

# Cameragal Montessori School Annual Report 2010



*“Help Me To Do It Myself”*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b><i>Introduction</i></b>  | 3  |
| <b><i>Rationale</i></b>   | 3  |
| <b><i>Application</i></b>   | 3  |
| <b><i>Period of report</i></b>  | 3  |
| <b><i>Chairman's Message</i></b>  | 4  |
| <b><i>Treasurer's Message</i></b>   | 5  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 1: Contextual information about the School</i></b>             | 7  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 2: Standardised national literacy and numeracy testing</i></b> | 7  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 3: Summary of Professional Learning of Teachers</i></b>        | 7  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 4: Workforce composition</i></b>                               | 8  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 5: Student Attendance rates</i></b>                            | 8  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 6: Student non-attendance</i></b>                              | 8  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 7: Enrolment policies</i></b>                                  | 9  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 8: Characteristics of the student body</i></b>                 | 9  |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 9: School Policies</i></b>                                     | 9  |
| - <b><i>Student welfare policies</i></b>  | 9  |
| - <b><i>Discipline policies</i></b>   | 10 |
| - <b><i>Reporting complaints and resolving grievances policies</i></b>              | 10 |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 10: Priority areas for improvement</i></b>                     | 10 |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 11: Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility</i></b>  | 12 |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 12: Parent, student and teacher satisfaction</i></b>           | 12 |
| <b><i>Reporting Area 13: Summary financial information</i></b>                      | 14 |

## ***Introduction***

Cameragal Montessori School operates three classrooms for three to six year olds. We have two campuses – one classroom at Lavender Bay and two classrooms at Neutral Bay.

## ***Rationale***

This report is required in order to meet the educational and financial reporting obligations of the Board of Studies of NSW. The details are provided in the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual February 2010 (incorporating changes from 2004 to 2009), which regulates Kindergarten through to Year 12.

## ***Application***

Only a small proportion of our students are affected by the educational and financial reporting obligations. In most instances, it is not possible to isolate information specific to the Kindergarten programme. Therefore, information is provided relating to the entire School.

## ***Period of report***

This report covers the 2010 calendar year.

## ***Chairman's Message***

Cameragal Montessori School has completed another successful year. The school had a full complement of children by the end of term 3, 2010 and also continues to receive a strong endorsement from parents in the wider community, with our waiting lists and enrolments very strong.

This year there has been an enormous effort by parents at the school, both in working on the Board, for various subcommittees and in the level of general involvement from those who have stepped up to voluntarily undertake the many tasks that keep the wheels of Cameragal turning smoothly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents for their commitment.

The children have clearly benefited from the dedication and commitment of our Directresses and their Assistants. I continue to receive compliments from parents on the high quality of education at the school and our exit survey reflects many parents saying that the education exceeds their expectations. Following from the increase in children numbers in one of the classes from 20 to 30 children in 2009, the School has planned to expand in a number of areas within the next few years. We have looked into the possibility of a primary program to commence in 2012 in order to cater for the need of children graduating to a Montessori primary school within the area. The School is also looking to expand the School building (Neutral Bay Campus) to accommodate another classroom of 30 children. We are working closely with North Sydney Council to achieve this goal.

The School has recently appointed a new auditor and they have finally signed off on the 2009 financial accounts and are currently working on the 2010 audit. The change of auditors has benefited the School enormously but it has highlighted some poor record keeping. This has resulted in a large write-off of \$67,021 of assets (the book value of the pre-2009 assets). The total loss for the 2009 year was \$90,611. The write-off of the assets contributed \$67,021 to that loss and the remaining amount \$23,590 was attributed to the underlying operating loss for the School in the 2009 year.

This amount is significant for the School and is the reason the School Board has been working actively towards increasing revenue for the School.

Russell Leslie  
Chairman Cameragal Montessori School

## ***Treasurer's Message***

The 2010 year was a year of consolidation for the school. To redress the loss in 2009 the school expanded the number of students in two classes and applied for Commonwealth Government funding for our primary school age children. As a result of these two initiatives the school had a better financial performance in 2010.

The board and staff have continued to work on the longer term strategy for the school of opening a Montessori Primary School. During 2010 we received North Sydney Council planning approval for the school building and accreditation with the Board of Studies. Unfortunately the initial 12 families who were keen to send their children to the new primary school, dwindled to 4 by the end of the year, and this was too few to begin the new primary school in 2011. We will try again for a 2012 start to the Primary School. The school's financial future will change significantly if the expansion to the Primary School is achieved.

Robert Blayney

Treasurer Cameragal Montessori School

## ***Teaching Staff Message***

Year 2010 saw an intake of 36 students to bring the School to a capacity of 85 students by end of term 4. Of those students, 29 students were eligible to join Extended Day by the end of term 4 (Early Stage 1 students). The School has three teaching staff with two assistant teachers in each classroom, thus maintaining a 1:10 ratio across the School.

2010 saw the departure of Mary Batterham, Directress and Authorised Supervisor of Cameragal for the past six years, to an overseas posting. Parrish Khalili was appointed as her replacement starting in Term 3, and the School has adapted seamlessly to the new Directress.

The School's policy and procedures are regularly updated during the year 2010. This year also saw the School become a part of the Cancer Council's Sunsmart school program with the introduction of a new Sunscreen Policy. Policies and procedures relating to the NSW Education Act 1990 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 are also regularly reviewed. The policies and procedures are available for viewing by the parent body and staff from the School's registered office at Forsyth Park, Neutral Bay.

Teacher inservice days have continued to provide sessions of instruction to update the professional development of the staff. Particular emphasis has been placed on the preparation and training of staff in the requirements of the Early Learning Years Framework and upcoming National Accreditation.

The teaching staff has and will continue to ensure that the School meets the curriculum outcomes set by the NSW Board of Studies for our Early Stage 1 children.

Parrish Khalili  
Teacher and Authorised Supervisor

### ***Reporting Area 1: Contextual information about the School***

There are currently 78 children enrolled in the programme between three to six years of age of boys and girls. Most of the families are from the Lower North Shore catchment area.

Cameragal Montessori School is set up as an Australian Public Company Limited by Guarantee. The School is therefore regulated by the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth). The School is a Charitable Institution ie. an institution that is established and run to advance or promote a charitable purpose and is endorsed to access the following tax concessions, GST Concession, Fringe Benefit Tax Rebate and Income Tax Exemption.

### ***Reporting Area 2: Standardised national literacy and numeracy testing***

There were 25 children who were five years of age or more by the end of July 2010. A further four children turned five years of age in the second half of the year and were eligible to join the extended day programme. This means that by December 2010 there were 29 children attending the Kindergarten (Early Stage 1) programme.

Twenty seven five year olds moved on to Primary School in 2010. Of this total two children will stay on to complete the Kindergarten programme at Montessori. Of the five and six year old children leaving, 14 are entering Kindergarten and nine are entering Year 1. Four are attending private school, 19 are attending public school and 2 will continue with Montessori primary at other Montessori schools.

All children met the curriculum outcomes set by the NSW Board of Studies. Transition of these students to this next stage of their schooling is closely followed by the staff so as to pinpoint any difficulties or lack of readiness. Because of the ages of the children and the Montessori philosophy, no formal testing is undertaken.

### ***Reporting Area 3: Summary of Professional Learning of Teachers***

All three teachers employed by Cameragal Montessori School have the appropriate teaching qualifications as determined by the Minister of Education

and Training. All three teachers have qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines ("category 1").

Annual expenditure on Professional Learning for 2010 was \$6,213.64.

Cameragal had an excellent attendance rate for teachers in 2010. Based on 196 days/40 weeks, the average attendance rate was 90.0%.

#### ***Reporting Area 4: Workforce composition***

The School's workforce is made of eleven staff with three teachers, six non-teaching staff, an administration officer and an accountant book keeper. 60% are from an English speaking background and 40% are from a non-English speaking background. All of the staff are of the female gender with an average age of 40 years.

All of the staff have completed the working with children check upon appointment.

#### ***Reporting Area 5: Student Attendance rates***

The average attendance for the School population of extended day/ kindergarten children for 2010 was 90.1%.

#### ***Reporting Area 6: Student non-attendance***

The School monitors the daily attendance and absences of students in the School by maintaining daily register for each class. Student absences from classes or from the School will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible. Unexplained absences from classes or School will be followed up in an appropriate manner with the student and /or their parent or guardian. The School will record student attendance and notify the parent or guardian in cases of poor attendance. Where unsatisfactory class or school attendance is identified the attendance issue and any action taken will be according to the Student Attendance Policy.

Parents are responsible to notify the School of absences due to sickness and also to notify and seek permission prior to planned extended leaves of absence.

### ***Reporting Area 7: Enrolment policies***

Our students commence at the School when they turn three. Prior to commencement, at least one of the parents would observe a class and attend a New Parent Evening. On commencing, there is a probation period during which time either parents or teaching staff may determine whether the environment is suitable for that particular child. (This is a rare event.) Once through the probation period, it is expected that all children will proceed to the Montessori Kindergarten programme known as the 'Extended Day' when they turn five, provided all the School fees are up-to-date. There are no entrance requirements or exam for entry into our Kindergarten year.

Student Population: We have 85 children aged three to six attending the School. Of these, 29 were attending the extended day kindergarten programme by December 2010.

### ***Reporting Area 8: Characteristics of the student body***

Out of the 85 number of students at our School, 57.6% are of boys and 42.4% are of girls. Most of the students are from the Lower North Shore area with a majority from the North Sydney municipal area.

Of the 85 number of students, 90.6% are from an English speaking background and 9.4% are from families that speak another language in addition to English at home. There are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students currently enrolled at the School.

### ***Reporting Area 9: School Policies***

#### ***- Student welfare policies***

The welfare of the children is of paramount importance. This is covered in several of our existing policies including:

Educational and Financial Reporting Policy

Security Policy

Staff Interaction With Children

Occupational Health and Safety

Anti-bias

Multicultural  
Children with special needs  
Confidentiality  
Non-sexist

These policies are reviewed regularly and can be found in our "Roles, Policies and Procedures Manual" held at each campus.

We also have a section on "Health and Safety for your child" in our Parent Handbook. This covers issues such as illness, medication, mandatory reporting of children at risk of harm, and emergency procedures.

We also cover the responsibilities of employees, including our Code of Conduct, in our Employee Handbook which was produced in February 2004.

A full review of all policies took place over the period May – October 2006, resulting in several changes to bring them into line with current regulations.

### **- *Discipline policies***

Discipline is covered under our Behaviour Management Policy which can be found in our Roles, Policies and Procedures Manual, our Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook. This policy was reviewed in May 2004 and was reviewed again in 2006.

### **- *Reporting complaints and resolving grievances policies***

Reporting complaints and resolving grievances policies are covered in the following:

"Conflict Resolution For Employees" in our Roles, Policies and Procedures Manual

"Grievance Procedure" in our Employee Handbook

"Conflict Resolution" in our Parent Handbook

### ***Reporting Area 10: Priority areas for improvement***

Cameragal's priority areas for improvement in 2010 were all successfully addressed throughout the year. They included;

#### **1. Establishment of a Property Sub-committee**

The sub-committee examined and reported on Cameragal's property issues, including existing and future leases and building development options. As a result of sub-committee deliberations and approval from the Board a proposal was submitted to North Sydney Council for a proposed extension to the Forsyth

Park campus building. This required the Council to consider changing the existing zoning from Open Space to Allowable Use in order to allow the development of another classroom to accommodate 30 children.

#### 2. Establishment of the IT Sub-committee.

The IT sub-committee worked on the development of a school-wide back-up plan to ensure that all internal IT applications and records were successfully backed up. Important information such as student records and data will be protected in the event of unforeseen outages.

#### 3. Communication Plan

Work was completed on a strategy to provide a plan for integrating and improving lines of communication. Recommendations were incorporated into a school wide communication plan that will be handed on to future committees to provide continuity and use going forward.

#### 4. 6-9 Class Feasibility Study

Regulatory approvals for the Primary School were granted by the NSW Board of Study and North Sydney Council in 2010.

During 2010, priority areas identified for improvement were:

#### 1. Feeder Program Agreement

Cameragal Montessori has established a Memorandum of Agreement with the Mosman Montessori Under 3 program. This will ensure that children who have completed at least 14 months at Mosman Montessori Under 3 will be given priority consideration for entry at Cameragal Montessori (after North Sydney Municipality residents and siblings of Cameragal students.) This will establish a feeder program for the School and enable families to continue their montessori education beyond 0-3.

#### 2. Establishment of the 6-9 Class

The Board is continuing the work to open the Primary School in 2012. After receiving regulatory approvals to proceed, the work will then focus on forming the foundation class, purchasing equipment, recruitment of teaching staff and getting the classroom ready.

### ***Reporting Area 11: Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility***

Respect and responsibility are the founding stones of the Montessori philosophy and teaching principles. Central to Montessori philosophy is giving the children the freedom for spontaneous activity. The materials are self-correcting and the child can gauge his or her own performance. Children develop independence, responsibility, persistence and confidence in their own abilities.

They use a special set of educational materials, choosing their activity themselves as well as how long they will engage in that activity. They learn to enjoy learning, mentor younger children and explore their world in a cheerful atmosphere of orderliness, calmness and purposeful work.

The Montessori environment also engenders more positive social interaction. Recent studies published in the journal Science in September 2006 show that Montessori educated preschool children demonstrated a greater sense of justice and fairness and were more likely to engage in positive play with their peers.

### ***Reporting Area 12: Parent, student and teacher satisfaction***

Cameragal conducts exit surveys in the last term of each calendar year to determine the satisfaction levels of parents and their children with the three year programme.

Twenty five surveys were distributed to parents of children leaving Cameragal in 2009. Twenty three responses were received.

Although the numbers were small, in brief the results were:

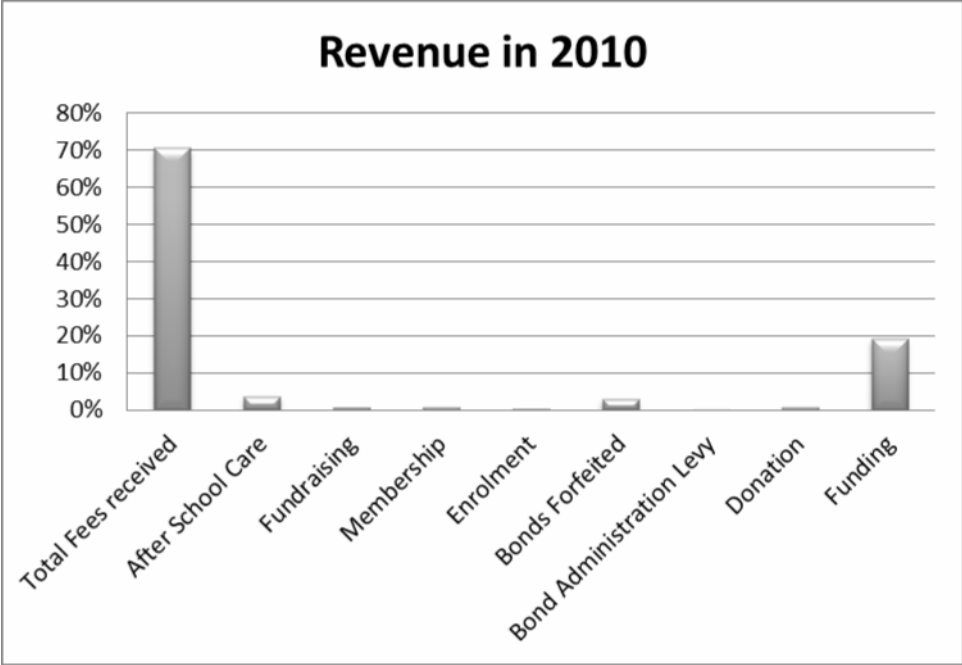
74% of those responding to the survey believed their child had benefited by his/her Montessori experience. The Montessori approach to education is consistently seen as a positive experience and most parents cite the acquisition of independence and self-esteem as a wonderful grounding for life.

Satisfaction with the Board and belief that the Board was making fair and balanced decisions for all stakeholders was positive.

Teacher satisfaction is reflected in the excellent attendance rates and years associated with the School as well as their involvement at Board and Committee

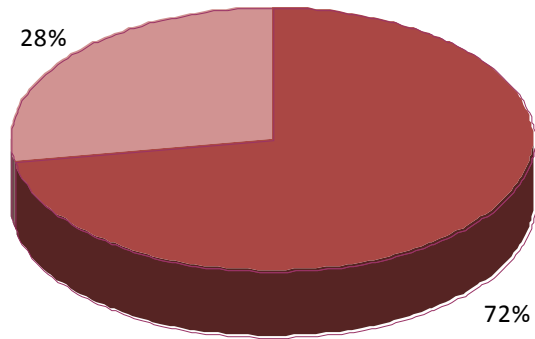
level. This involvement allows them to actively influence their work environment and ensure that their students receive the best possible education. Apart from the surveys, the School Board meets once a term (Open Board Meeting) and is an open forum where parents can express their concerns and suggestions.

**Reporting Area 13: Summary financial information**



### State and Commonwealth Funding Breakdown

■ DOCS RECURRENT FUNDING      ■ NSW DEPT ED PRIMARY FUNDING



## Expenditures in 2010

