

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

30 November 2022



**INSIDE,  
WE  
TALK  
ABOUT:**

**Quality  
Connections  
Research  
Promotion  
Mentoring  
Why Montessori?**



## **Thank you to the Australian Montessori Community**

### **It's been a transformational year!**

Your many ideas and suggestions over the past year – gathered from personal site visits to early childhood centres, schools and aged care facilities, meetings with educators and leaders, surveys, interactions and feedback – have all been invaluable in helping us better understand your needs. You have called for support in specific areas, flexibility in the design and planning of services, and ongoing professional learning. This has allowed us to refine our services to better suit the changing needs of a modern, post-Covid workforce. Although its fundamental principles remain as powerful today as they did a hundred years ago, we believe that Montessori must adapt to the times to stay relevant and to take the movement forward.

Thank you for your support and input in our work of advancing Montessori in Australia. Montessori Australia has achieved the highest level of community support in its 15-year history as the national peak body with nearly 65% of all Montessori programs in the country, including 84% of all schools, now members !



## Quality Standards for all Training Traditions

Uniting our movement requires universally recognised standards that Montessorians of all training traditions can support. We have brought globally recognised standards for Montessori training to Australia through our accreditation with the [Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education \(MACTE\)](#), the worldwide Montessori training accrediting body recognised by the US government. MACTE standards were set by a committee made up of the ten major Montessori organisations, including the American Montessori Society (AMS), Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the International Montessori Council (IMC) and now Montessori Australia (MA).

Over the last 25 years the Montessori community worldwide has increasingly come to recognise MACTE accreditation as a sign of quality Montessori training and we are proud to represent MACTE in this region of the world. Montessori Australia will be hosting a visit from MACTE's founding Executive Director, Rebecca Pelton, early next year.

## Quality Standards for all Schools and Centres

Now in its second year, the [Montessori Quality: Authentic Practice](#) program (MQ:AP) is reinvigorating the quality improvement process for centres and schools through a self-reflective process that is now more in line with Montessori principles. We have updated the standards for self-assessment, established on-going training for schools and centres, and provided resources and supported organisations to embark on their journey of self-reflection and improvement.



## Connections with Like-Minded Education Organisations

Many of our workshops, conferences and professional development programs are now accredited with NESA and ACT for Professional Learning hours, a labour-intensive process which makes our Montessori workshops more valuable for teachers needing to satisfy state requirements for PD hours.

Montessori Australia has also sought to increase the exposure of the Montessori movement by making connections with other educational organisations. We took the lead in establishing Transforming Education Australasia (TEA), a new collective for promoting the common agenda of alternative education organisations. Hosted by Montessori Australia, TEA is moderated by Professor Scott Eacott of the Gonski Institute at UNSW and holds monthly discussions with representatives from groups such as Steiner Education Australia, the Australian Democratic Education Committee, Global Education Innovations and Future Schools, among others. TEA's mission includes three pillars: research, advocacy, and public interface. The TEA website will soon be ready to go live, at which point the group will go public with a media release statement.



## Fostering Australian Research

Through its research arm, Montessori Australia has liaised with independent researchers to showcase their work. We have established links to North American research and to various universities there, and have also supported those embarking upon research in Australia through discussions with several universities. Our website highlights some excellent contemporary Australian research. Working with the community and leading academics, the Early Childhood Focus Group has compiled research on floor beds and has conducted a review of data management systems, two issues of high need for early childhood centres across Australia. Montessori educators, parents, and alumni took part in the 2nd phase of a research project with UNSW which is gathering data to consider and examine alternative outcomes of school success. Please look out for a ground-breaking opportunity to take part in the next phase of research with UNSW's Alternative indicators of school success project which will generate much conversation within our own as well as the broader educational community.



## Advancing Montessori Across Australia

In response to your calls for increased advocacy, visibility and marketing, Montessori Australia has held ongoing discussions with education regulatory bodies including ACECQA, NESA, ACARA, and ISA, among others. We have also been working with ACECQA to provide articles, resources and assessor training.

We have begun to market Montessori more widely with these organisations and in the general community through social media and the distribution of video resources such as [Why Montessori?](#) This video has been used widely over the past year to promote Montessori to new schools, services, and has also been adopted by ACECQA. Schools and centres are welcome to download or link to this video and use this video for their own promotional purposes.

In the medium term we aim to produce a television advertisement to give the benefits of Montessori education greater awareness among families across Australia.

Traffic on the Montessori Australia website is currently increasing at an average rate of about 12% monthly with unprecedented high click rates on pages in Australia, US, Canada and the UK!



We have showcased Montessori to wider audiences through our conferences and professional development programs marketed outside the Montessori community. This year Mark Powell presented workshops introducing Montessori to early childhood education students at TAFE and K-12 education students at USC.

To attract wider audiences to Montessori and promote a cross-fertilisation of ideas, our conferences have included acclaimed speakers both from within the Montessori community and outside. Our [Early Childhood Best Practice Conference](#) on 11-12 March 2023 will feature Anthony Semann from Semann & Slattery, Dr Red Ruby Scarlet (presenting and also performing her NQF - The Musical with Louise Dorrat), Dr Sally Staton from the University of Queensland and Prof. Jeanine Young (both renowned experts on sleep practices), Jackie Bennett, Christopher Phoenix and Cathy Duvel, along with an impressive lineup of Montessori experts discussing best practice in early childhood.



## Early Childhood Best Practice Conference

**When:** 11 & 12 March 2023

**Where:** Gold Coast, QLD

**Details:** [conference.montessori.org.au](https://conference.montessori.org.au)

## Grassroots Work in Focus Groups

Apart from making significant efforts to promote Montessori in the wider educational community, MA has also sought to become a more inclusive organisation within the Montessori community in Australia. Our action-based Focus Groups are open to everyone, no matter their training background. Focus Groups currently include working groups on the Montessori National Curriculum, Early Childhood, the Montessori Quality Authentic Practice Program; Research and Development; Faith-based and public schools; Montessori Christian education; Montessori for Inclusion; Montessori events & professional development; marketing and public relations; mentoring and leadership; Adult and Aged Care; and networking across Australia. If you have an interest in participating in any of these focus groups contact us at [info@montessori.org.au](mailto:info@montessori.org.au).

The Montessori National Curriculum (MNC) Focus Group has met on Saturday mornings since late 2019 to update the MNC and has been able to put it online so that it is widely available in a more user friendly format with added resources. The new version will soon include coding and mapping to the Australian National Curriculum which is almost complete. State-based mapping is planned next.



## Mentoring and Networking

Montessori Australia has also supported the Montessori community by honouring experienced Montessorians in the community and connecting them with younger educators through the bi-monthly Zoom program Montessori Lives! We have recorded two dozen interviews with Montessorians from a range of backgrounds and these recordings are free on our website.

Montessori Australia has actively promoted networking with live conferences. During the Covid period when many other organisations went online, we persisted because you told us that the networking opportunities of these conferences are as important as the speakers! Our [Early Childhood Best Practice Conference](#) in March 2023 hosts an impressive line-up of speakers. In addition to the previously listed educational thought leaders, we're also joined by Montessorians Cathy Wilson (MANZ), Barbara Langford (SA Montessori), Anna Black (Inspire Education, Victoria), Mark Powell, Lucette van Someren Boyd and Susan Chahwan.



## Join Us and Get Involved!

We are YOUR peak body. Montessori Australia welcomes everyone with an interest in the Montessori community to get involved at whatever level they are comfortable with. We welcome Montessori educators and leaders of all levels and training traditions. With nearly 65% of all Montessori schools and centres around the country as members, we offer tangible benefits and services. Provider Memberships are available to schools and centres or you can join as an Individual Member.



## JOIN US

**Memberships:** [montessori.org.au](https://montessori.org.au)

**Focus Groups:** [info@montessori.org.au](mailto:info@montessori.org.au)