

PERTH MONTESSORI

ANNUAL REVIEW FY 2021



PERTH
MONTESSORI
—

**Encouraging curious, independent,
lifelong learners.**



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PERTH MONTESSORI

VISION & VALUES



PERTH
MONTESSORI



VISION

Encouraging curious, independent, lifelong learners.



MISSION

To empower our children in an environment based on the values of resilience and respect.



APPROACH

Following the Montessori curriculum and SCSA curriculum, we provide a multi-age, prepared environment that encourages students to feel valued, safe and secure. Students are encouraged to become independent learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers who can take initiative and responsibly make their own decisions in an atmosphere of mutual respect.



Principal's Overview

During the first semester of 2021, the principal at the time, Marg Pontin, continued the work that had been commenced the previous year to prepare the school for the re-registration processes scheduled for May. It is an enormous task to prepare the documents that are needed and it is to the credit of Marg and to the many staff who were also involved, that the school was granted five years' registration from July 1, 2021, until June 30, 2026.

Another priority at the start of the year was to increase student enrolments. A marketing consultant from the company Space Station was retained to develop a strategy to increase the number of students, particularly in pre-K to year 1. An online advertising campaign was developed and enquiries started to increase.

Unfortunately, the turmoil that had been building in the school over the past few years, continued into 2021 and by the end of June, the principal had tendered her resignation and left the school in the middle of term 3. Staff were asked to form management committees to cover the management roles that needed to be completed. In particular, Debbie Wrigley and Caroline Kennedy stepped into the role of Designated Authority to oversee matters such as risk management and critical incidents. The staff managed term 3 very effectively and the school community should be very grateful for their willingness to add these additional tasks to their classroom roles.

By the start of term 4, most staff were anxious to restate their commitment to the school and worked together to develop a fresh vision for their work:

Encouraging curious, independent lifelong learners.

*Empowering our children in an environment based on
the values of resilience and respect.*

At the same time, ways to improve communication between all sections of the school community were being explored and a process was established to develop and send out a Weekly Update. This highlights events in the school calendar, news and photos from the classes, other information from the school and links to information from the wider community that might be useful to families.

In the second week of term 4, I stepped into the part-time role of Consulting Principal. My brief from the Board was to manage the school until a new substantive principal could be appointed. My first task was to support the staff to enable them to work positively together in the interests of their students and the school. I was grateful for how easy the staff made my transition into the school and I was impressed by their commitment to the students and the roles that they were each playing. After several weeks, the Board agreed that we could give the staff the opportunity for some individual leadership training with a consultant who works as a coach, especially around the development of workplace culture. By the end of the term, the atmosphere within the school was a lot more positive and forward-looking.

At the same time, the push for new enrolments was increasing and this had become even more important because a number of families had either left or given notice of their intention to leave at the end of the year. Towards the end of the third term, the enrolment process had changed from group tours on set days to individual tours led by Sharika Bisnath, a teacher and parent at the school, and Doug Butcher, a parent at the school. This process gathered momentum and throughout term four there was a constant stream of tours and new enrolments. During this time, plans were also put in place for new branding and marketing for the school associated with the anticipated name change back to Perth Montessori. Enquiries for new enrolments continued and these became enrolments at a greater rate than had previously been the case.

The student data that is attached shows that, whilst a large number of families left the school at the end of the year as a result of the earlier turmoil, these were more than replaced by new families joining the school.

An area where enrolments had almost completely collapsed was in the High School, particularly in years 10-12. The Board reiterated their commitment to continuing to offer secondary schooling and I was asked to

consider possible ways of developing an engaging, effective secondary school program that would give students choices for their futures beyond school, be that university, technical education or employment.

The Montessori Association has been re-developing the Montessori Curriculum for Cycles 4 and 5 and this can be used in association with the standard West Australian curriculum. A document was developed, *The Future of the High School*, which described how years 7-12 could move ahead at the school, guided by the Montessori Principles, but implemented through the structures associated with Big Picture Learning. The Board agreed that this could be explored as a way forward and a series of discussions were held with staff, parents and students.

A group of staff and parents also visited the Big Picture Academy at Halls Head College and staff were in contact with Rockingham Montessori where Big Picture forms part of their design for learning in their High School. After a number of weeks, the decision was made to explore Big Picture in the High School in 2022. At the same time, it was decided that the school would not enrol students in years 10, 11 or 12 in 2022.

This will allow the school to embed Big Picture Learning and prepare the students for the successful completion of the International Big Picture Learning Credential, which has been developed in conjunction with the University of Melbourne and is being accepted as a credential for entrance to universities across Australia.

By the end of the year, staffing was confirmed for 2022, including the appointment of Adin Livnjak as Deputy Principal, the enrolment process was working well and advertising had resulted in a shortlist of candidates for the position of principal. It had been a difficult year for many members of the school community but by December there was cautious optimism for the future and the Christmas Concert was a wonderful way in which to conclude the year.

Jo Bednall

Consulting Principal



Board Overview

There is no doubt that 2021 was a year of significant change at the School. The mid-year announcement of proposed plans for classroom closures, staff redundancies and the downsizing of Cycles 1 and 2 caused a great deal of apprehension and concern amongst many of the parents who attended the School's Annual General Meeting in June. This resulted in a fractious meeting and the election of four new Board members. It also precipitated the resignation of the Principal and remaining members of the previous Board.

Parents had made it very clear that they viewed the plans for classroom closures and staff reductions as part of a managed decline that left no room for recovery or growth within the School. The new Board had to very quickly find its feet and develop an action plan that both responded to the concerns of parents and addressed the ongoing financial issues that had prompted those closures. This was no trivial task as the financial year was already half over and the eruption of concerns over the historical financial situation had already unsettled many of the staff and families.

The new Board's immediate action plan involved:

- **Finding and appointing an interim Principal:**

Following the Principal's resignation, the staff really stepped up and helped devise a system for managing the School based on distributed responsibility. However, we were very conscious that their primary focus needed to be their own classrooms, so we kept looking for the right person with extensive experience and exemplary management skills. We found both of these and more in Jo Bednall, who was appointed as our interim Consulting Principal in September 2021 and has done an incredible job of steadying the ship, providing solid and balanced leadership, and completely turning around staff morale.

- **Establishing a Marketing and Communications Committee:**

This was established in August 2021 and they have been working incredibly hard to design a coherent brand identity for Perth Montessori, build a new website for the School and create engaging marketing materials and flyers for a comprehensive mail-out campaign in the local area. At the same time, they organised and independently funded the painting of the new mural on the front facade of the School facing Burswood Road.

- **Establishing a School Tours and Enrollments Team:**

This was formed in August 2021, with Doug Butcher (a volunteer parent) and Sharika Bisnath (the Playgroup director) taking on the onerous task of conducting tours and devising ways to effectively communicate the Montessori method to prospective new parents. They too have done an absolutely incredible job of reinvigorating and formalising tours, and working with Jo to streamline the follow-up processes. Together they have managed to increase overall enrolments at a time when many unsettled families were leaving the School.

- **Seeking Legal and Financial Advice:**

When initially looking at the School finances, it quickly became clear that there were multiple issues that needed immediate attention and that a comprehensive financial strategy was required. As a result, the Board had to appoint both legal and financial consultants to provide detailed advice and assist with the development of a viable and achievable strategy to address the viability and sustainability of the School.

Whilst these parts of the action plan have helped to establish a solid basis upon which to regrow the School, the current economic climate is still a significant constraint. Also, as government funding for the majority of this year is still based on the student numbers from the middle of last year, our budgets are still extremely tight and will be until we receive make-up funding towards the end of the year. Thus, vigilant financial management and ensuring adherence to our financial strategy has been, and will continue to be, a major priority for the Board.

Future Plans

In addition to addressing the finances, the new Board also set about implementing the vote by members at the last AGM to return the School's name from 'Perth individual' back to 'Perth Montessori'. Any name change is both a challenge and an opportunity for a business, and needs to be handled carefully to ensure that it is fully supported with the right branding and marketing. Thus, there was a lot of preparatory work to do before submitting our request to the Department of Education.

New Logo

As the 'Perth Individual' name was an intrinsic part of the existing logo and branding, the first step in this process was to devise a new logo to go with the new name. In September 2021, all members of the School community were given the opportunity to vote for their favourite from a range of proposed logo designs. Whilst there was a winner, there were two designs that were obvious favourites within the community.

This prompted further community consultation where it was identified that the key elements with broadest appeal included a surrounding shield, the year of establishment and the book/tree/bird motif. From this feedback, the final logo design adopted by the School is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: The new logo for the School selected by members.

New Branding

Once the logo was resolved, the Marketing and Communications Committee set about developing a new brand identity, which you can see represented in the formatting of this very document as well as other collateral such as business cards, letter and document templates, email footers and brochures.



Figure 2: An example business card design integrating the new brand identity.

The next task was the design and development of a new website which would be much easier for staff to update regularly and showcase the dynamic activities occurring at the School. This new website has been worked on by the MCC and can be previewed at <https://perthmontessori.com>.

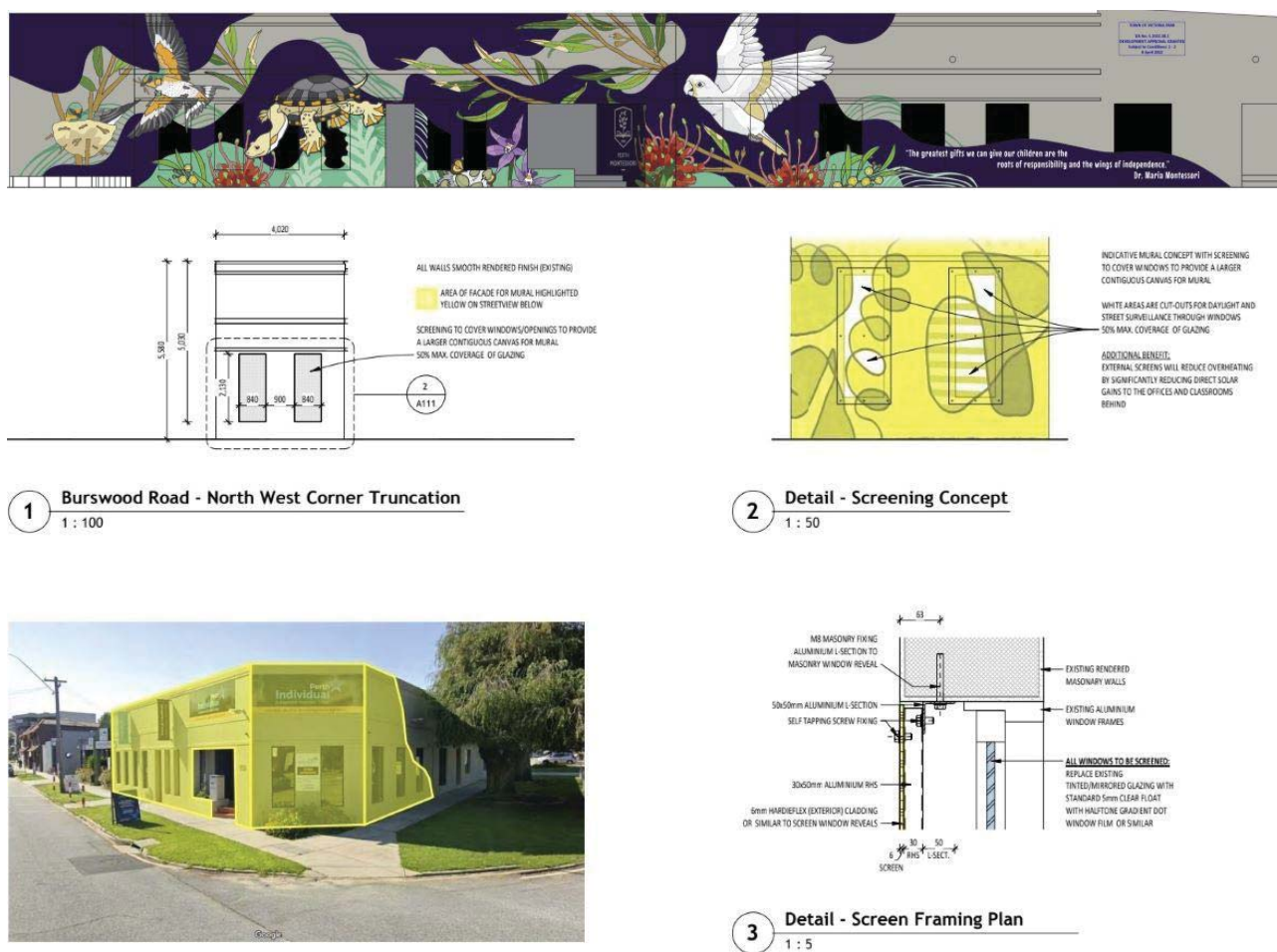
It also took quite some time to track down all of the various social media accounts that had been created over the years, using different variants of the two names, so that they could be amalgamated and rebranded to form a coherent and coordinated social media presence for the School.

Once this was all underway, the School submitted a change of name request to the Department of Education, which was recently approved to take place as of 17 July 2022.

New Mural

The front facade of the School along Burswood Road has never really stood out in any way, to the point where even local people did not actually realise that there was a school behind it. Thus, as part of the new branding, it was time to begin planning for a mural of some sort. The aim of the mural was to provide a unique landmark and striking visual identifier for the School, to increase awareness of the School within the local community and catch the attention of drivers as they pass along the busy Burswood Road.

To get this started, the MCC first developed a brief for the mural and sought quotes from a number of local artists. A Place grant application was then formulated and submitted to the Town of Victoria Park in November 2021 to fund the project. This grant was approved in December 2021, after which the required planning documentation had to be prepared and submitted for approval by the local planning department, as shown in Figure 3. Approval was given and the final mural was completed in April 2022.



<small>All dimensions are in millimetres unless stated otherwise. Figured dimensions to be used in preference to scaled dimensions. Do not scale from this drawing. Contractors MUST CHECK ALL dimensions and levels on site and any discrepancies must be reported to the Architect. If in doubt consult the Architect...</small>	PROJECT: Perth Montessori 150 Burswood Road, Burswood, WA 6100	STATUS: DA	SCALES: Indicated @ A3	DRAWING TITLE: Shade Screens for Mural
		DATE: January 2022	DRAWING NO.: A111	

Figure 3: The proposed mural design unwrapped from the facade, and the approved window coverage application.

Burswood South Streetscape Improvement Plan

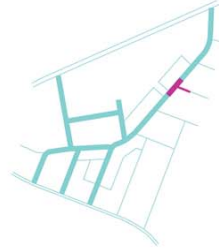
The Burswood South Streetscape Improvement Plan is an initiative of the Town of Victoria Park which aims to transform Burswood and Teddington Roads into an attractive and thriving precinct linking the Burswood Peninsula to Albany Highway. This would turn Burswood Road from a busy thoroughfare into a vibrant business high street with planting, pedestrianisation and slower vehicular traffic. Part of these plans also include the development of a *Play and Learn Micro Plaza* within the public space immediately in front of our School, as shown in Figure 4 which is an extract from the planning proposal.

Information about the proposal is available at <https://yourthoughts.victoriapark.wa.gov.au/burswoodsouth>.

This plan has now been through all the consultation phases and was officially approved by Council at its meeting on 15 March 2022. The Board submitted feedback in November 2021 that was strongly supportive of the proposal and is now working to better understand its potential and begin transforming the School to be in a position to take maximum advantage of this opportunity.

Business High St & Micro Plaza

Opposite is visualization depicting all Key Moves of the Streetscape Improvement Plan in the one location. It illustrates the vision for Burswood Road (east of Teddington) to be transformed over time into a Business High Street (Vibrant Street), consisting of a 'string of pearls' or distinct people places. In this image, a play and learn Micro Plaza that wraps around the corner of Egham Road adjacent to the existing activity node of Perth Individual School.



TOWN OF VICTORIA PARK . BURSWOOD SOUTH | 44

Figure 4: An artist impression of the proposed redevelopment planned for the street area immediately in front of our School.

PM Board of Directors 2021

Terms 1 & 2

Dr. Anastasia Isakova
Chair

Clayton Powell
Deputy Chair

Jo-Anne Robinson
Finance Director

Jason Talati
Director

Marg Pontin
Principal

Terms 3 & 4

Dr. Andrew Marsh
Chair

Dr. Rocco Loiacono
Deputy Chair

Matt Lowth
Finance Director

Kate Haliczenco
Director

Yakuta Khumri T4
Director



Key Student Outcomes

Student attendance

The average attendance rate for students in 2021 was 84.5%. This is an increase from the previous reported figure of 81.7% for FY2019.

Non-attendance at school is managed by the following procedures:

- The attendance roll is marked by the teacher every morning and afternoon.
- This information is reported and checked by the school administration.
- Parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason which is recorded by the school (any sequential absences are referred for follow-up).
- If a student is away, the administration notifies the parent/carer to ask why the child is not at school, this is then recorded and the Principal/delegate follows up accordingly.
- All absences are recorded to inform the government census.

Benchmark results & outcomes

All students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 completed NAPLAN achieved results above the national minimum standard for their age, with a number well above.

Our cohort on average performed ~12% better overall, compared nationally to students with similar backgrounds. The background of students has been shown to have an impact on NAPLAN results. Student background includes parental occupation and education.

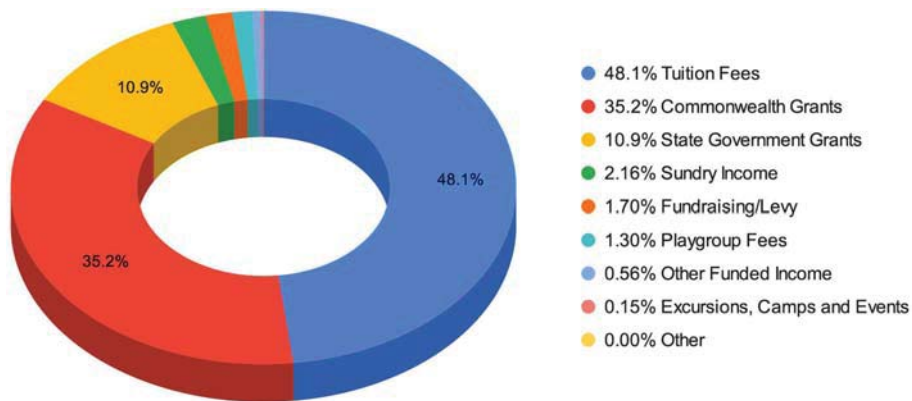
In 2020 education ministers decided that NAPLAN testing would not proceed that year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All year 12 students achieved WACE and completed the State's requirements for Secondary Graduation.

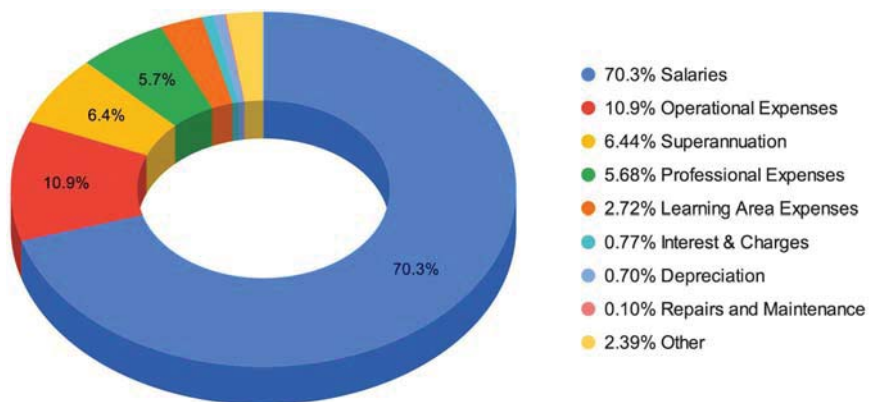
Student retention

Student retention from the start of 2021 to the end of the year was 81%. 19 new students enrolled for the start of 2022.

Operations - Revenue ₂₀₂₁



Operations - Expenditure ₂₀₂₁



Professional Development & Engagement

All PM teaching staff are members of the Teachers Registration Board. In addition, some already have or are working towards their Montessori certification*. Particular congratulations to Udenie who completed the Montessori Diploma for three to six-year-olds in 2021.

All staff have their Working With Children Clearance and are up-to-date with Mandatory Reporting and First Aid Training.

PM's teachers are committed professionals who model the concept of lifelong learning. All participated in the following professional development (PD) during the year:

- Digital Technologies
- Keeping Safe Curriculum
- Epilepsy - administration of emergency medication
- Asthma management
- Using Valuate to interpret NAPLAN results.

Individual staff participated in a range of workshops associated with Montessori Education and several attended a series of workshops on autism.

The school was also involved in two research projects. The first involved all staff but focussed on transitions into Early Learning. This was run by Edith Cowan University (ECU), AISWA and the company specialising in design thinking, NoTosh. It was funded through a grant from the Australian Government managed by AISWA and will be completed in 2022.

The second involves Jayne and the students in Jacaranda. It is being conducted by a research team from Edith Cowan and Curtin Universities and focuses on how to teach young children about the importance of soil. It is being funded by a grant to the research team and will continue into 2022.

The total costs for professional learning for the year came to \$5,016.

The average expenditure per teacher on professional learning, at the school level, is \$264.

Staff attendance and retention

The average attendance rate or the average number of days attended per staff member was 83%.

Of the 16 teaching staff members who started the year, we retained 14 at the end of 2021, including education assistants. Thus, the proportion of teaching staff retained in a program year from the previous year was 87.5%.

**The greatest sign of success for a teacher...
is to be able to say, *"The children are now
working as if I did not exist."***

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

Staff list and qualifications 2021

Cycle 1

Kerryn Johns,
Education Assistant
Cert III CS

Arul Kalipernal,
Education Assistant
BSc (Hon), PGDipEd

Udenie Karunaratne,
Education Assistant
BSc, Cert III EA, Cert III CS,
DipMont(3-6y)

Caroline Kennedy,
Director
BEd, DipMont

Michelle Kwok,
Director
BEd(ECE), MSci(Sci,Math,Ed),
DipMont(3-6y) *

Anitra Woodcock,
Director
DipMont

Cycle 2

Jayne Kaiko,
Director
BEd EC SE PA, Cert CC, DipMont

Deborah Pan,
Education Assistant
BEd ECS, DipCS

Anthea Pinto,
Director
BEd, Cert IV VisArts *

Cycle 3

Shamim Misso,
Education Assistant
DipBS, DipM, AssBS, Cert III EC CS *

Debbie Wrigley,
Director
BAEd, GDipSS(LSci)

Cycle 4 & 5

Rebecca Loftus,
Director
PGDipEd

Liz Marazzato,
Director
GDipEd, CertIV T&A

Nicky Neumayr,
Director
BEd

Tamara Yousry,
Director
BA, MA, PGCertEd, PGDipEd

Special Programs

Learning Support
Cono Mangano
BEd(EC,Pri), GCertEd(Spec)

Physical Education
Adin Livnjak
BSci, GDipEd

Language
Linda Jones
BA(Asia), GDipEd(Pri,Sec)

Music

Todd Bebbington
CertMus, DipMus

Playgroup Coordinator

Sharika Bisnath
DipMont, DipCS

Support Staff

Principal

Marg Pontin (T1 - T3)
GDipEd(Sec)

Consulting Principal

Jo Bednall (T4)
BSc(Zoo,Math), DipEd(Sec),
DipEd(Psych,Soc,Pol), MEd.

Finance Manager

Nina Thethy
CPA, BBus(Acc)

Librarian

Wendy Ho
GDip(LIS)

Receptionist

Laura Ruddell

Maternity Leave

Sarah Caldwell
DipEd

Manmeen Kaur
GDipEd



PERTH MONTESSORI

WORKPLACE CULTURE STATEMENT



PERTH
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—

At Perth Montessori all staff enthusiastically contribute to a shared culture characterised by:



CURIOSITY

We ask questions, explore new ideas and learn from each other.



INDEPENDENCE

We take initiative and contribute to problem solving and decision making.



LIFE-LONG LEARNING

We understand that there is always more to learn and embrace opportunities to participate in learning activities.



RESILIENCE

We maintain a positive approach, let go of disappointments and learn from our mistakes.



RESPECT

We value individual differences, are mindful of how we communicate with and about others, and seek to work constructively with all members of our school community.

The Board and Principal of Perth Montessori understand that staff are empowered when they feel that they are acknowledged, trusted and valued.

perthmontessori.com

Our School's History

The School began life in 1980 as the Victoria Park Montessori Playgroup, before becoming the Montessori Children's Centre with the opening of the first Children's House in 1982 (Hibiscus). Throughout the mid-eighties, the Centre continued to expand with the opening of the first primary classes in the old cottage on the Egham Road site, as well as a second Children's House (Bougainvillea). With the opening of the first phase of the School's new primary building in November 1989, two further middle primary classrooms were added (Jacaranda and Magnolia), as well as an upper primary classroom (Kangaroo Paw).

In the early 1990s, the second phase of the new primary building was completed and the School purchased the Leigh Street property which currently houses our Playgroup. The existing middle primary classes were also amalgamated into a single middle primary classroom (Jacaranda).

In 2002 the Centre changed its name to the Perth Montessori School. Around that time it also purchased the adjoining property at 150 Burswood Road to further improve the classroom environments and the School operations. In 2004 the School undertook a review of its internal governance policies and procedures which led to an updated Constitution and a new Board of Management structure.

In 2010, thanks to the Federal Government 'Building the Education Revolution (BER)' program, the School began the construction of two new buildings. The first to house our Cycle 2 classrooms (6 to 9-year-old) as well as Learning Support, Art, Home Economics and a Parent room. The second to house our Music, Playgroup and Out of School Care operation.

In 2017 the School changed its name to 'Perth Individual, a Progressive Montessori College'. This precipitated a more challenging time for the School with the retirement due to the illness of both the long-serving Principal in 2018 and the long-serving Deputy Principal in 2019.

At the start of 2020, a new Principal was appointed, who was very soon faced with the COVID-19 restrictions that began in March and affected everyone in Perth throughout both 2020 and 2021.

In 2021 the School community voted to return the School's name back to Perth Montessori to reaffirm its commitment to providing a quality Montessori education. In support of this name change, a new logo and branding have been developed, as well as a new website and marketing materials. The Department of Education has now approved the School's new name which will take effect from mid-July 2022.

Perth Montessori strives to provide not only a quality Montessori education but an innovative, progressive and personalised education enabling children to become curious, independent lifelong learners.



***“The greatest gifts we can give our children
are the roots of responsibility and the wings
of independence.”***

~ Dr. Maria Montessori



PERTH
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150 Burswood Road,
Burswood, WA 6100

+61 (0)8 9362 3186

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