

Southern
Montessori
School



2025 PERFORMANCE REPORT



VISION

.....
Future leaders and problem solvers, contributing to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

MISSION

.....
Inspiring brave hearts and curious minds in an academically excellent Montessori environment.

PURPOSE

.....
Empowering learners to flourish in life.





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History



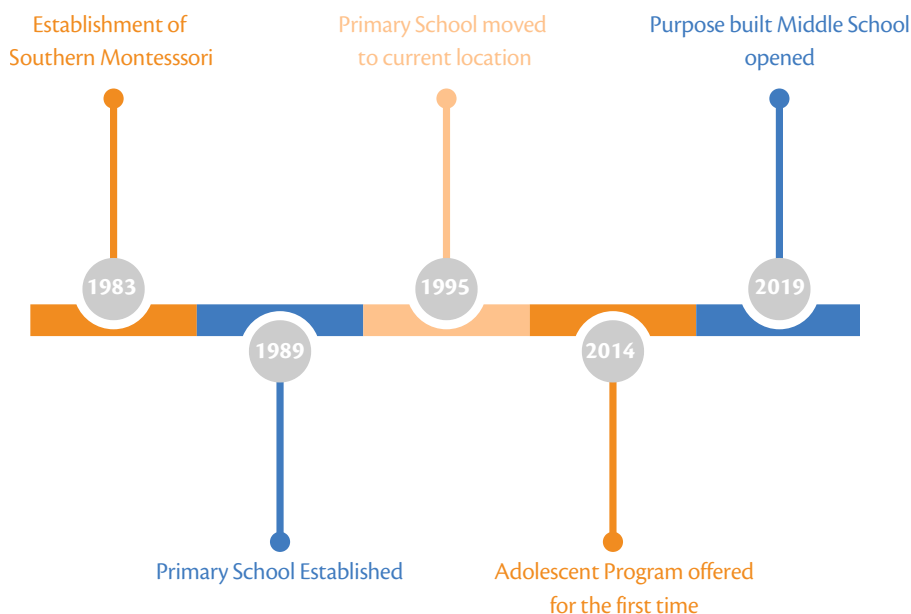
FOUNDED IN 1983

The history of Southern Montessori School is the story of our commitment to offering an authentic Montessori education in Adelaide's southern suburbs.

Founded as a Preschool in 1983 by a group of parents seeking a Montessori education for their children, enrolments quickly grew and a primary school was established in 1989 moving to our present location in 1995.

In 2014, an Adolescent Program (Years 7 and 8) was offered for the first time as our community worked to establish a Montessori Middle School in the southern suburbs.

Finally, in 2019, after considerable searching, we were very excited to be able to open our new, purpose built Middle School for Years 7 to 9 in Woodcroft. Co-located with Kalyra Aged Care this move provides us with the unique opportunity to form an intergenerational partnership benefiting both students and Kalyra residents.



OUR SCHOOL TODAY

Today, Southern Montessori School provides an authentic, highly regarded Montessori education for children from 8 months of age to Year 9 across the following programs: Baby Steps, Toddlers, Preschool, Primary and Middle School. We educate approximately 250 students.

The Montessori approach provides children with enduring intellectual capabilities, achieved through the framework of social and emotional learning. A vibrant community of learners, we are part of a close, supportive community and the future is looking bright.



Our values

“The aim of Montessori education is to foster autonomous, competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are life-long learners and problem solvers.”

(Montessori Education: Key Concepts and Practices, American Montessori Society, 1990)

It is expected that staff, students, and families will model our school values. Our values will guide our thoughts, words, and actions to help us create the future we want.

Curiosity

Driving student-led learning through developing the ability to ask questions, to challenge, to inquire and to investigate independently and in cooperation with others.

Courage

Teaching children to be brave when facing the unknown, to embrace challenges, to view failure as a learning opportunity, and to act with integrity.

Care and Compassion

Nurturing the development of children’s social and emotional intelligence in an environment of trust and mutual respect which values each child’s unique strengths and needs and encourages acceptance of self and others.

Choice

Enhancing wellbeing and personal growth by encouraging children to make productive choices and feel a sense of control over their learning and their lives.

Connection

Building the relationships and community now that will connect children to their world and teach them to care for and shape it for a brighter future.

Creative and Critical Thinking

Providing a stimulating learning environment that supports children to realise their full potential as intelligent, imaginative thinkers who see solutions rather than problems.

School Board 2025



Michelle Emmerson
President



Phil Hammond
Vice President



Tiffany Newman
Treasurer



Matthew Greenhough
Board Member



Luke Bertram
Board Member



Elyse Cossutta
Board Member



Michelle Pinto
Board Member



Heather McInerney
Principal



Salvo Motta
Business Director



Skye Shoubridge
Board Administrator



Board President's Report

Firstly, it is important that the Board of Governors of the Southern Montessori Education Centre Inc. acknowledge that our school is built on Kurna land, and on behalf of the Board we acknowledge and pay respects to Kurna elders past, present and emerging.

Beyond contributing to our community, serving on the Board offers significant personal and professional experience. Our members value the networking opportunities, the chance to contribute to long-term strategy and the personal growth that comes from navigating the governance of a purposeful organisation.

Serving on the Board is a valuable opportunity to contribute to the life of the school, support its continued growth, and help ensure a strong and vibrant future for our learners.

The role of the Board of Governors is to provide oversight of the financial management, risk management and strategic management of the school. The Board consists of elected volunteers from our community and the school Principal. The school's Assistant Principal and Business Director regularly attend Board meetings as standing guests, as does the Office Administrator.

One of the key achievements of the Board in 25/26 was oversight of the school's building improvements. More building works are planned for 26/27, as the school continues to benefit from growing student numbers and effective financial management from the school's leadership team – against the backdrop of macroeconomic conditions.

Governance is a team sport, with communication/collaboration, respect and trust at the heart of good governance. It is an honour and privilege to serve on the board, and as Acting Board President/Chair – I would like to acknowledge the commitment, effort and professionalism of both the current and incoming board members.

Lastly, thank you to ALL of the Southern Montessori School staff. I am thankful for your unwavering dedication & contribution to the school and the care and attention you provide to our students. Your commitment and passion to the Montessori philosophy make our school an exceptional learning environment and community to be a part of.

Kind regards,

Phil Hammond

Acting Board President/Chair



Welcome Evening, Term 1



Outside Toilet Opening, Term 1



Middle School Street Art Program, Term 1



Cycle 1 Bread Making, Term 1



Aquatics, Term 1



Buddy Program, Term 1



Toddler Program, Term 1



Cycle 3 Class in motion, Term 1



Harmony Day, Term 1



National Ride2School Day, Term 1



Coffee with a Dash of Montessori, Term 1



Animals Anonymous Incursion, Term 2



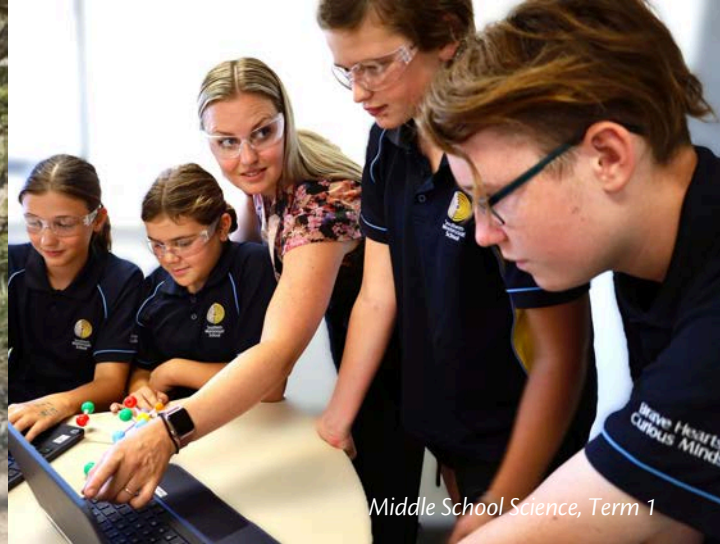
Preschool Fire Truck Visit, Term 1



Teddy Bear Picnic, Term 1



Clean Up Australia Day, Term 1



Middle School Science, Term 1



Colour Fun Run, Term 1



Middle School Camp, Term 2



Mothers Day Event, Term 2



Tackle Rugby, Term 2



Preschool Holiday Program, Term 2



Birds in Focus, Term 3



Middle School Performance, Term 3



Glenthorne Excursion, Term 3



Speed Stacks Program, Term 2



Fun & Fitness, Term 3



Primary School Talent Show, Term 4



Cycle 2 Class in Motion, Term 3



Soccer, Term 2

Principal's Report



"Free the child's potential, and you will transform them into the world."

- Maria Montessori -

As we reflect on 2025, it is with deep pride and gratitude that I share the year's achievements. They speak to the strength of our community, the dedication of our staff, and the enthusiasm of our students. At the heart of every success is our commitment to Montessori principles and to our shared values of Care and Compassion, Courage, Curiosity, Creative and Critical Thinking, Choice, and Connection.

Key Staff Changes

In 2025, we farewelled David Anderson and thanked him sincerely for his outstanding contribution to the school. We were pleased to welcome Salvo Motta as Director of Business and Hannah McAuley as Finance Officer/HR. Together, they have made meaningful strides in streamlining and improving our Finance Department.

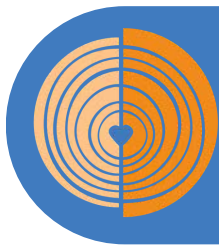
We also welcomed Vanessa Webb as ELC Director and Toni Maddock as Head of Middle School. Both brought a deep commitment to Montessori education and a passion for supporting children and young people on their individual learning journeys.

Educational Program and Learning

We began 2025 with strong enrolments, high demand for places and a vibrant learning environment across the school. In classrooms, students engaged in hands-on, purposeful learning—solving real-world problems and taking increasing responsibility for their education. Our staff continued to innovate and guide students in discovering their unique potential.

A key focus this year was strengthening Mathematics through fluency, reasoning, and problem-solving. In the Middle School, there was a strong emphasis on student-led assessment and reflective practice, supporting learners to develop independence and ownership of their progress.

Our co-curricular program continued to grow, offering a rich range of opportunities in sport, music, and drama. Students embraced these experiences with enthusiasm, and the positive feedback we receive—whether about the professionalism of our choirs or the sportsmanship of our teams—remains a source of great pride. We are especially grateful to the many parents whose generous volunteering makes these opportunities possible.



Principal's Report

Our Learning Environment

A significant milestone this year was the completion of the library veranda and toilet renovations, including the addition of colourful outdoor tables and seating. The refreshed facilities are welcoming, light-filled, and have supported children to feel more confident and comfortable in their environment. While this project marks the completion of renovations to the main building at the primary school a significant amount of time this year was invested in consulting with our architects and builders in preparation for our 2026 Cycle 3 build.

We were also delighted to secure a Commonwealth Government grant for the development of a new Middle School classroom, scheduled for completion in 2027/28. We extend our sincere thanks to Kalyra Aged Care and the Block Grant Authority for their support and recognition of the value of Montessori adolescent education.

In addition, improvements to outdoor lighting and the installation of CCTV have enhanced the safety and security of our school.

Student Wellbeing and Community

Student wellbeing remains at the centre of all that we do. Our Montessori approach naturally supports wellbeing through holistic, child-centred learning, calm and orderly environments, and strong, empathetic relationships. Respectful relationships, restorative practices, and a deep sense of belonging underpin daily life at our school. Our peace education and social-emotional learning programs continue to support students in developing empathy, resolving conflict, and contributing positively to their community.

School counsellor, Danielle, provided support for all children across the school, introducing strategies to build increasing self-regulation and social and emotional resilience, and proactively communicating with parents as needed. Danielle's time increased during the year reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students.

This year, Danielle introduced My Mind Check, an evidence-based digital tool funded by the Australian Government. The platform provides valuable insights into student wellbeing and access to practical resources. Across the school 125 students took part with the results indicating that 8.1% of students identified as struggling, 6.5% students identified as vulnerable and 85.5% of students identified as coping. We were pleased to see that all students identified as struggling and vulnerable had already been identified and were receiving additional support.

Principal Report



Working closely with Cycle 3 teachers, we also commenced participation in a pilot program on Consent and Respectful Relationships for upper primary students. Delivered through the Association of Independent Schools SA, this initiative supports children and young people to develop the skills and understanding needed to build healthy relationships. It also provides valuable guidance to ensure our personal development curriculum remains responsive and relevant in our context.

Our strong sense of community continues to be one of our greatest strengths. The partnership between home and school is central to each child's success and wellbeing. Family engagement through open classrooms, learning conversations, passage presentations, exhibitions, and community events continues to enrich school life and strengthen these connections.

Highlights

A standout highlight of the year was our performing arts program, including the primary musicals Tattybogle (Cycle 1), Nowhere Boy (Cycles 2 and 3), and the Middle School production Cinderella: The Untold Story. These productions showcased creativity while providing meaningful opportunities for students to build confidence, collaboration, and communication skills. It was a joy to see how excited and proud children, families and staff members were.

Bringing three productions to life was a whole-school effort, and I extend my sincere thanks to Jenny, Elley, Toni, and our administration, marketing, finance teams, along with all teachers and assistants, for their flexibility and dedication.

As we reflect on all that has been achieved in 2025, we are reminded that our work extends beyond the present moment. Each experience, each relationship, and each opportunity offered to our students contributes to something much greater. As Maria Montessori so thoughtfully expressed, "We must look to the child as a guide to a better future." In this, we find both affirmation of our purpose and inspiration for the year ahead.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff and School Board for their dedication, professionalism, and care. Most importantly, I thank our children and young people. As Montessori reminds us, they are our hope for the future and deserve our respect, guidance, and unwavering support.

It is a privilege to lead this community, and I look ahead to 2026 with optimism and a clear sense of purpose and vision. Thank you for being part of our extraordinary journey.

Heather McInerney
Principal



Attendance

Attendance rates for each year level:

Reception	Mid-Year Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
91.20%	98.40%	90.20%	90.20%	92.50%	91.20%	90.70%	89.80%	85.80%	91.10%	89.50%

Our mean attendance rate was 91.4% for Reception - Year 9 students.

The process in which the school manages non-attendance

Student attendance from Reception to Year 9 continued to be managed through the Administration Team, using a centralised information system, while the Preschool utilised a separate student management system to enable the school to meet government reporting requirements.

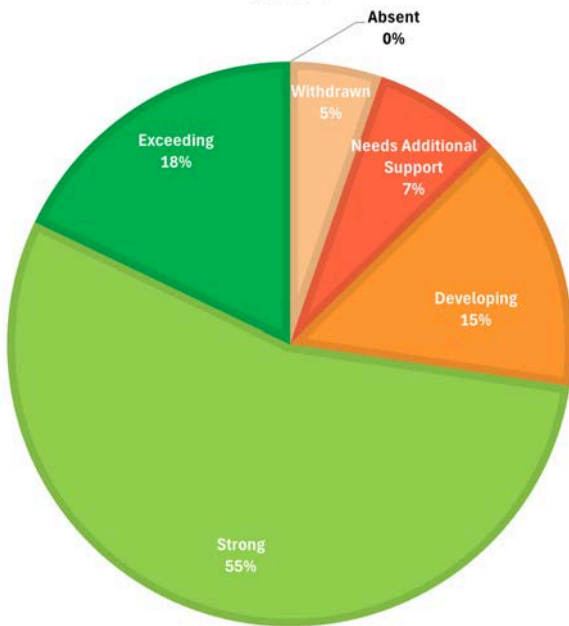
Southern Montessori School provides various channels for families to notify of their child's absence: via the school communication app, via email, and a dedicated phone line. Families of students who are absent without a prior explanation are sent a SMS message requesting a reason be provided to the school. Absences of more than 5 consecutive days require Principal approval.



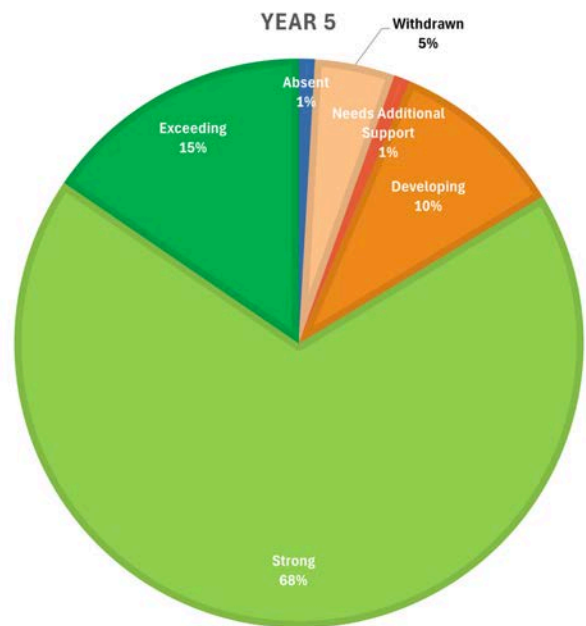


NAPLAN testing was undertaken in Term 1. Overall all students performed well, with our Middle School results placing us in the top 20 secondary schools in the state. Please see a snapshot of our schools results below.

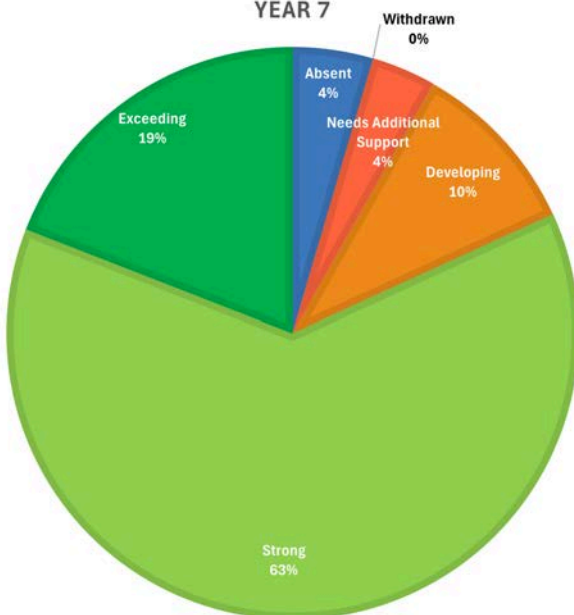
YEAR 3



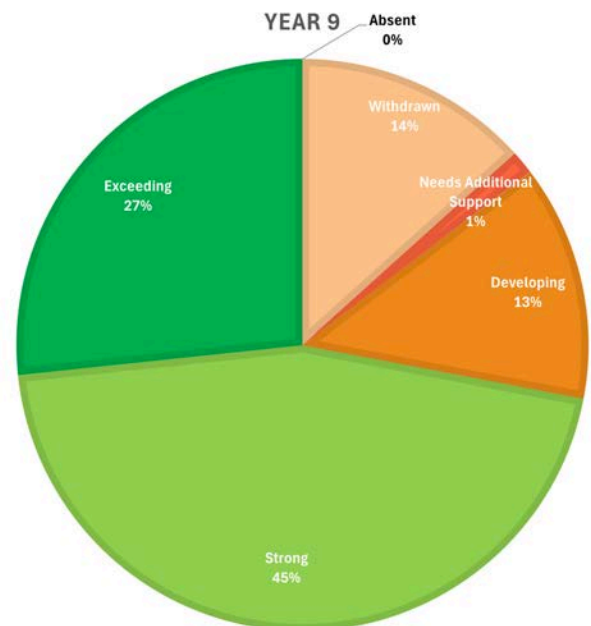
YEAR 5



YEAR 7



YEAR 9





Contextualised Information

At Southern Montessori School, we aim to know your children well and to nurture a love of learning that will last a lifetime. Our strengths include our dedicated staff, a wonderful Board of Governors and a genuine sense of community amongst our member families. We are an independent, non-religious organisation offering programs from Baby Steps (8 months), Toddlers and Preschool through to Primary School and Middle School to Year 9. Our curriculum strengths include numeracy, literacy and environmental education. As the Centre grows, so does the range of extra-curricular activities offered to students in the areas of the arts, sport and recreation. In 2025 Southern Montessori provided a challenging educational program that has Montessori principles at its core and is based on sound educational theory and practice. This is delivered through small, multi-aged cycles and fosters the development of independence, self-discipline and a lifelong love of learning. It promotes a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and encouragement to advance the diverse talents of each student. The Centre is a member of Montessori Schools and Centres Australia, the Montessori World Educational Institute and AISSA.

Enrolment Information

Total enrolments at the end of 2025 from Reception to Year 9 was 228 including 33 reception students. With 0.86% from an Indigenous background. 15.9% of students required additional support beyond quality differentiation.

Teacher Standards and Qualifications

Below is a table of teaching staff qualifications. A number of teachers have multiple qualifications.

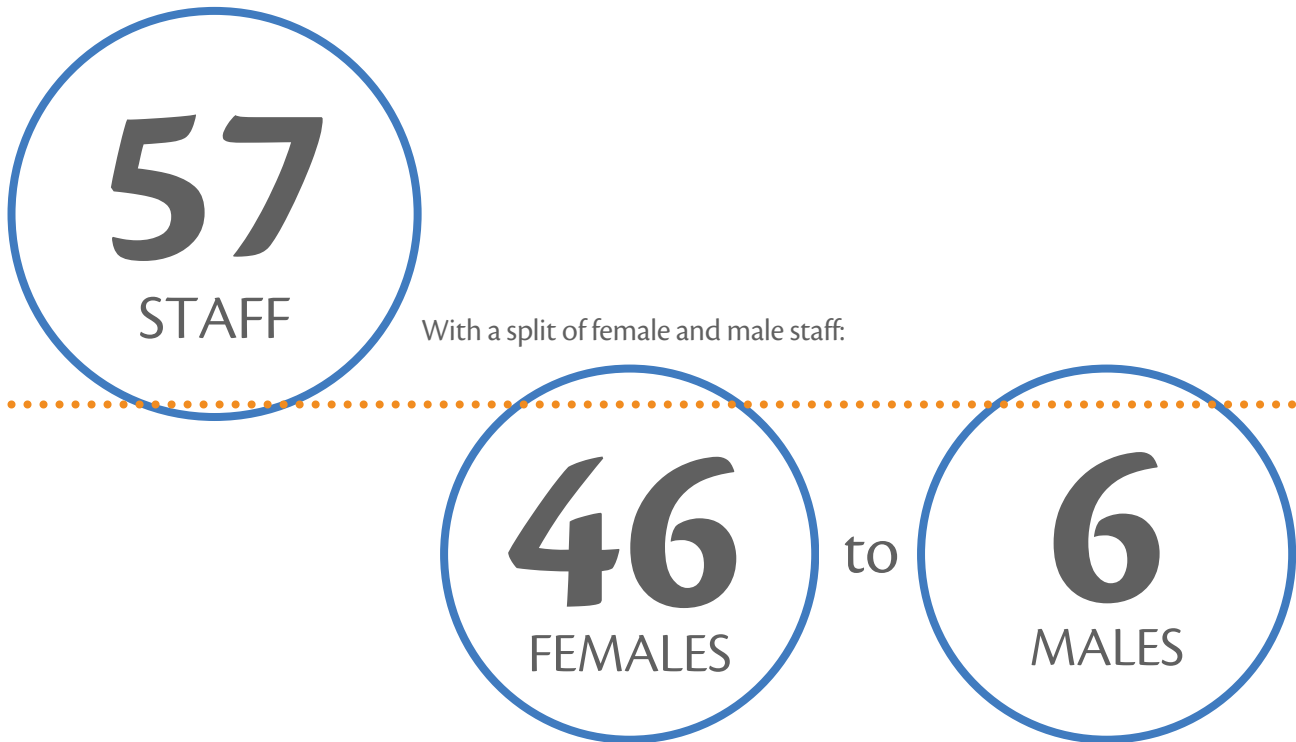
28 Teaching Staff in 2025	
Masters	7
Post Graduate Certificate	2
Bachelor	26
Graduate Diploma	3
Advanced Diploma	1
Diploma	4

In addition to these formal qualifications, all staff undergo training in Responding to Risks of Harm and Abuse, Protective Practices, First Aid, Fire Safety Training and hold the necessary qualifications for Teacher Registration in South Australia. All staff are involved in targeted professional development including ongoing Montessori training.

Workforce



As of 31 December 2025 the overall workforce of Southern Montessori School was comprised of



Staff include the Principal, Assistant Principal, Inclusive Education Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Counsellor, teachers and support staff. Specialist teachers are employed to enrich student learning in the areas of Physical Education, Drama, Music and Italian.

In 2025, Southern Montessori School employed:





Our Staff

PRINCIPAL

Heather McInerney

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Alison Fish

HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

Toni Maddock

TEACHING STAFF

Abby Schultz Cycle 4 Teacher

Alisa Guo Cycle 3 Teacher

Amelia Faulkner Cycle 2 Teacher

Amelia Rance Primary School P.E Teacher

Anna Golab Inclusive Education Coordinator

Annabel Coleman Cycle 2 Teacher

Anne-Marie Cummings Cycle 2 Teacher

Clayton Jones Cycle 4 Teacher

Daniel Lim Cycle 4 Teacher

Elle O'Mara Italian Teacher

Elley Hassiotis Dramatic Arts Teacher

Eloise Atkins Cycle 2 Teacher

Gwen Doyle Mid-Year Reception Teacher

Jenny Chilvers Primary School Music Teacher

Joanna Buick Cycle 2 Teacher

Joaquin Santos Cycle 4 Teacher

Judy Pemberton Cycle 2 Teachers

Kristy Dunstan Cycle 3 Teacher

Luke Swindells Cycle 3 Teacher

Maria Niedorfer Italian Teacher

Michelle Young Cycle 3 Teacher

Olivia Thoday Cycle 1 Teacher

Rachel Cusano Cycle 1 Teacher

Renee Pereira Cycle 3 Teacher

Siobhan Curran Cycle 4 Teacher

Tash Jones Cycle 1 Teacher

Tricia Thompson Cycle 2 Teacher | Library Coordinator

Wendy Humphreys Cycle 2 & 3 Teacher

STUDENT WELLBEING

Danielle Hayes Student Wellbeing Counsellor

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Alexandra Bigg Cycle 3

Amanda Flood Cycle 1 & 2

Demi Grant Cycle 1

Desiree Santos Cycle 3

Helen Robinson Cycle 1

Jane Bristow Cycle 2

Jodie Milde Cycle 3

Liarne Chicco Cycle 2

Raelene Barclay Cycle 2

Timothy Ross Cycle 2

Kirsty Christmas-Inglis Cycle 1

ADMINISTRATION STAFF

April Johncock Trainee Administrator

David Anderson Business Manager

Hannah McAuley Finance & HR Officer

Hannah Boath Executive Assistant

Monica Berg Enrolment Manager

Monique Herreen Administrator

Salvo Motta Director of Business

Skye Shoubridge Administrator

GROUNDS & MAINTANENCE

Tristan Biglands

Shane Lee

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE DIRECTOR

Susan Foy

Vanessa Webb

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE STAFF

Cherie Lee Baby Steps Coordinator | Preschool Assistant

Cheryl McGaffin Toddler Coordinator | Preschool Assistant

Demi Grant Preschool Assistant

Helen Robinson Preschool Assistant

Jane Bristow Preschool Assistant

Kristi Guy Preschool Teacher

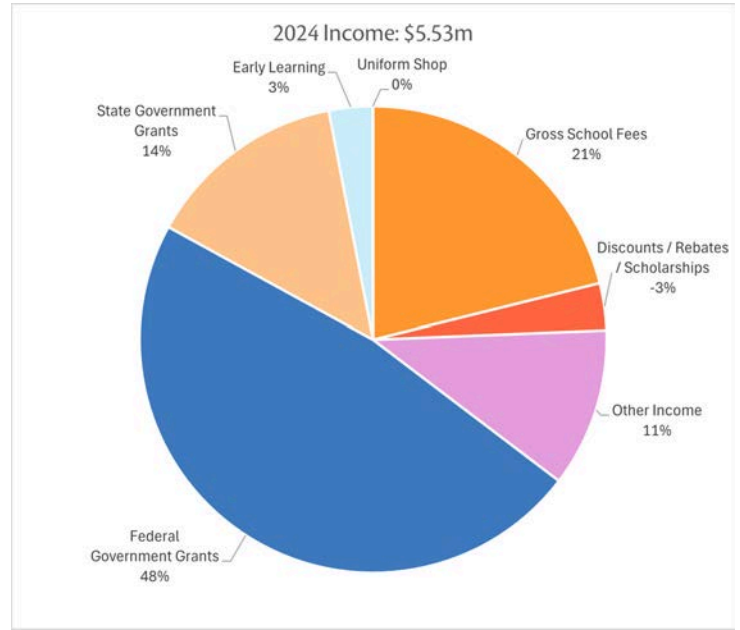
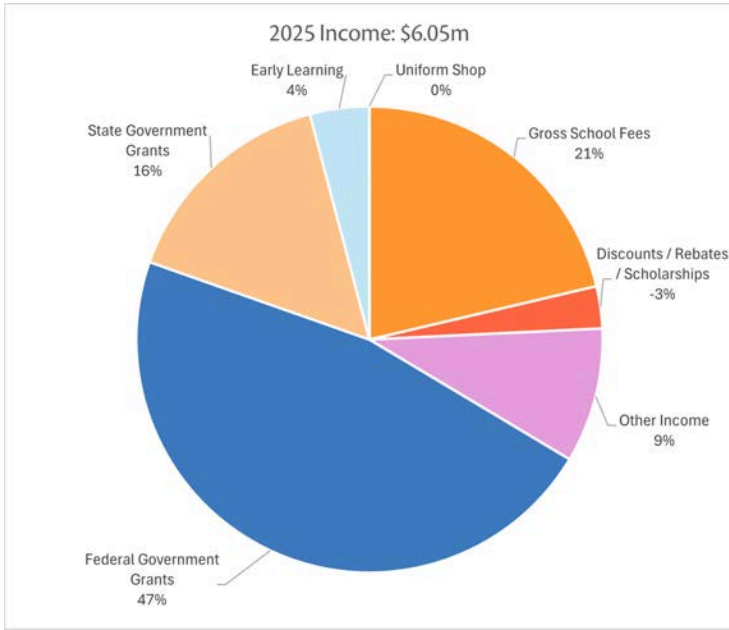
Louise Brady Preschool Assistant

Shixin Li Preschool Teacher

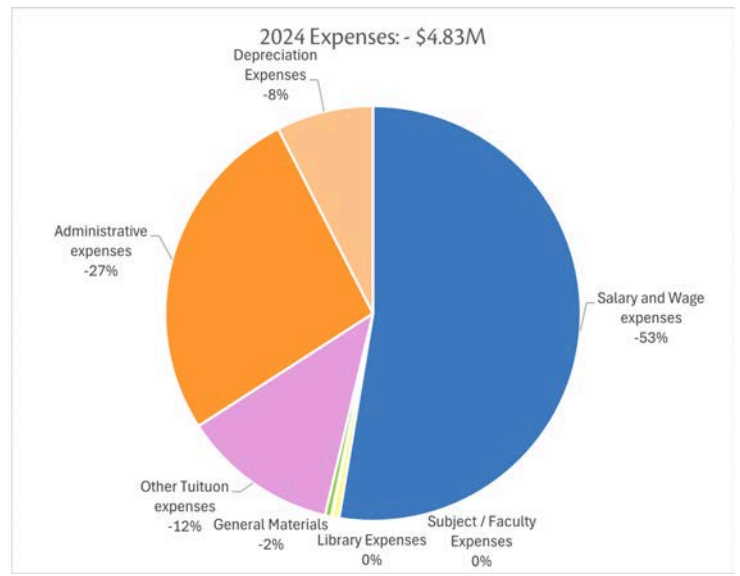
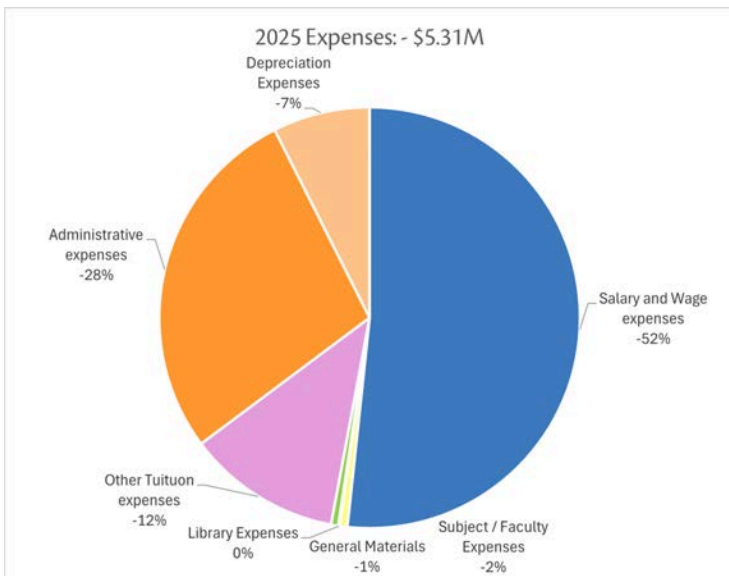
Income & Expenditures

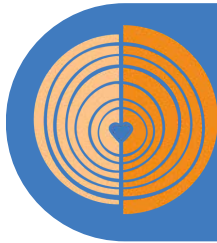


Total Revenue



Operating Expenses





Audited Financials

Southern Montessori Education Centre Inc

Statement of financial position

As at 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	574,091	116,062
Investments in term deposits	370,270	352,806
Trade and other receivables	59,659	11,536
Other assets	97,731	122,314
Total current assets	1,101,751	602,718
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	6,526,094	6,241,500
Total assets	7,627,845	6,844,218
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	322,563	229,585
Loan	-	160,000
Provisions	468,382	423,133
Other liabilities	316,656	290,709
Total current liabilities	1,107,601	1,103,427
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefits	90,473	51,411
Total liabilities	1,198,074	1,154,838
Net assets	6,429,771	5,689,380
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	5,365,767	4,625,703
Reserves	1,064,004	1,063,677
Total equity	6,429,771	5,689,380



Southern Montessori School

School Performance
Report
2025