



Montessori
Children's
Foundation

Annual Report 2022

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Acnowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we work on. We work to improve outcomes in meaningful ways for the traditional owners for both present and future generations.



Message from the Chair

2022 has been a further year of consolidation and renewal.

Firstly, on behalf of the Board, I would acknowledge the longstanding contributions of two Board members who departed in the past 12 months - Sally Connellan and Fran Reed.

Both have been longstanding supporters of the Montessori methodology and more specifically the purpose and programmes undertaken by the Montessori Childrens Foundation. The Board is delighted that both women have undertaken to continue to offer their wise counsel and experience to our ongoing work.

Secondly, as part of our renewal, we are privileged to have Francis Jose ("Joe") join the Board. Joe brings a wealth of experience of First Nations educational needs and programmes in the Cape.

To deliver our programmes it has been a key requirement that we achieve both financial stability and the certainty of an ongoing financial stream. Our CEO details how this has been achieved through our investment in share houses in Cairns. And this has all been underpinned by detailed work over the past four years in establishing leading governance and financial protocols.

The core responsibility of the Montessori Childrens Foundation is to facilitate greater opportunity for First Nations people through the application of the Montessori philosophy in educational and training programmes.

As reported by our CEO we are proud to say that during 2022 we have laid solid groundwork through the establishment of promising pilot programmes. These pilots are now providing evidence based information for the successful wider rollout of these programmes during 2023.



Message from the CEO

"I want to thank the Board for their continued dedication, and our amazing staff for their work in strengthening families and bringing MCF's first Family Strengthening program to reality."

During the development of the Raising Happy Kids program the Montessori Children's Foundation had to find its way as an organisation, transitioning from a Southern based board focused on partnerships, to a Cairns base of operations with a focus on developing and delivering our own programs. It is well-known that providing services that strengthen first nations families in a sustainable, meaningful and impactful manner is a challenge that has been largely unmet to date.

"If the plan doesn't work change the plan but not the goal" Anon

Many of the assumptions held at the outset have been challenged as feedback has come back from the process of developing and delivering the Raising Happy Kids program. We will continue to "cut the cloth" according to the reality of the situation we are presented with. As such new delivery options are now available and our plans are now better informed than ever.

In order to close the gap and create positive generational Change in the communities that we serve We needed to start from the ground up. The philosophy and methodology of the program needed to be strength based. We needed to build the program in collaboration with the facilitators that would be delivering it, adjust it and tune it as we went. What we have now is vastly better than what we started with - the path we had charted was not what we ended up with, but what we have is much better for it.

With the new addition to the board Francis Jose has brought a depth of experience and knowledge in the first nations family space that has resulted in reflection on community engagement and delivery models that are now

**“Traveler, there are no paths.
Paths are made by walking.”**

– Australian Aboriginal Proverb



resolved into a community engagement plan and necessary changes to the strategic plan.

With five sharehouses now owned and 5 year business plan in place we can concentrate on the objects of the trust knowing full well that the financial infrastructure underpinning our future endeavours is strong and will remain for generations.

It is with great pride that we see our first batch of facilitators now scheduled to be providing the first training, mentoring and support services back in their own communities in the Torres Strait. This is a significant milestone as the recruitment, training and retaining of staff in this sector is extremely challenging - we now have two trainers and hope soon to see many more coming through the ranks in 2023.

We will be working with the Parenting Research Council to establish a methodology and approach for data collection to ensure the collection of data throughout 2023 is conforming with best practices. It is imperative that we can provide a solid body of evidence for the Raising Happy Kids program in order to gain widespread adoption and opportunities for funding. There is another aspect to the collection of evidence during the delivery of this program and that is more generally for supported playgroups and also potentially as a model for an evidence based approach in the first nations services space. The Parenting Research Council has indicated an interest in pursuing this further as a new data driven model for services delivery has been a goal for both MCF and the Parenting Research Council.

It is with an approach of resilience, strength and humility that we take on this most important work in the hope that we can make a positive impact on current and future generations of first nations families.



Our Vision

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and their families will be empowered to thrive during their formative years.



Our Mission

Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their children to thrive and prosper through Montessori education.



Goals

The goals identified as best guiding the organisation toward the Vision and Mission are:

- Developing world class, evidence based family strengthening sustainable programs
- Serving remote communities from Yarrabah to TI
- Training facilitators and family members to deliver programs
- Strengthening first nations families and their children
- Making access to our services free
- Raising funds to develop and deliver services



Values

- **Strengths based** - A strengths-based approach emphasizes using a families strengths to achieve goals
- **Culturally appropriate** - We respect and incorporate the culture of first nations communities into everything we do.
- **Montessori philosophy** – children are treated as individuals
- **Access for all** – everyone is welcome
- **Here to stay** – we follow the family





OUR IMPACT 2022

Impact with Mixed Families

Programs

Raising Happy Kids Supported Playgroup -
Term 4, 2022 Trial Program

Mixed Cohort: Mixed ethnicities (including ATSI families)

RHK Parenting Program Impact Profile

52%
Communication

15%
Child
Management

40%
Parent Child
Activities

9%
Nurturing

12%
Enriched
Environment

Average across all domains
was a 0.8 Standard
Deviation Improvement on
a per term basis

9 Family enrollments
that completed
a term in our trial
program

17 Total
Current
enrollments
for 2023

2022 Achievements

- **MCF Financial future guaranteed**
 - MCF secured for now and generations to come with Cairns Sharehouse investments now complete, providing predictable equity growth and cashflow
- **Doubled our Impact**
 - Attendance at Yumihaus playgroup has doubled this last term and is set to double again in 2023
- **Designed, developed and deployed the Raising Happy Kids training program**
- **Evidence base for program established**
- **Increased Diversity**
 - MCF Board has added a new member Francis Jose to the team
- **Recognition of our facilitators and training methodology**
 - Contracted by Yumi Education (TSI) to provide mentoring and support to their facilitators in 2023

RAISING HAPPY KIDS

Raising Happy Kids Program

Raising Happy Kids is a family strengthening program, designed for (and by) First Nations Families that is deployed as a supported playgroup or as a parenting circle. The program, including training materials, all resources and support is available online (free) or face to face. The program is designed to be delivered in community, regardless of numeracy or literacy challenges, at scale, with a strong emphasis on support. Having been built with an evidence based approach from the beginning the program data collection methodology is unmatched in the first nations parenting intervention space - it is hoped that we are able to obtain recognition for the efficacy of the program in 2023.

Our Raising Happy Kids program is now available on [Raisinghappykids.com.au](https://raisinghappykids.com.au). It is now available online, in webinar or presentation format, for facilitator training or delivery.

“As plans for 2023 ramp up we look forward to working with the Parenting Research Council to have our Raising Happy Kids program validated, our evidence based approach appraised and potentially written up as a general model for First Nations Services to operate from”



Data Collection Method

We are using the PSA-10 to measure changes in parenting practices which is acknowledged as a reliable measure of parenting practices. The PSA-10 is administered at the beginning and end of the term by the facilitators with parents in a one-on-one interview. Throughout the term Session Reflection forms are completed by parents (or by facilitators for parents) as a record of what was learnt during a session, at the end of the term the reflection forms together with the pre and post PSA-10s are aggregated into a family file, and the data is input into the data table.

The Data

Domain	Communication	Child Management	Parent Child Activities	Nurturing	Enriched Environment
Absolute Improvement	31%	13%	18%	6%	14%
Standard Deviation	1.47	0.72	0.72	0.39	0.71



Impact

It is noted that the strongest impact is seen across the Communication domain, this is to be expected due to the strong language focus of the program combined with the literacy challenges presented in the cohort. The result is extremely positive and has been noted anecdotally throughout the term in Session Reflections from parents.

LOOKING AHEAD

2023 is a time to thrive

Our facilitators are booked to train and mentor facilitators in Torres Strait who are running a parenting program. This is a big honour for the trainers as the role was previously conducted by Julia Hilson (Australia's foremost Montessori educator for first nations children).

In 2023, we will prioritize community engagement as we work closely with community leaders to identify the areas where the Raising Happy Kids program can be most beneficial. Starting in Yarrabah, we will travel north through various communities, including the Torres Strait, to determine which communities would benefit most from our program and how we can work with them to implement it in either a Supported Playgroup or Parenting Circle setting.

We will be working with the Parenting Research Council to establish a body of evidence for gaining recognition as being a parenting intervention strategy that is efficacious. Once recognition is attained for the program the opportunity for widespread adoption and funding expand considerably - this is key for making a material impact in "closing the gap" and improving outcomes for first nations families in the greater Cairns and Cape York region.

Program Development

The Raising Happy Kids program is housed on our learning management system and is available as an online course that can be delivered live either in person or via video. The online version is available free and the in-person training is available at cost.

Program Deployment

The process of democratizing access will continue with a view for the program to be available for all interested parties, free with varying levels of support and training as appropriate. The program is expected to be tailored for a range of different applications in-line with feedback from community leaders as we receive feedback as part of our community engagement process.

KEY FINANCIALS

Profit and Loss

Montessori Children's Foundation and its controlled entities

ABN 87 114 666 170

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	Consolidated entity	
	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Cairns Share House Trading		
Revenue from room rentals	851,606	340,363
Professional fees relating to acquisition of share houses	-	(17,851)
Depreciation	(6,925)	(8,076)
Employee benefits expense	(129,036)	(38,284)
Other share house expenses	(397,667)	(157,443)
Total Share house expenses	(533,628)	(221,654)
Surplus from share house activities	317,978	118,709
Other income		
Donations	13,824	382
Dividend and management investment income	-	698
Interest	58,069	98,590
Government's cash flow boost	-	9,061
Total other income	71,893	108,731
Other operating expenses		
Education program employee expenses	(33,751)	-
Other education program expenses	(53,717)	(49,348)
Project expenses	(5,000)	(31,725)
Employee benefits expense	(148,096)	(131,139)
Impairment of financial asset	(434,159)	-
Other operating expenses	(113,785)	(68,744)
Total other operating expenses	(788,508)	(280,956)
Loss before income tax	(398,637)	(53,516)
Income tax expense	-	-
Loss for the year	(398,637)	(53,516)
Other comprehensive income (Net of tax)		
<i>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</i>		
Gain on revaluation of property and plant	432,179	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	33,542	(53,516)

Statement of financial position

Montessori Children's Foundation and its controlled entities

ABN 87 114 666 170

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2022

	Consolidated entity	
	2022	2021
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	174,407	98,868
Trade and other receivables	15,000	27,812
Other assets	33,093	14,142
Financial assets	-	476,090
Total Current Assets	222,500	616,912
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	4,151,621	3,542,048
Total Non Current Assets	4,151,621	3,542,048
TOTAL ASSETS	4,374,121	4,158,960
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	101,106	93,056
Borrowings	160,000	-
Employee benefits	33,364	19,795
Total Current Liabilities	294,470	112,851
TOTAL LIABILITIES	294,470	112,851
NET ASSETS	4,079,651	4,046,109
EQUITY		
Settlement sum	20	20
Retained earnings	3,647,452	4,046,089
Revaluation reserve	432,179	-
TOTAL EQUITY	4,079,651	4,046,109

THANK YOU

Staff

We have developed an outstanding team of dedicated individuals all committed to making Raising Happy Kids absolutely the best parenting program around. As we continue to develop the program it is important to recognise the dedication and passion these amazing individuals bring.



Rebecca Ward



Ardyn Masterman



Telita Banu



Simah Banu

Our Board of Directors



Bruce Clarke - Board Chair

Bruce Clarke is Chairman of respected professional services firm Allygroup which he jointly established in 2008.

Bruce has established an extensive network of contacts in a range of community and environmental groups over the past 16 years. He is a member of the Ewingsdale Community Association and the Bangalow Koala Protection Society.



Sue Pynenburg - Finance Chair

Sue was a director of ASBA State and National Boards and served as the NSW president, in addition to directorships on the Boards of Edmund Rice College and the Sydney Catholic Superannuation Fund. Sue's involvement with independent schools for over 35 years included the role of Business Manager at Edmund Rice College, SCEGGS Darlinghurst and Sydney Montessori School. Her major passion during this time was delivering over \$100 million worth of building projects, large and small, all to budget and on time. Sue is a CPA and a fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia.



Elizabeth Goor - Education Chair

Elizabeth has been involved in Montessori Governance since 1986. She established the first Montessori Adolescent program in NSW as well as the first International Baccalaureate Diploma in Wollongong. She advocated for and mentored an Indigenous AMI 3-6 Montessori teacher trainee and has long-time links to the Cook Islands community. Elizabeth joined the MCF Board in September 2018.



Robert Morrison - Governance Chair

Following a long and highly successful career as a commissioned officer in the Royal Australian Navy culminating as a member of the Defence Senior Leadership Group, Robert now works as a self-employed management consultant, strategic advisor, and an active Non-Executive Director for public, non-profit and private sector clients across Australia.



Francis Jose

Joe is a seasoned leader with a proven track record in family services.

Adept at nonprofit work, facilitation, and organizational growth. Joe is passionate community and social services expert who brings perspective and insight to all his projects. Joe joined the board in 2022.



Jorian Cunliffe - CEO

In the past 20 years Jorian has been in roles of increasing responsibility, recent highlights include leading RAY International (headquartered in the Sultanate of Oman) as GM from a handful of staff to a headcount of 900. In Papua New Guinea Jorian established Laitepo Engineering which looked after all landowner equipment leasing to Exxon Mobil on the PNG LNG project.

As the grandson of the late LC Masterman Jorian joined MCF in an executive role in late 2019.



Vicki McKinnon

Vicki McKinnon is the owner and CEO of Building Futures Pty Ltd who operate 3 Montessori Long Day Care centres in Brisbane and a Family Day Care Scheme, along with a Registered Training College, management and software for early childhood. Understanding the universal application of Montessori across diverse cultures and environments, she holds the unique opportunity that MCF holds in high regard to make a positive change in the lives of Australia's most vulnerable children.



Fran Reed

Fran has over 50 years in Education, including 32 years as Principal of a Montessori School. She taught at Primary, Secondary and University levels. Currently serves on the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) in a consultative capacity.

Our Patron



Sally Connellan

Sally's professional career in early childhood began with her first AMI Montessori Three to Six teacher training in 1974. This training ignited a lifelong passion for the wellbeing of the child and his destiny in our 21st century. Since then, she has attended a second AMI Montessori training, Birth to Three, and attended the first two Educateurs sans Frontières assemblies. These assemblies offer a deepening of one's understanding of Dr. Montessori's work as well as an understanding to take Dr. Montessori's work out of the classroom and into community be that down the street or across the globe.

Currently Sally is the patron of the Montessori Children's Foundation and is an examiner for the Birth to Three oral exams.





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