

# TRANSFORMING THE ADULT

NATIONAL CONFERENCE



UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL,  
TRANSFORM YOURSELF AND  
INSPIRE CHANGE

**28 & 29 OCTOBER 2023 | SYDNEY**

8:00am - 8:30am

Registration, Networking & Exhibitors

8:30am - 8:45am

Conference Welcome

8:45am - 10:15am



### EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION: SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN MONTESSORI

*William Maier*

Montessori envisioned a world where you and I would think for ourselves instead of being controlled and manipulated; where human beings would live in harmony with all other forms of life on this planet; where we would live lives of continual personal and social growth and learning. Montessori had a vision that you and I would emerge as truly free, authentic individuals.

10:15am - 10:45am

Morning Tea, Networking & Exhibitors

10:45am - 12:00pm



### PROPOSITIONS FOR A PUBLIC MONTESSORI IN AUSTRALIA: TOWARDS A MORE CARING, INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

*Stewart Riddle*

The current political and policy context of education in Australia is troubling, given the increasing metrification, standardisation and narrowing of what counts (i.e., what can be counted) as quality teaching and learning. While public debates have focused on teachers and test scores, there have been widening social, economic and educational gaps between young people from different backgrounds. In this presentation, Stewart will consider the possibilities and pragmatisms of a public Montessori as one response to the growing residualisation of public schooling in Australia and increasing educational inequality. In doing so, he poses some provocations and propositions for a public Montessori that works for 'the public' in terms of young people's democratic participation, civic engagement and developing capacities for critical and creative change in the world.

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Lunch, Networking & Exhibitors

1:00pm - 2:00pm



### THE ART OF STEINER/WALDORF EDUCATION AND THE INNER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY OF THE TEACHER

*Shelley Davidow*

This presentation explores the teacher's inner development journey as one of 'becoming' --a movement towards attaining 'freedom of thought.' The presentation considers indications that Steiner gave to facilitate the potentially deeply creative act of teaching and learning in our educational settings - and which can be taken up in any educational setting. It looks at the value of this journey for its transformative potential in education. If teaching is an art, as Steiner posits, then the teacher is always, to some degree, an artist in the broadest sense, and the journey is as important as the destination.

concurrent workshops - select one

### MATHEMATICS AND ETHNOMATHEMATICS: MUTUAL INTERROGATIONS

*Joel Rioux*

Ethnomathematics can offer keys to being a more Prepared Adult and keys to becoming a mathematically and culturally responsive pedagogue. The potential for conflating both Western (conventional) and local Indigenous mathematical perspectives is stimulating for Montessori educators because mathematics is about Reconciliation. Reconciliation in this context means to investigate the humanising of the mathematics and not only looking at the customary and predominant mathematics curriculum. The child, school, community can be part of a process of "mutual interrogations" of the different mathematics available in the schools' region. Contextualisation to culture means using local materials. Contextualisation of mathematics aims at bringing relevance into education for Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous Montessori students, ethnomathematics brings an element of respect, reverence, of history, of mathematical humility.

2:00pm - 3:00pm



### TRANSFORMING AGED CARE THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION

*Barbara Langford and Jessica Langford*

Echoes Montessori is embedded into the grounds of an independent retirement living complex, creating an intergenerational village in which children and their elders share their land and share their lives. Barbara and Jessica will take the audience through an overview of the Echoes journey, from its starting point as a vision of children and their elders contributing to each other's lives, to the realisation of that dream as our intergenerational village flourishes and thrives each day. They will highlight the benefits of intergenerational interaction for children, elders, educators, families and society, with the hopes of inspiring others to embrace this approach. The session will identify some of the key considerations for developing a prepared environment for intergenerational engagement. It will also introduce the Echoes Montessori principles of meaningful, sustainable and ethical intergenerational practice, and outline the importance of diversity and inclusion in the structure of an intergenerational program.

concurrent workshops - select one

### LIFE BY DESIGN & THE INTENTIONAL GUIDE

*Dimitri*

We are, the single most significant influence/resource in the early developmental lives of our children.... If the child truly is, as Montessori said 'the hope & promise for humankind', then our responsibility to aid/support their 'holistic' process of self-creation is perhaps not only vital but one might say it's a 'fundamental human need.' How might we do this? By continuing to support the transformative process of self-creation throughout adult life.

3:00pm - 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea, Networking & Exhibitors

3:30pm - 4:30pm



### MONTESSORI ELEVATOR SPEECH COMPETITION

*Mark Powell*

This panel discussion will look at and discuss the finalist selection of videos submitted for this national competition. After the discussion the audience and panelists will all vote on the top three elevator speeches which will be awarded valuable prizes. Come be part of the fun and get some ideas for what to say when you find yourself in a conversation with a neighbour, co-worker or stranger in an elevator who asks, "So what is Montessori anyway?"

4:30pm - 5:15pm



### LAUGHTER YOGA: LAUGH TO CONNECT

*Benedicte Henry*

Laughter is truly universal: it knows no language, age, cultural, economic, educational or gender barriers. It helps us connect with our inner child and our inner joy. Promoting peace through joy, laughter naturally relieves tensions and dissolves loneliness. This session will help educators with strategies to manage stress better, improve classroom management and learning outcomes, better tackle the ever-increasing expectations of parents and improve team-connectivity. Laugh to connect contributes to increased mental wealth and improved morale for both educators and the children in their care.

# Recognition Awards Dinner

**SATURDAY 7:15pm – 10:00pm**

Join us for the inaugural Montessori Australia Recognition Awards dinner to acknowledge extraordinary accomplishments in areas relevant to the Montessori Movement.

The tributes are to honour the often invisible work of the many Australian Montessorians who work tirelessly for children, often without recognition and sometimes with only minimal compensation.

Prospective honourees are nominated by the Montessori community and then considered and chosen by a designated committee, using articulated rubrics.

We invite members of the Australian Montessori community (including educators, leaders, staff, trainers and parents) to submit nominations for the 5 award categories, with nominations opening on 1 June and closing on 31 July 2023.

The award categories are:

- **Living Legend**
- **Innovator Award**
- **Equity & Social Justice Award**
- **Willemien Duyker-de-Vries Community Service Award**
- **Barbara Stephens “Quiet Achiever” Award**

All finalists will be celebrated and the recognition awards will be presented at the Recognition Awards Dinner.

We invite everyone to attend this special event to celebrate those who have contributed so much to our community.

**Details and Nominations:**  
<https://montessori.org.au/recognition-awards>

The evening includes a sumptuous 3 course dinner and beverages, the award ceremony and live entertainment from the incredible HOT POTATO BAND.

**Dress: Cocktail attire**



### OPTIONAL: BREAKFAST SESSION

7:15am – 8:30am

#### POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TOOLS FOR MONTESSORI EDUCATORS

*Mark Powell*

An introduction to the Positive Discipline for Montessori Educators course on classroom management tools to support student mental health and foster respect, kindness and responsibility.

8:15am – 8:30am

Arrival, Networking & Exhibitors

8:30am – 10:00am



#### COSMIC EDUCATION: A WAY OF LIFE

*William Maier*

Maria Montessori said that “new” teachers must do more than learn new skills; we must transform ourselves. We must step back to truly observe ourselves and others. In this way we develop a “cosmic” view that is at once scientific and spiritual.

10:00am – 10:30am

Morning Tea, Networking & Exhibitors

10:30am – 11:30am



#### PROFESSIONAL GROWTH THROUGH PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

*Elizabeth Brandt*

Compassion for others is a dance with compassion for ourselves. How we meet and serve others is inextricably connected to how we meet and serve every part of ourselves. The inner work of ‘being’ is transformative in our ‘doing’ in the world. With a focus on personal-professional transformation this interactive workshop includes various reflective practices and a focus on ‘The Work’ of Byron Katie.

11:30am – 12:30pm



#### SELF-LEADERSHIP: FROM REACTION TO CONNECTION

*Shawnee Schmid*

Present moment self-awareness is key in recognising when we are not operating from our core self. In this workshop, we will be exploring ways to develop more in the moment self-awareness, how we know we are in some kind of reactive pattern, and how we can transform these kinds of patterns. We'll focus on the importance of doing our own inner healing work for staying calm, connected, and energised in an education setting.

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Lunch, Networking & Exhibitors

1:30pm – 2:30pm



#### CAN WE CAPTURE THE TRANSFORMATION?

*Alex Ioannou*

My vision of the future is no longer of people taking exams and proceeding from [one level of school to the next], but of individuals passing from one stage of independence to a higher [one], by means of their own activity [and...] will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual. (Montessori 1948a, p. xv) How do you capture this transformation and growth of the children with whom you work? What are the challenges and the celebrations?

This workshop will begin with a look at what is considered as best practice for assessment in education for children of all ages. Within this framework, it is hoped that we can explore, interactively, the opportunities and challenges for Montessori practice whilst reflecting on the key questions, “What do I do?” and “Why do I do it?” The aim will also be for participants to share practice on what works and how we know it works and consider the scope for this to affirm the practice and identity of Montessori within Australia.

concurrent workshops – select one



#### TRANSFORMING OURSELVES TOWARDS STUDENT AGENCY

*Fiona McKenzie*

A wave of active citizenry is emerging in Australian society and showing its capacity to lift the bar on integrity, inclusivity, and fairness in our communities, and of their leadership. How do we authentically give our children and young people the opportunity to actively participate in the organisation of their most significant community, and learn the skills of active citizenry? Structure and processes can scaffold decision making, group discussion, and vision sharing, around matters that effect their school lives but as with the authentic application of any school philosophy, it is the adults in the room that are the key. Adults in democratic school environments must be very conscious of the power that they inherently hold in a school environment and be willing to share it (or at least be transparent about when they can't) on a daily basis. It takes self-awareness, humility, and trust in the goodness and capacity of children to hold a space for shared power and responsibility in the classroom. It takes courage to let children see the decision you are advocating for lose in a class vote. It takes vulnerability to share with them your disappointment about this while letting them know that you respect the process.

2:30pm – 3:30pm



#### PANEL DISCUSSION: MONTESSORI, STEINER AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS TALK TRANSFORMATION

*William Maier, Shelley Davidow, Fiona McKenzie, Mark Powell, Alex Ioannou*

What Can Montessori, Steiner and Democratic Schools Learn from One Another About Transforming Educators to Work Effectively with Young People?

3:30pm – 4:00pm



#### CONFERENCE CLOSING

*Maree-Rose Brakatselos*

A story of transformation from a Montessori alumni. Listen to this former student of Sydney Montessori School speak about how her years in Montessori have benefitted her and set her apart in many ways from her peers who went through traditional education.

## VENUE

Novotel Sydney Brighton Beach offers premium 4.5-star hotel accommodation overlooking the beautiful, white sandy beaches of Brighton-Le-Sands and Sydney's picturesque Botany Bay. The hotel has a spacious and relaxing beachside feel, superbly located in the heart of Brighton-Le-Sands' foodies strip, teeming with cosmopolitan restaurants and cafés. Only 4km from Sydney Airport, it features 296 hotel rooms, Coco's on the Beach restaurant with views of Botany Bay, 24 hour reception and secure onsite parking.

Conference delegates: Use the booking code for 15% off the best available unrestricted rate. Discounted breakfast rate of \$30 per person per day.

## BOOKING CODE: 271023MONT



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## SPEAKERS



### ELIZABETH BRANDT

Elizabeth Brandt is a workplace coach based in Kurrajong, New South Wales. She has been using The Work as a practice for 16 years and has completed facilitation training using The Work of Byron Katie some 10 years ago. Elizabeth's main focus is on promoting a work environment of integrity and productivity for both individuals and teams. She uses a process called 'The Work' as a tool for introspection, reflection and insight on a personal and professional basis. Along with practical applications for workplace change and empowerment, she encourages us to: Love your day. Today.



### MAREE-ROSE BRAKATSELOS

Maree-Rose Brakatselos is a proud member of the Montessori alumni, first as a student at Riverwood Montessori School and Sydney Montessori School, Gympie. Maree-Rose was recognised as part of the global leaders early entry program moving into the undergraduate Bachelor's Degree in Psychology course at Macquarie University which she is currently in her final year. Maree-Rose plans to continue her post graduate studies to gain her provisional license to specialise in Development Psychology. Maree-Rose is on the NSW consulting team with Leisure Employment Australia (LEA), a company affiliated with the leisure facility management company Bluefit. Here she mentors HSC students in Years 11 and 12 to be introduced and get ready for the workplace whilst completing a traineeship in Aquatic and Leisure services industry. Maree-Rose is the Events Coordinator with Montessori Australia.



### SHELLEY DAVIDOW

Shelley Davidow is an international author and senior lecturer in the School of Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast, QLD, Australia. She is the coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Steiner Education, the only post-graduate training for Steiner teachers in the country. Originally from South Africa, her recent book titles include Runaways (Ultimo, 2022) Shadow Sisters, Whisperings in the Blood (University of Queensland Press, 2016; 2018), Playing with Words (Palgrave, 2016) and Writing the Radical Memoir (Bloomsbury, 2023). Shelley is excited to join the conference to share and discover how Steiner differs to Montessori, what surprising similarities there are and what we can learn from each other.



### DIMITRI

Dimitri is co-founder and custodian of Central Coast Montessori in NSW, which features a diverse community of people committed to holding space for self-creation and social sculpture. Dimitri loves to imagine and to play with what's possible, to explore and examine any and all constructs. He has done so in life and in particular in Montessori spaces for over two decades. Dimitri's deepest want is for us as a Montessori community together to deeply delve into the Cosmic Continuum, the vital thread that runs through all planes (and beyond) in a bid to understand how we may aid humanity's capacity to adapt through the creation of an existential sustainability container.



### BENEDICTE HENRY

As a linguist who strongly believes in the power of language-learning to break barriers between people, Benedicte Henry's aim is to use laughter as a universal language to help participants reconnect in an increasingly disconnected world; not only to reconnect with themselves and their inner child, but also with the students they teach every day, between their own body and mind, and with the professional and personal communities they belong to. As a qualified Teacher of French for secondary school and a child carer, Benedicte has over 25 years of experience teaching people from a wide range of age groups, abilities and ethnic backgrounds in 3 different countries. Her message is simple...Laughter Connects!



### ALEX IOANNOU

Alex Ioannou has worked as an educator for over 30 years, with nearly 20 of these in Montessori education within an Adolescent program. In addition to her work within the classroom, Alex has also had experience in leadership and as an acting principal. This work has built skills in liaising with accrediting bodies and standards and a determination to support and build capacity in teachers for the remarkable work they do. She continues to work with students as well as being involved in curriculum and resource development. Alex also works with the Montessori Australia team as Director of Research and Development. Alex holds a Grad DipEd, BA (Hons) and is currently completing her Master's in Educational Studies.



### BARBARA LANGFORD & JESSICA LANGFORD

Barbara Langford has been a Montessori teacher for over 30 years during which time she has established seven highly regarded Montessori ECEC centres in Adelaide as owner and founder of SA Montessori. Barbara is a passionate advocate for raising the quality of education and care for young children. She spent many years as the President of both Childcare SA and also Childcare Associations Australia enabling her to champion at both a State and Federal Government level for the benefits of high quality early education for children. Barbara also runs her own consultancy company, volunteers on many boards and organisations to advocate for the early childhood sector. Jessica is Barbara's daughter, and holds a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), Diploma of Montessori (0-6), Diploma of Positive Psychology, and Diploma of Montessori (0-3). She is co-owner of 4 of SA Montessori's centres.

## SPEAKERS



### WILLIAM MAIER

William (Biff) Maier is Director of Faculty and Curriculum Development at Lexington Montessori School, and he co-directs the Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative (METTC), both in Lexington, Massachusetts. Involved with Montessori since 1974, Biff is a seminar presenter, consultant and mentor for the American Montessori Society. As former Chair of the AMS Teachers' Section, he served on the AMS National Board of Directors. Involved with Montessori since 1974, Mr. Maier is a seminar presenter and consultant. For the American Montessori Society, he serves as mentor to Emerging Leader Fellows and co-leader of Instructors Academy. As former Chair of the AMS Teachers' Section, he served on the AMS National Board of Directors. He earned his B.A. in psychology from Duke University and his M.Ed. from Xavier University, where he also received his AMS Early Childhood and Elementary 6-9 credentials. He also earned an AMI 6-12 credential from the International Center for Advanced Montessori Studies in Bergamo, Italy.



### FIONA MCKENZIE

Fiona McKenzie is the founder of three democratic schools (two primary, one secondary) in Victoria, is currently the Principal of Village High School, and has recently taken on the Presidency of the Australasian Democratic Education Community. She has a passion for environments that support children and adults to learn and experience the significant capacity we all have to affect the quality of our lives. She also supports individuals and communities around Australia to start democratic schools.



### MARK POWELL

Mark Powell first read Positive Discipline for his Montessori training in New York in 1994. This foundation helped him successfully manage 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms in the US and Australia for 27 years. Mark trained with Jane Nelson herself and also has a M.Ed. specialising in Conflict Resolution. He has published widely on Montessori education and designed many classroom materials now sold around the world. As a Montessori trainer he has delivered many workshops at international conferences and consulted for dozens of Montessori schools. In 2021 Mark joined Montessori Australia as Director of Education Services. He gives regular workshops on a variety of topics, although bringing this unique approach to relationship building to Australian parents and educators is a mission dear to his heart.



### STEWART RIDDLE

Stewart Riddle is an Associate Professor (Curriculum and Pedagogy) in the School of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. His research examines the democratisation of schooling systems, increasing access and equity in education and how schooling can respond to critical social issues in complex contemporary times. He has published extensively on educational disadvantage and the connections between equity and access to quality educational outcomes for young Australians. Stewart's most-recent book is *Schooling for Democracy in a Time of Global Crisis: Towards a More Caring, Inclusive and Sustainable Future* (Routledge, 2022). Prior to joining academia, Stewart taught high school English in Queensland schools for eight years.



### DR JOËL RIOUX

Dr Joël Rioux has substantive mainstream experience with learning and teaching in the Montessori Method in Australia and New Zealand. For eight years, he taught Aboriginal adolescent students in Woorabinda, a small community in Central Queensland. He taught Aboriginal pre-service teachers at Batchelor Institute (NT) from 2012-2022, as part of the initial Teacher Education course. His doctoral thesis built on his experience exploring the integration of Indigenous and western knowledges and the learning experience and engagement of students in their education and learning journey. He is currently the principal of Noosa Montessori school.



### SHAWNEE SCHMID

Shawnee is a Clinical Psychotherapist with a Bachelor of Counselling and Level 2 Internal Family Systems Therapist. Shawnee is passionate about using Internal Family Systems (IFS) and expressive art methods to reveal the natural pathway to healing through her own healing work for remaining present and connected for sharing the evidenced-based approaches with children, young people, parents, and teachers in her role as School Counsellor and Private Practices, and has a background in prevention and healing the impacts of Family and Domestic Violence. Shawnee has been a Program Assistant on IFS Institute trainings and will be sharing examples from an upcoming book "Freeing Self: IFS beyond the Therapy Room". Shawnee's interactive presentation will explore using IFS-Informed approaches for restoring inner harmony, through discussions on Attachment, Trauma, Coregulation, Polyvagal Theory and Interoception.



### CONFERENCE MC: GAVIN MCCORMACK

Gavin McCormack is a renowned Montessori-trained teacher with a passion for innovative education practices. With over two decades of teaching experience in multiple countries, Gavin has been named the Montessori Australia Ambassador and has built nine schools, several libraries and run three teacher training centres in Nepal. He is a co-founder of Upschool.co and EducationInfluence.com, platforms that aim to bring about meaningful change in the education sector. Gavin is also a bestselling author of "The Potential in Every Child" and a children's author with books focusing on life skills. His dedication to promoting education equality has led to him being recognized as one of the top ten most influential global educators in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, and he was nominated for Australian of the Year in 2018. Connect with Gavin to learn more about his personal pedagogy and educational philosophy and to collaborate on programming, classroom management, and pedagogy.

## REGISTRATION

	PRICE	GST	TOTAL
MEMBER	\$570	\$57	\$627
NON-MEMBER	\$650	\$65	\$715
SINGLE DAY	\$360	\$36	\$396
CONCESSION	\$360	\$36	\$396
RECORDING	\$400	\$40	\$440
SUNDAY BREAKFAST SESSION	\$35	\$3.50	\$38.50
AWARDS DINNER	\$140	\$14	\$154

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION: Includes 2-day conference access, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, conference satchel, name badge, recording access (see below), exhibitors and certificate of attendance.

MEMBER RATES: Individual members and staff of Montessori Australia member schools and centres are eligible for the discounted member rates. Apply the discount code when booking online to obtain the discounted rate.

BUY 10: Purchase 10 conference tickets or 10 Gala Dinner tickets for the price of 9 (one being free of charge).

CONCESSION: Available to Concession Card holders, Pension Card holders, and full-time students of Montessori diploma, early childhood degree or teaching degree courses. Proof of card holder or enrolment required.

RECORDING: Available 3 weeks after the conference exclusively for the ticket holder viewing only, for a period of up to 60 days. Includes all breakout sessions.

SINGLE DAY: Saturday or Sunday session attendance. Recording or certificate of attendance not applicable.

BREAKFAST SESSION: Includes continental breakfast and presentation.

EVENT POLICY: Refer to the event policy for further details including cancellations and refunds: <https://montessori.org.au/event-policy>

**REGISTER: <https://conference.montessori.org.au>**