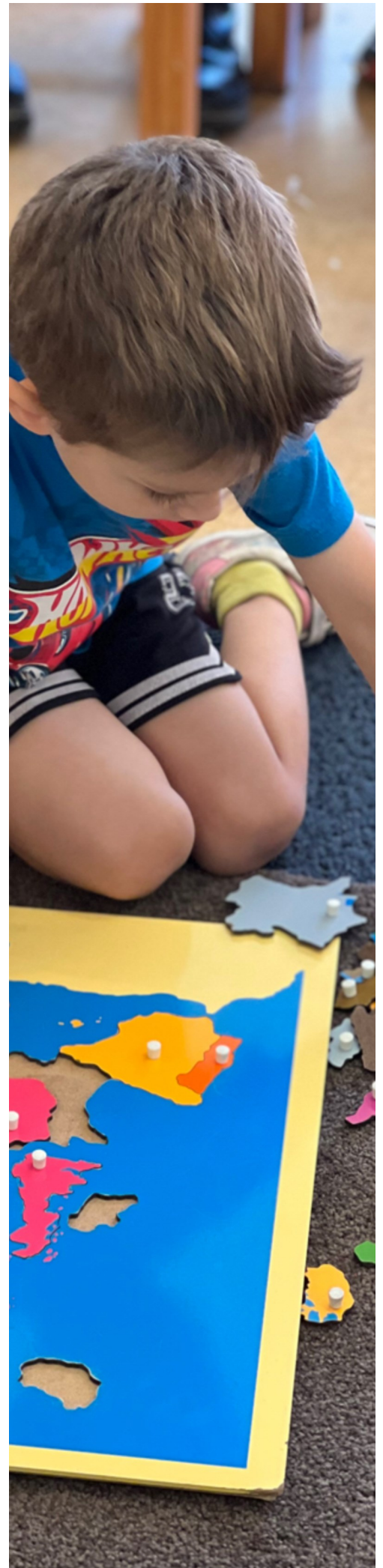
The school moved to its current campus in Holder in 2003. This is one of the few Montessori School campuses in Australia that have been completely purpose-built, and it is also one of the most spacious.

As of 2022, the school consists of an early childhood environment, parent toddler, five 3-6 classes, two 6-9 classes and one 9-12 class. Canberra Montessori School now serves families with children aged from 18 months to 12 years old. Every one of these classes is run by well trained and dedicated Montessori staff, who understand and respond to the developmental needs of the children in their care, to enable the full potential of the child to express itself naturally and without restriction by artificial demands.

The Montessori Method is a unique and comprehensive educational method which enables our staff to meet the individual child where their needs are, while still creating communities of learners, where the older, the more experienced and the stronger, nurture, guide and bring forth the smaller, the lesser experienced, and the not-yet-developed.

The Canberra Montessori Teaching Staff are the bearers of a rich and wonderful understanding of childhood and human development left behind by Maria Montessori. They build each other through sharing best practice pedagogy, and hold workshops and demonstrations for parents who want to further align their parenting with this fantastic vision. The parents support the school through the work of the Parents and Friends Association, which runs social events for parents and raises money for special school projects.

The development of the full potential of the child is our mission, and the delivery encompasses all of these activities. It is because of this work that Canberra Montessori is becoming one of Australia's great Montessori schools.







Message From School Board

Dear Members,

The previous years have seen some of the hardest operational environments for education, and 2022 was when we started to operate in the 'new normal' post Covid-19 restrictions. Significant events have a way of refocusing people, and we saw a number of staffing changes over the last 12 months, including welcoming Halima as our new Principal at the end of the reporting period.

The challenges of continuing to educate children during a once-in-a-hundred-year pandemic meant that other things were not necessarily as prioritised as they ordinarily would be. Over the course of the beginning of 2023, it became apparent that while the Canberra Montessori Society employed staff who delivered Montessori education in trying circumstances, we discovered concerns about the delivery of required administrative processes. We have had significant disruptions to the provision of administrative support, including at the leadership and management level, and we have seen the related effects. While we wanted to hold the AGM earlier in the year, the Board needed the extra time to investigate and consider the school's financial operations. The Board is the custodian of the Canberra Montessori Society and the investments that members make to deliver a Montessori education. The Board takes its responsibility to lead and support the administration of the school seriously. When it becomes necessary, the Board will direct operations to achieve our constitutional and administrative obligations. While comprised of volunteers, the Board has devoted considerable time, effort, and expertise to assist in remedying identified issues, and will continue to do so when it is necessary.

Our financial statement for the 2022 operating year points to some of the difficulties. While we are confident that the Society can continue to operate and deliver Montessori education through its school program, an uplift in administrative processes and procedures has become evident. The Board is working with staff, including Halima and the administrative team, to achieve this uplift. Budgetary pressures and efficient use of resources across the school program and its administration have led to decisions which some might have found difficult or challenging, but we are confident that these adjustments are necessary to best ensure the sustainability of the school. These adjustments include the investment in a larger Early Childhood program to meet immediate demand, which we are confident will grow our foundational intake into the Cycle 1 program and have follow-on effects over the longer term.





Message From School Board

We believe we owe it to members and our wonderful staff enabling and delivering quality Montessori education to ensure that the Society's school program has articulated, robust, repeatable, and effective processes and procedures for managing operations. We look forward to continuing to enable and support Halima and the rest of the staff to deliver Montessori education and other Montessori programs on behalf of the Society to its members.

Yours truly,

Tim Bourke

Board Chair on behalf of the Board





MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL

As I write this, I recall the happy green of the leaves of Summer. The weather cools, but warm and vibrant memories still surround. They sustain us still. Then Winter comes, and life takes shelter on the inside, while preparations are underway for new growth when the time is right!

2022 was the first year of many which was undisturbed by prolonged absence due to the pandemic. We were able to have a full year in our classrooms again, and without the disruptions, we began to re-consolidate the learning environments around the school. Children who missed months of schooling in previous years established themselves more deeply in their classroom work, as the adults in the environments continued to guide them.

As the year drew toward the conclusion of its third quarter, Rael Matthews, our Principal, had to leave the school quite suddenly for family reasons. I took on the role of Principal as the year drew to a close.

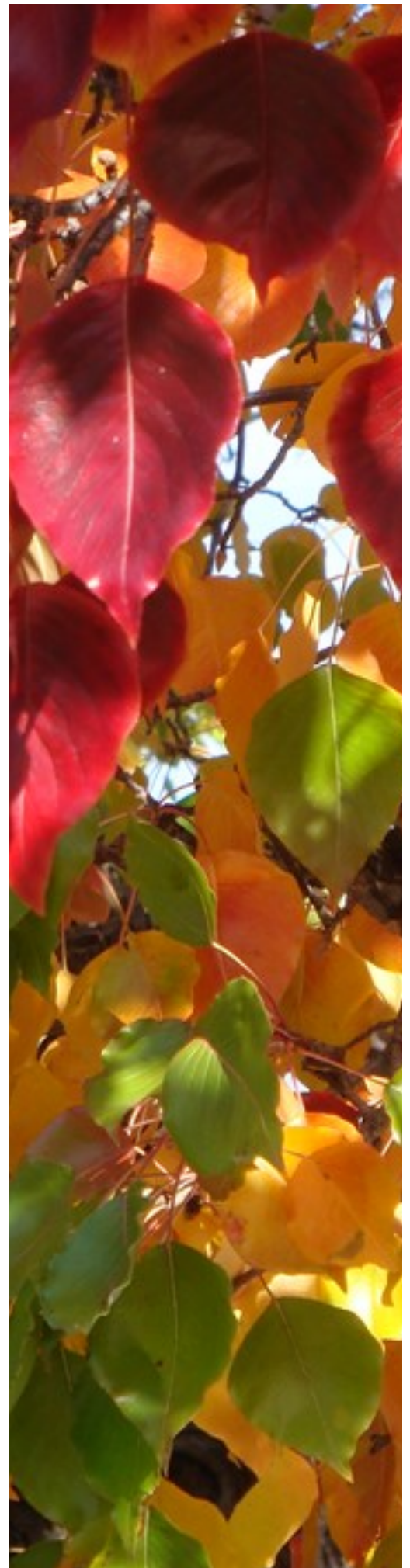
You will see as you read to the conclusion of this report that it would be fair to describe 2022 as something of a “financial Autumn” for Canberra Montessori. However, when Winter ensued, the staff pulled together, like particles of matter which, in the words of Dr Montessori in the First Great Story, cling tighter and tighter together as they grow colder.

It is because of the dedication of the staff and the support of the parent body that at the conclusion of 2022, we initiated gains in a variety of areas including learning support, the enrichment and deepening of our school culture with Aboriginal perspectives, the development of the school grounds, the establishment of PAT testing, and curriculum development, particularly in the area of sport.

We look forward to strong growth in the year ahead!

Halima Khurram

Principal





Message From Parents & Friends 'Association

The Canberra Montessori School Parents and Friends' Association ("P&F") started in December 2019. A small team of parents formed a committee tasked with deciding Objects to define operations, establishing and ratifying a constitution, developing a charter as well as the many procedural, administrative and legal duties required of a start-up.

There were grand plans. The Committee wanted to build a better community by providing fun events for families, networking opportunities for parents as well as fundraising activities. There were several events before the landscape changed: bushfires, then COVID, delayed initiatives.

Faced with these adversities the Committee did not falter. Plans were repurposed. The new environment became virtual with yoga sessions, seminars, reading gatherings, and even a Bollywood dance party for families. As restrictions relaxed early 2022 – in time for the Canberra cold – the Committee was able to implement more plans including after-school free-play sessions, new parents' morning teas, and a weekend winter picnic day.

Late last year the Committee held its first major event post restrictions and winter: a return to face-to-face activities. The Halloween event was a great success with many parents outside the Committee volunteering to make the night a fun one for families. Children 'trick or treated', 'limboed', and danced to the beats of our CMS DJ whilst parents relaxed, tapped their toes, and chatted amongst themselves.

Early in 2021, the P&F realised the Committee's inaugural fundraising program by purchasing early readers for the School.

The second fundraising program is to raise money for the School's sporting and loose-play grounds. In 2022, this program included a mango and gingerbread house drive. The program continues in 2023.

Last year, the Committee also launched its first CMS P&F survey. It was well-received by parents with the results acting as a barometer for future events and fundraisers.





Message From Parents & Friends' Association

The Committee also worked alongside another parent to provide a special 'thank you' to all directors and staff for their continual dedication and energy during COVID lockdowns.

As the Committee passes the reigns over to the new Committee, I am confident it is in safe hands, and will continue to be an asset to the School's community.

Yours sincerely

Petrea Simeon
Retired President (December 2019 – April 2023)
Canberra Montessori School Parents and Friends' Association





Achievements and Undertakings

PAT Testing Started

Progressive Achievement (PAT) tests assist our directors to identify student needs, target teaching and monitor learning growth. PAT tests allow teachers to collect evidence of student learning; to identify where students are in their learning at a given point in time; to monitor growth over time and to reflect on student attainment. The tests are adaptive and are designed to establish the points individuals have reached in their long-term progress in an area of learning. These tests help to establish what children know, understand and can do at the time of assessment – information that can then be used to identify next steps in teaching and learning and to monitor individual progress over time.

Learning Support Processes Improved

Learning Support gained a great deal of momentum in 2022, as Viv Moir took on the role of providing that extra support for children who need a bit of a boost, and Leharne Fountain took on the role of overseeing the multifaceted learning support process. Leharne has been hard at work creating systems for initiating, organising and tracking learning support, and Viv has been hard at work curating resources and strategies which align to the learning that the children receive in the classroom.

Reconciliation Community Garden opened

Viv Watson, Louise Draper and Glen Watson dedicated hours to planning, winning a grant and implementing the CMS Reconciliation Community Garden. The garden features four beds for the school and nearby community to plant in, as well as a bush tucker garden and plantings of edible foods both native and introduced. A yarning circle is also incorporated into the design, which is a meeting place where members of the school community can come to discuss matters of importance, and to speak from the heart, as an inspiration from the Ngunnawal people who are the traditional custodians of this land. CMS is very proud to have a yarning circle and reconciliation garden incorporated into the design of the school grounds.





Achievements and Undertakings

NAPLAN

In 2022, children in Cycle 2 and 3 who were aged equivalent to traditional school Years 3 and 5, participated in NAPLAN. These standardised tests aim to measure a child's achievement in numeracy and a range of literacy skills. While these are undoubtedly valuable skills, they do not represent the breadth and depth of skills and dispositions developed through a Montessori education.

A child's performance in NAPLAN offers a glimpse of their strengths and weaknesses at one point in time, and together with a range of other sources of formal and informal assessment, forms part of the picture of a child's learning.

Curriculum Development

2022 saw the release of the early stages of a CMS sport album, including lessons in football (soccer) and skipping. It also saw classes taking steps into the outside environment, establishing sport as an area of learning in which children receive lessons during the regular work cycle and can then access materials and practise independently. This is a major development toward the full vision of Dr Montessori; historically the school employed a sport teacher, and sport was generally confined to that dedicated time every week.







School Team

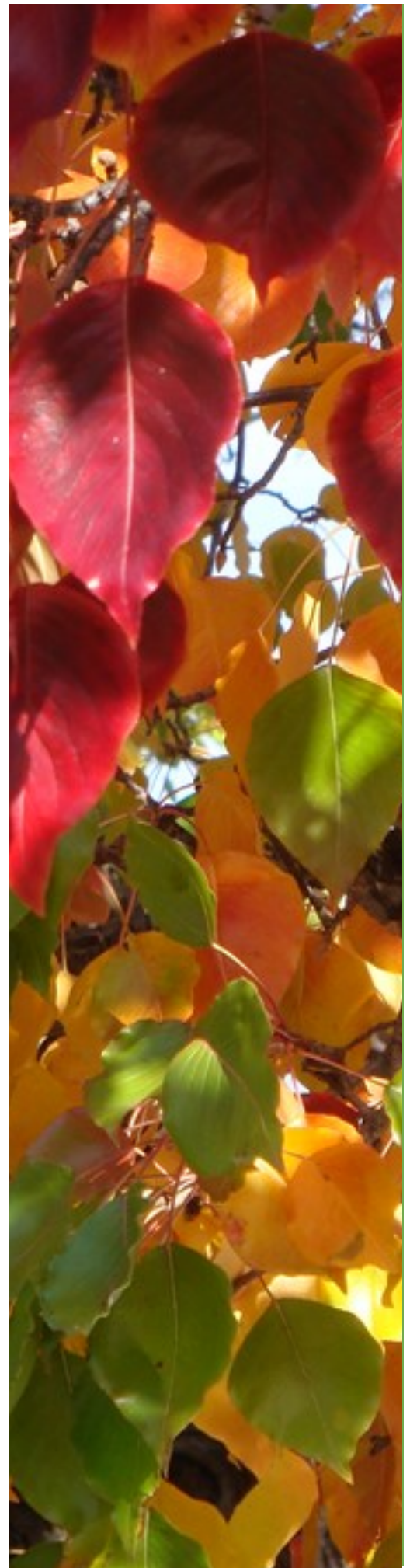
School Staff 2022

Teaching Staff	22
FTE* Teaching Staff	21
Non-teaching Staff	8
FTE* Non-teaching Staff	7

Roles

Staff Roles 2022

Principal	Rael Matthews
Deputy Principal	Aileen Frost
	Halima Khurram
Executive Assistant	Judy McGowan
Administrative Staff	Gemma Fisher, Tonia Lewis, Sure Verri
	Prue Loader
Directors	Glen Watson, Leharne Fountain, Tom Ransom, Darcy Loughton, Alice Quade
	Ros Hartley, Shereen DeSilva, Louise Draper, Tomomi Evans, Teiyane Moby
Assistants	Viv Watson, Banipreet Khaur, Kylie Hunter, Aparna Rangarajan, Stephanie Viegas, Taryn Smith-Hardy, Sukhi Sahota, Veda Limaye, Kim Hughes, Archana Lal, Mathew Sellen, Vinh Ngyuen.





Professional Development

- AMI Assistant to Infancy Diploma
- AMI Introduction to Adolescence Certificate
- AMI Montessori 3-6 Orientation
- AMI Theory into Practise series
- ACT Democracy Head-on
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspective
- Wynnys, Musica Viva
- Music Inspired by the Natural Environment, Musica Viva
- Digital Rights and Responsibilities of Students and Educators
- Teaching Civics and Citizenship: a parliamentary approach
- Eco-Art and Natural Journaling
- Montessori Principals to Practise
- Responding and Reporting of Critical Online Incidents
- Managing Food Allergies
- Multi-Sensory Structured Language Education
- The Music Shelf
- Disability Standards for Early Childhood Education
- How to Teach Sustainability with Hope
- Be You
- Acknowledge This
- Inclusive learning post-pandemic





Student Profile

Enrolments 2022

Cycle 3	26
Cycle 2	44
Cycle 1	72
Infant Community	16
Parent-Toddler Program	17

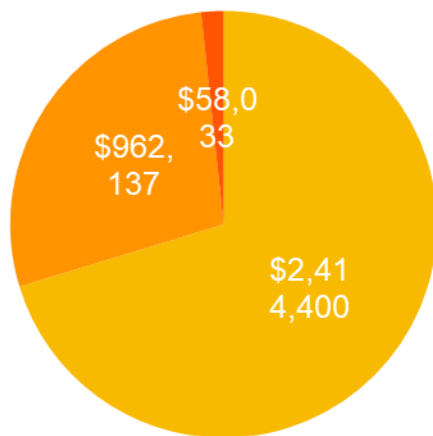




Financial Information

- School fees
- Government funding
- Other revenue

2022 Revenue



- Employee expenses
- Building maintenance
- Other expenses

2022 Expenditure

