

AGECS

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies

Impact Report

Financial Year 2026



Denmark forest school, Jonathan Levitzke, 2025 Fellow

From the President

Welcome to AGECS's very first Impact Report. We hope you enjoy reading about our achievements in the 2026 financial year for you, our members, and the wider ECEC community.

AGECS has a long and proud history of supporting the Early Childhood Education and Care community, starting way back in 1922. Over time, how we support the ECEC community has evolved as the sector's needs have changed. Our focus in this decade is providing free professional learning, free resources, and grant opportunities to support educators in a typically underpaid sector.

As an organisation, we are unique in providing free professional learning (PL) events and free resources to both our members and subscribers. Whilst other ECEC organisations have an annual membership fee which provides access to paid PL events, our members pay only a once-off, lifetime, tax deductible membership fee of \$50. As a charity, we make many of our service offerings available to everyone, providing our members access to additional learning and resources. We are committed to providing these events and resources free, as our association continues its philanthropic focus and support of the sector.

We are a not-for-profit charity, run by a Council of 10 volunteers, supported by three part-time contractors. We receive no government funding, but rely on the generosity of members to help us continue to champion one of the most important sectors in our society.

Everything we do is focused around providing assistance to early childhood educators. We invite you to consider donating to AGECS to help us in our vision and mission:

We believe that early childhood professionals change lives.

We believe that investing in early childhood education and care changes the life trajectories of children, families, and communities.

Our mission is to **Advance, Empower, Resource** so that early childhood professionals can thrive.

As the ECEC sector grows, and the pressure on educators continues, we seek your support so that AGECS can keep giving back to Early Childhood Education and Care for decades to come.

We hope you enjoy reading this report.

Coral Campbell

President

On behalf of the AGECS Council



Our Organisation

For over 100 years, the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) has championed the people who shape our youngest learners. As a membership-based, not-for-profit charity, AGECS provides free professional learning, resources, and opportunities to early childhood educators and other professionals making a difference in the sector.

Our mission

- Advance, Empower, Resource early childhood professionals so children can thrive

Our themes and values

- **Empowerment:** Nurturing and inspiring professional wellbeing and resilience
- **Resourcing:** Providing funds, materials and opportunities for the ECEC profession
- **Leading:** Setting directions for the ECEC profession, that are responsive to diversity
- **Advancing:** Providing a platform for professional reflection and growth
- **Connecting:** Building relationships in the ECEC community that value diversity, equality and inclusion
- **Innovating:** Supporting the exploration of new ideas and new voices

Why AGECS matters

Time and money are found to be the biggest barriers to professional learning (AITSL, 2018). Teachers are often underpaid and time poor which makes accessing professional learning harder.

In a survey of almost 12,000 teachers, NSW Education Standards Authority (2017) found that around:

- 23% of teachers have conflicting work schedules with PD
- 19% of teachers find PD expensive
- 14% teachers cannot access PD because of location

Notably, the report also found that early childhood teachers often rely on professional networks and associations for their professional development needs. This is where AGECS steps in.

Our solution

AGECS addresses these barriers by providing free, accessible, and quality professional learning, resources, and grants for its members and the wider ECEC community, because **we believe that investing in teachers is also investing in children, families, and communities.**

Free vs. paid members: what's the difference?

Subscribers join us for free, with access to live online professional learning events, our monthly inForm newsletter, and the Fellowship Program for Leadership and Change.

Members go further. For a one-off \$50 lifetime fee, members unlock special grants, recordings of past PD events, an AUDAX subscription, and opportunities for council involvement.

AITSL. (2018). *Exploring the opportunities and challenges of teacher professional learning in the early childhood, casual/relief and rural/remote teaching contexts: Findings report.*

NSW Education Standards Authority. (2017). *Enablers and barriers to initiating professional development.*

The AGECS Impact: Overview



1,309

members

\$53,470

in Fellowship Program grants



6

Fellowship Program recipients



approx

900

inForm subscribers reached monthly

11

issues of monthly inForm



4

member-exclusive content emails



5

partner universities for Academic Awards

28

Academic Award recipients



\$3,300

Magabala Book vouchers granted to Academic Award recipients



270

registered to our online professional learning events

3

online professional learning events



Professional Learning

Our professional learning (PL) events are open to everyone — members or not. We know time and money are the two biggest barriers keeping teachers from PL so our events are held **online and after-hours, and always free.**

We invite esteemed speakers from across the field to challenge conventional thinking and introduce **new and innovative ways** of approaching early childhood practice. This gives our members fresh tools and perspectives to bring straight back into the classroom.

This year, we delivered three live professional learning events:

Nic Russell shared the latest research behind educator wellbeing.

Dr Kim Kinnear presented how to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce.

Professor Nicola Yelland discussed how to develop a capable image of the child using examples from STEM ecologies.

Monthly inForm

There is a lot of information out there for early childhood professionals but the real challenge is knowing where to start. That is where our monthly inForm (newsletter) helps our members.

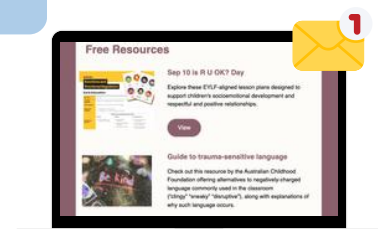
Every month, we bring together **everything you need to know in one place**: what's happening at AGECS; sector news; free classroom-ready resources; and professional development opportunities from government bodies and other organisations across the sector.

Through inForm, we shared:

30 classroom resources

23 opportunities

39 news articles



Fellowship Program for Leadership & Change

The AGECS Fellowship Program for Leadership and Change (FPLC) aims to **provide financial support** through grants of up to \$10,000 for individual early childhood professionals who are working in the state of Victoria. Fellows undertake a project for a period of 6 – 12 months that will impact on the quality of services for children aged birth to 5 years.

Through the Fellowship Program:

\$53,470

in grants awarded

3

Fellows explored
Denmark's forest
schools



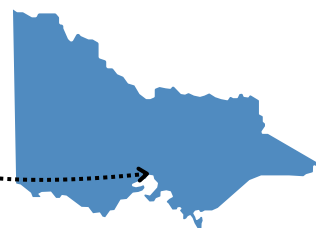
2

Fellows examined the
Reggio Emilia
philosophy in Italy



1

Fellow undertook the
ECQRS-EC training
in Victoria



The AGECS Fellowship Grant has been instrumental in giving me the opportunity to deepen my understanding of pedagogy I truly believe in. Visiting Denmark challenged me to rethink many of the assumptions embedded in early childhood education. It has inspired me to lead with greater trust, embrace risk as an essential part of learning and prioritise children's wellbeing above all other outcomes.

Jamie Gash, ECT & Ed Leader
Yarrowonga Preschool & McLean Street Kinder

Academic Awards

At AGECS, we **celebrate emerging leaders** in early childhood education. Our Academic Awards recognise graduating students who don't just excel in their studies, but bring dedication, practical skill, and a genuine passion for making an impact in the field.

Nominations come from participating universities, who select candidates based on academic merit, leadership potential, and institution-specific criteria.

Our impact:

5 partner institutions

28 outstanding awardees

\$3,300 in Magabala Books vouchers granted

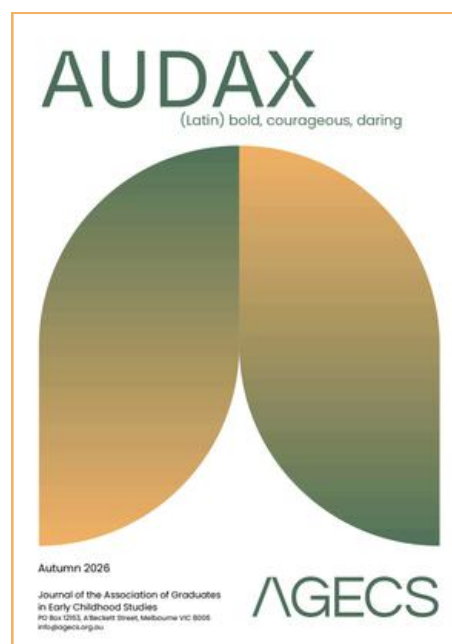


AUDAX

latin for "bold, courageous, daring"

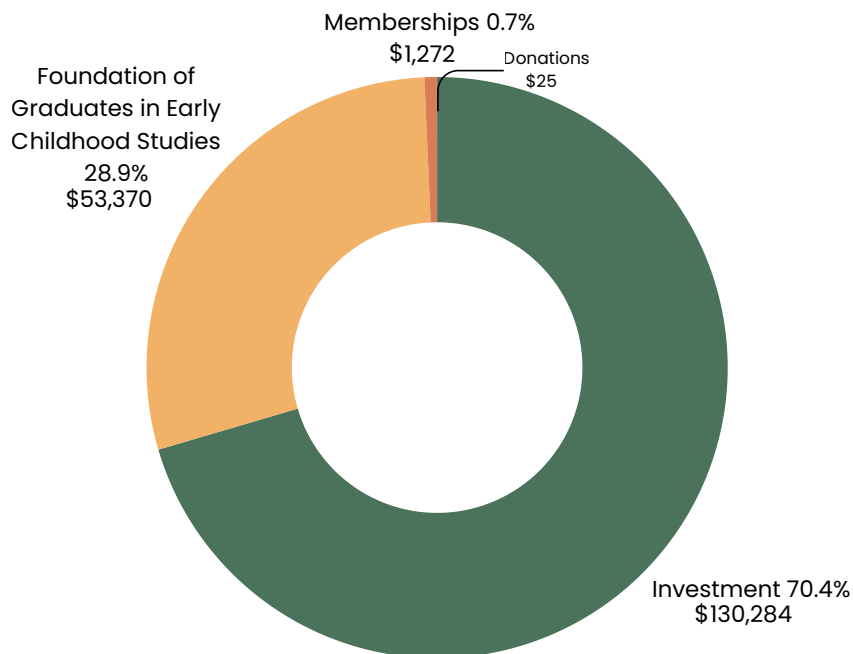
AUDAX is our bi-annual journal established in the 1970s, published each Autumn and Spring. Each edition brings together **articles, case studies, and reflections, tackling the sector's relevant themes and issues.**

We publish articles from our Fellowship recipients, so they can share their projects directly with members. We also have a regular segment called Council Conversations – where a Council member unpacks a topic straight from the Council's own discussions. Our members get full access to every edition and opportunities to contribute.



Finances

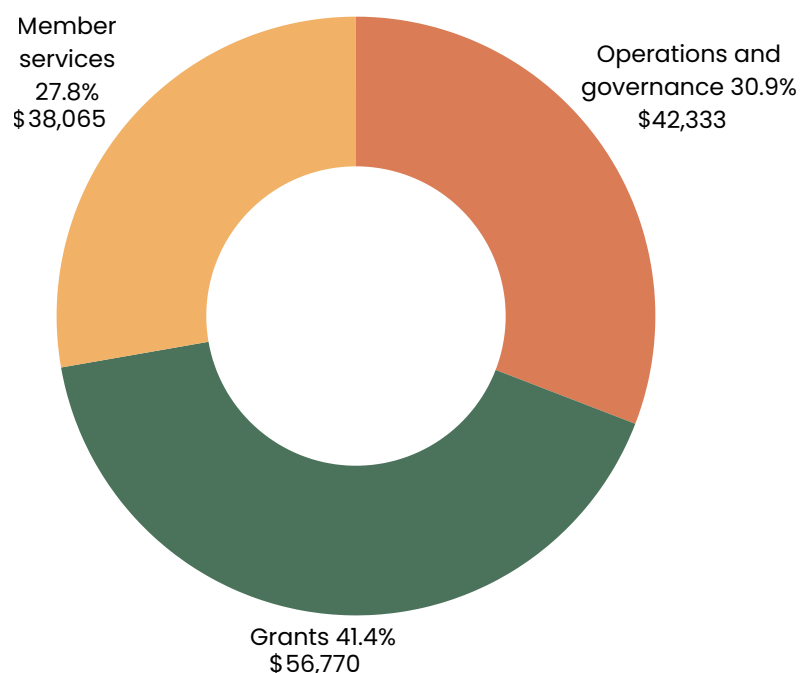
Source of Income



AGECS's primary source of income comes from its investments. This financial resource was created from generous donations and bequests of past members, and is carefully stewarded by our Council with guidance from our Finance Committee.

As a not-for-profit charity, our focus is on giving back to the ECEC community, with 70% of our expenditure supporting the sector through direct grants and services to our members and subscribers. The remaining expenditure supports our operations and governance, ensuring our volunteer Council has the resources needed to fulfil its responsibilities and ensuring AGECS meets all relevant regulatory and compliance requirements.

Expenditure



Hear from our members



"I had a wonderful and incredibly insightful study tour in Denmark and am so grateful for the opportunity and support from AGECS. The Danish principles of trust, belonging, agency, relationships and learning through nature have prompted a lot of reflection, both on my own practice and on the opportunities and challenges we face as a sector."

Tinkara Trcek, Kids By The Bay Children's Centre, Williamstown

"Being part of AGECS over the past six years has been an incredibly valuable part of my professional journey. The Fellowship Program 2024 and Celebrate Diversity Grant 2025 both provided more than just funding: they gave me the confidence, encouragement and **platform to explore ideas** that I am deeply passionate about and to contribute to important conversations across the early childhood sector. They supported me to connect with like-minded professionals, extend my thinking, and share my work more broadly, ultimately **strengthening my confidence** as both an educator and emerging researcher. I also really value the monthly inForm newsletter. In such a busy profession, it is an easy and **reliable way to stay connected** with current sector news, research, professional learning opportunities and the wonderful work being undertaken by colleagues across Australia. It helps me feel part of a professional community that is committed to continuous learning, advocacy and improving outcomes for children, families and educators. Thank you for creating opportunities that genuinely invest in educators and support them to grow throughout their careers."



Sarah Louise Nelson, ECEC Coach and Mentor



"Thank you AGECS for your investment in the future of the early childhood workforce. Your support fosters a culture of excellence and shows emerging teachers that our contributions to society are valued. I am proud to represent this award as I begin my journey in the sector."

Jessica Mary Stewart, AGECS Academic Excellence Awardee

What's next for AGECS?

Alongside operating our ongoing projects, AGECS in 2026/2027 will focus particularly on promotion and fundraising.

Total of \$20,000 mini grants to be awarded to ECEC professionals



Featured Educator/Service pilot project with \$200 voucher award



Partnership with more institutions including TAFE



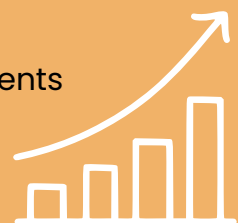
Connect with Early Childhood Improvement Branch (ECIB) to promote AGECS

Raise funds via tax deductible gifts, bequests, and other fundraising initiatives like Container Deposit Scheme



Increase of up to 10 Fellowship recipients

Compared with 5 in previous years



Is your service or institution interested in partnering with AGECS?
Contact us at engagement@agecs.org.au

Make your impact & invest in AGECS

Be a part of our history and our future

AGECS was built from the charitable donations of those able to offer them. Without the significant bequests of Forest Hill or Ware (Warrawong), AGECS and the Foundation would not exist today. Indeed, our history as a graduates' association began with members rolling up their sleeves to wash cars, sell newspapers, garden or sew, all to raise money to establish and maintain 'holiday homes' for vulnerable children.

Become part of a long history of supporters ensuring a future of high quality early childhood education and care. There are three ways to support AGECS:



Donations

All donations to AGECS over \$2.00 are tax deductible. You can donate via:

- Paypal at tinyurl.com/agecspaypal choosing monthly, annual or a once-off donation.
- Direct bank payment:
The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies
Westpac
BSB: 033-138
Account number: 763212

Please include your name in the reference section, and email us on programs@agecs.org.au so we can send you a tax-deductible receipt.



Bequests

AGECS has partnered with EveryWill, Australia's most trusted online Will provider, to make the will making process as easy as possible.

All wills written via EveryWill are legally binding, completely free and include free updates for life. EveryWill includes an optional section for charitable bequests, providing the option for you to consider a legacy donation to help AGECS make a meaningful difference in our mission to support educators, children and, families.

Prepare your free will at wills.everywill.com.au/c/agecs



VICTORIA'S
CONTAINER DEPOSIT
SCHEME

Bottle Collection Fundraising

We are participating in Victoria's container deposit scheme so you can help us and the environment. Details coming soon via inForm and our social media channels.



Support AGECS today

Governance

Executive



**Professor Coral Campbell,
President**

Coral has built a diverse career that includes science project officer, school teacher, and university academic. In the last 18 years, she has focused on early childhood STEM education and serves as an Honorary Professor at Deakin University. She is also a former Chair of the AGECS Fellowship Advisory Committee and a 2017 grant recipient.



**Dr Melissa Adam
Vice President**

Melissa has almost 30 years of experience in a range of roles across early childhood education as a teacher, Education Leader, and director. She recently finished her PhD and is currently a lecturer of ECEC at Deakin University. She thoroughly enjoys coaching and mentoring preservice teachers as part of the placement liaison and assessment team.



**Nicole Lees
Honorary Secretary**

Nicole has worked in the ECEC sector for more than 20 years, including: educator and leadership roles, consultancy and research. Nicole is currently a Be You Consultant at Early Childhood Australia: supporting early learning services across Australia to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of children, educators, and families.



**Emma Boag
Honorary Treasurer**

Emma is a teacher and leader with extensive experience working with children from birth to 8 y.o. across kindergarten and school settings in Australia and the UK. She currently serves as Leader of Pedagogy at Community Kinders Plus, supporting teachers and educators to deliver high-quality early learning.



**Dr Judith Gomes
Honorary Asst Treasurer**

Judith is a full-time Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Deakin University. She worked as a preschool teacher and later taught in preservice teacher education programmes at universities across Victoria. She draws on experience with diverse ethnic communities, schools, and education programs across Norway, Bangladesh, and South Africa.

General Council Members

Helen Baker
Dr Sue Emmett
Wendy Grenfell
Sandra McCarthy-Wilson
Sinead O Conaill
Professor Bridie Raban

Aboriginal Ambassador:
Dr Kim Kinnear

We would also like to thank members of our advisory committees:

Fellowship Program
Finance
First Nations and Partnerships
Forest Hill
Warrawong

Contractors

Liz Potter, *Program Manager*
Nicole Rey, *Engagement Coordinator*
Alexis Chapman, *Bookkeeper*

We would like to acknowledge former EC, Alex Heard, and Bookkeeper, Narelle Wilson for their contribution during this FY.

Impact Report designed by Nicole Rey

