

# Impact of Giving Report 2024







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# Message from our Principal & Foundation Chair

It is our pleasure to present to you the inaugural Melbourne Montessori College Impact of Giving Report: 2024. This report details the tangible difference we are all making in the lives of current and future students of Melbourne Montessori College (MMC).

Whether used to improve our learning facilities, scholarships or building our corpus, your philanthropic support provides our students with an enriching and empowering education that embraces Montessori principles within a safe and inclusive learning environment.

At the heart of MMC is a deep commitment to nurturing the whole child. Guided by the values of independence, curiosity and global citizenship, our college offers a distinctive education that blends academic excellence with a holistic and personalised approach to learning. We are known for cultivating confident, self-directed learners who think critically, act with compassion and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

This Impact of Giving Report celebrates how our community of parents, grandparents, caregivers, alumni, staff and donors are instrumental in shaping the trajectory of our college.

We are a community that gives through countless acts of generosity: volunteering, supporting students and teachers, taking part in community events, and providing financial support. In so many ways, your contributions encourage growth and excellence. And, of course, your philanthropic support is more than a number; your generosity touches every student, enriches every classroom, and expands every program.

We invite you to join us on our philanthropic journey as we work together to support the vision and future direction of our college. We also take this opportunity to thank those who have so generously supported us in this journey so far. The commitment and investment of our community has allowed MMC to become one of Australia's leading Montessori schools, and the vision and efforts of our community are why we are here and thriving today.



**Daniel Thomas**  
Principal, Melbourne  
Montessori College



**Melissa Schraner**  
Chair, Melbourne Montessori  
College Foundation



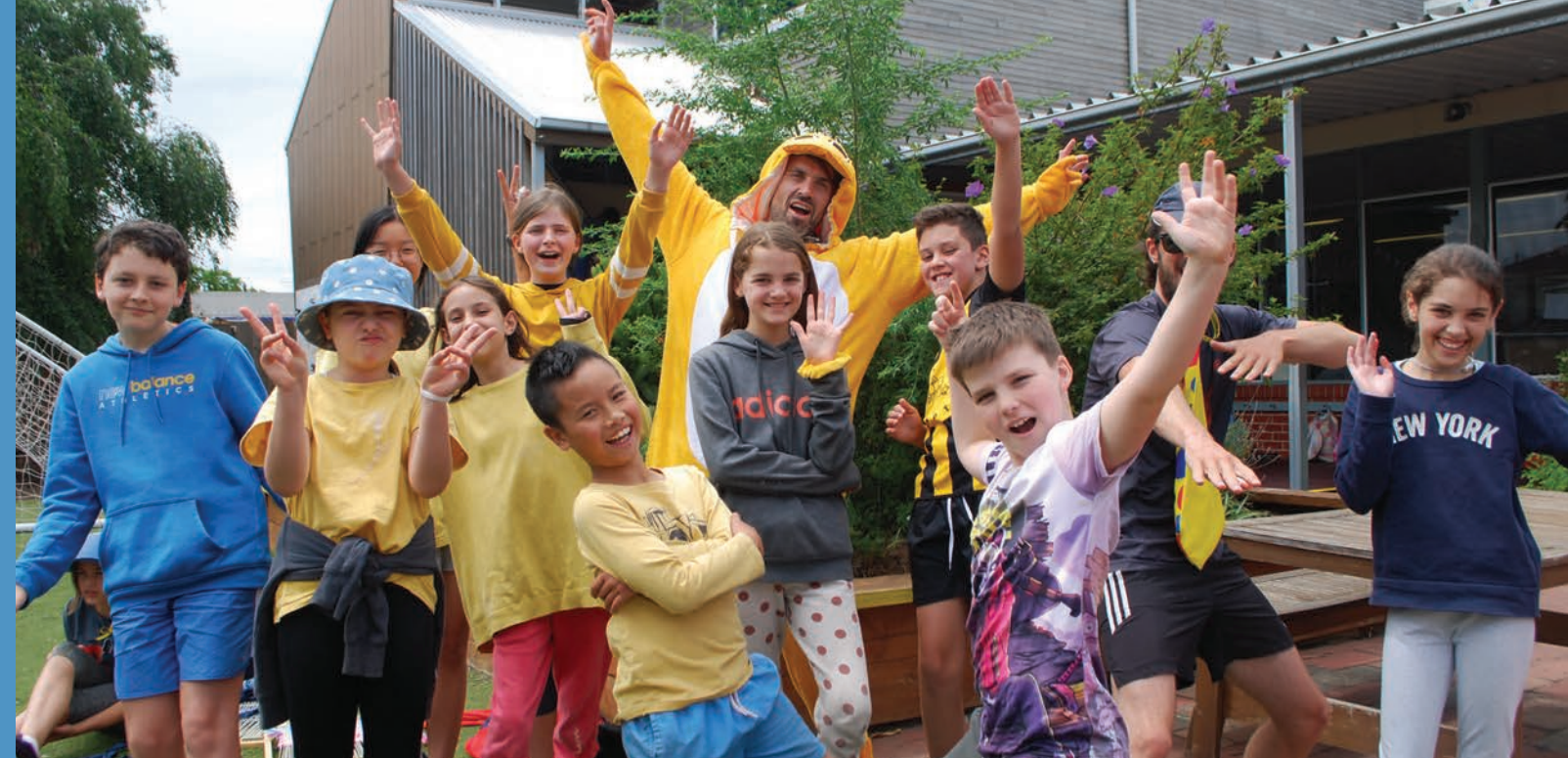
# Celebrating 50 Years of Giving



The philanthropic journey of MMC began decades ago and, since that time, we have grown rapidly. When we think about the pillars that define our college, the generosity of our community lies at the centre of everything we stand for. When our college, the Foundation and our community work hand in hand, amazing things happen.

Every generation of MMC students has benefited from the facilities and resources provided by the previous generation. Here, we share some extraordinary examples of how our community has united to support our college and the MMC Foundation and to advance MMC in a profound and lasting way.

*\*Melbourne Montessori School (MMS) became Melbourne Montessori College in 2024.*



1975

## How we purchased the Caulfield Campus

In 1975, Brighton Montessori School (which merged with Caulfield Montessori School in 2005 to form Melbourne Montessori School) bought the Caulfield Campus site for \$140,000. To support the school, 40 founding families paid down the loan by taking turns selling raffle tickets on weekends.

Their commitment and investment, along with the support of many other families since, has allowed MMC to become one of Australia's leading Montessori educational institutions.



2013

## Creating the MMS Community Finance Fund to purchase the Brighton Campus

In 2013, MMS seized the opportunity to purchase the Brighton Campus and adjoining church for \$5 million. Funding came from a \$2.5 million loan, a \$500,000 grant, and \$1.8 million raised by 28 families and community members. This pivotal investment enabled MMS to expand across two campuses and establish the Senior School. A decade later, the Brighton Campus was valued at over \$20 million—a remarkable legacy for future generations.

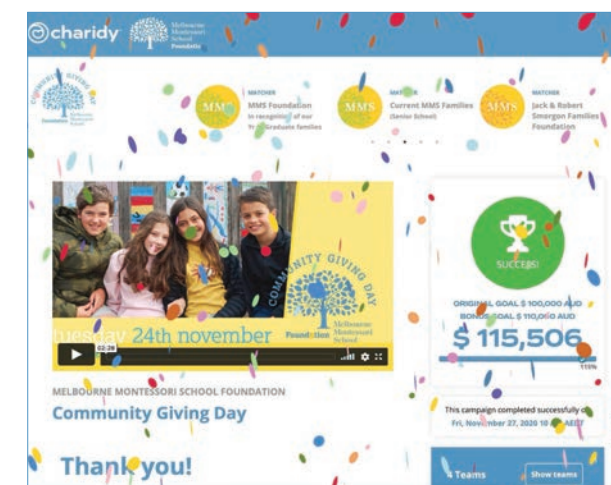


2020

## The MMS Scholarship Fund

In November 2020, the MMS Foundation responded to the severe financial impacts faced by many families due to the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing the MMS Scholarship Fund.

Through the generous donations of the current school community and our alumni, over \$115,000 was raised in 24 hours to establish the Fund, and to provide fee support for students and families affected by the pandemic.



2024

## MMC Legacy Fund - Celebrating 50 years of MMC

To mark the 50th anniversary of our incredible college, the MMC Foundation established the MMC Legacy Fund with a goal of raising \$500,000 over five years. See Melbourne Montessori Legacy Fund section on page 10, for more details.





# The Impact of Your Giving

\$

Total Philanthropic Gifts  
2020-2024

**\$184,374**

## Legacy Fund

Donations made  
in 2024  
**\$38,240**

Pledges made for  
2025-2028  
**\$113,480**

**\$151,720**

Smallest  
donation  
2024  
**\$10**

Largest  
donation  
2024  
**\$10K**

## Foundation Scholarships

**27**  
recipients of  
Senior School  
Scholarships  
since 2022

**\$127K**  
funding from  
the MMC Board

## Voluntary Building Fund 2024

These funds help  
maintain MMC's learning  
spaces and facilities to  
a high standard.

**236**  
families

**\$128,578**  
donations

## Foundation Grants Awarded to MMC

Total grants awarded  
since 2018  
**\$73K**

Building  
Fund  
**\$16K**

Scholarship  
Fund  
**\$55K**

Library  
Fund  
**\$2K**

## Annual Giving Appeals

### Annual Giving Appeal 2020

The Foundation conducted an appeal that raised \$115,506 in 24 hours to launch the MMC Scholarship Fund. This was to assist families needing financial support due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support prospective students who may otherwise be unable to attend MMC.

### Annual Giving Appeal 2023

In 2023, through the generous donations of our school community, \$30,021 was raised. Funds were used to begin formal plans and designs to transform the original church building at Brighton Campus into a new learning and library precinct.

### Spring Fair 2022

The Foundation and the Parents' Association jointly organised and hosted the Spring Fair. This exciting event brought together the MMC community to celebrate our wonderful diversity through food, music and a wide range of cultural activities.

### Annual Giving Appeal 2024 – 50th Anniversary Legacy Fund

To mark the 50th anniversary of MMC, the Foundation established a Legacy Fund with a goal of raising \$500,000 over five years.

Donations in 2024 were \$38,240, with significant pledges made over several years.

## Foundation Scholarships

The MMC Foundation, generously supported by the MMC Board, parents, alumni, staff and friends, offers means-tested Senior School scholarships to students who would not otherwise be able to afford a MMC education.

Our scholarships are a heartfelt gift to families, enabling students to continue and thrive in their Senior School journey at MMC. The College, Board and Foundation are enormously proud to be able to award these scholarships.

The MMC Foundation will continue to fundraise to grow a corpus that, over the long-term, will fund the MMC Scholarship Fund. In the short to medium term, the MMC Board establishes an annual budget to fund the Scholarships/Bursary program.

## Foundation Grants Awarded to MMC

Each year the Foundation distributes a percentage of its assets to the college in the form of a grant. At the discretion of the Principal, this grant is directed to either the Library, Building or Scholarship Funds.

As the Foundation is currently seeking to invest and build its corpus to support the longer-term advancement of MMC, the annual grants awarded to the college are modest.





## Melbourne Montessori College Legacy Fund

To mark and celebrate the 50th anniversary of MMC, in 2024, the Foundation established a Legacy Fund to raise \$500,000 over five years. The Legacy Fund will allow the Foundation to invest the funds in perpetuity and so provide a permanent and growing funding source for MMC.

The Legacy Fund provides our current generation of MMC families and our alumni the opportunity to support the college's ongoing development and growth. It ensures that current and future generations of students will continue to benefit from a Montessori education.

We've enjoyed 50 strong years of growth and success and the Legacy Fund is an important means by which our passionate and dedicated community can continue to thrive and succeed for another 50 years!

The MMC Legacy Fund is the college's highest philanthropic priority and we thank everyone who supported the Fund in 2024. We are also deeply grateful to several MMC families and alumni who have generously pledged annual donations to support the Fund's continued growth.

Donations can be made via:  
[www.givenow.com.au/mmsfcommunitygiving24](http://www.givenow.com.au/mmsfcommunitygiving24)





## Why I Give

### The Ashman Family

*Nathan, Amy and their children joined MMC in 2022 after their eldest child, then in Year 5, had struggled with friendship groups at his previous school. He loved MMC from the first day and because good news travels fast, he was soon joined at MMC by his younger brother in 2023 and his younger sister in 2024.*

As working parents with demanding careers and three very happy children enrolled at MMC, we often wish we could give more of our time to the college, Board or Foundation. Our motivation to donate is driven in part by supporting MMC to deliver a great education to our children. We also acknowledge, support and honour the efforts of those parents and caregivers who contribute their time and effort to the Board and Foundation.

It requires time, effort and personal encumbrance to engage in community activities and we are deeply grateful to those who take on this responsibility. We both feel it is the least we can do to support and aid those who stand and achieve for our benefit.

Over the years, we have regularly donated to the Annual Giving appeals, most recently to the Legacy Fund Appeal in 2024. We are particularly drawn to the notion of offering a 'thank you' to the past and a 'give forward' to future generations of students and community. We think it's great to be part of a legacy.

As two parents who deeply believe in the promise of our college – yet find ourselves pulled in a hundred directions by work and family commitments – our time and expertise are not something we can contribute at this point. But what our family can do is invest in something that endures long after our own children have crossed the graduation stage. Our family is so happy that our kids are experiencing a Montessori education – our donations are a small way of ensuring that future generations of students and families experience the same gratitude.

If you would like to make a contribution towards our college, our advice is to consider what matters most to you – be it enhancing facilities, funding scholarships, or building a lasting legacy. Choose the form of contribution that fits your life. If time allows, lend your expertise on the Board or Foundation. Or a tax-deductible gift can send powerful ripples through the MMC community. Whatever the form of your contribution – skills, hours or dollars – every contribution fosters an enduring promise: that the gift of a Montessori education will remain vibrant for generations to come.



# Why I Give

## The Dacal Family

*Armando, Emily and their family have been members of the MMC community for over 17 years. They have been active members since day one, with Emily sitting on our Board and spending several years as a room representative.*

Our family has been part of the MMC community for over 17 years and during that time, we've seen firsthand the profound impact that a Montessori education can have on a child's growth, confidence and love of learning. Giving to MMC is our way of expressing gratitude and investing in a future that we truly believe in – one where children are nurtured to become curious, compassionate and capable individuals.

We believe that by giving, we help build a stronger and more caring community. It's a way of showing that we not only care about the children in our own lives, but also believe deeply in the power of Montessori education. It's meaningful to be part of something that creates lasting change, not only for our three daughters, but for generations to come.

We are particularly drawn to supporting the Legacy Fund and the Scholarship Fund. Supporting a child's access to a Montessori education regardless of their circumstances is one of the most powerful gifts we can offer. It's a way to honour the legacy of Maria Montessori while creating pathways for children to thrive.

Continuing Maria Montessori's legacy means making this unique approach to education accessible and sustainable with the funds raised. The Legacy and Scholarship Funds ensure that we can extend this gift to more families, strengthen our programs, and honour Maria Montessori and the vision that built this College.

We have enjoyed being part of a community where we all align with the same values on education. There's a shared sense of purpose in everything we do. We are all here for the children and are committed to building a better future. There is a true sense of collaboration and respect that defines MMC, which makes being involved fulfilling.

This college has been an incredibly important part of our family's lives. All contributions make a real difference. It keeps the doors open and preserves the spirit of Maria Montessori.





# Melbourne Montessori College Masterplan

In 2024, MMC and Kneeler Design Architects undertook an extensive and thorough process to develop a new Masterplan across our two campuses. The Masterplan is a conceptual layout of future development that considers buildings, pedagogy, landscape and urban design. It is a living document that supports MMC’s development decision-making and is a valuable tool in helping us secure any future finance.

The implementation of the Masterplan will be staged over several years and is reliant on bank funding, government grants and community donations. The Board, College Executive and Foundation are working together to identify several funding pathways to bring this plan to life.

The Melbourne Montessori College Masterplan creates a consistent, powerful learning statement for both the Caulfield and Brighton campuses. The campus layouts have been designed to support the different ages of our students and their varying stages of education and personal development.

The Caulfield Campus is conceptualised as a playscape to encourage learning grounded in nature, with an environment that nurtures and guides its younger students. The Brighton Campus is a learning landscape that encourages educational risk, creating space for adolescence to flourish and empowering students to grow in independence and to spread their wings.

As both our campuses are on compact inner suburb sites, the Masterplan prioritised preserving and intensifying the outdoor learning/play spaces and the green spaces as extensions of the Montessori classroom.

The Caulfield Campus’s tree fern grove will be woven into a wider network of outdoor spaces, including covered outdoor areas, a fitness track and synthetic sports pitch. The Brighton Campus is envisaged to have a meadow/sculpture garden at the college entrance, flowing into a series of smaller courtyards and outdoor spaces and will culminate with a sports pitch at the eastern end of the site.

## Our Architects - Kneeler Design Architects

Maria Montessori was a passionate believer in peace education, trusting that learning could help build a more peaceful world. Inspired by her vision, Kneeler Design Architects believe that every voice counts and set out to listen as widely as possible to the voices of our college community.

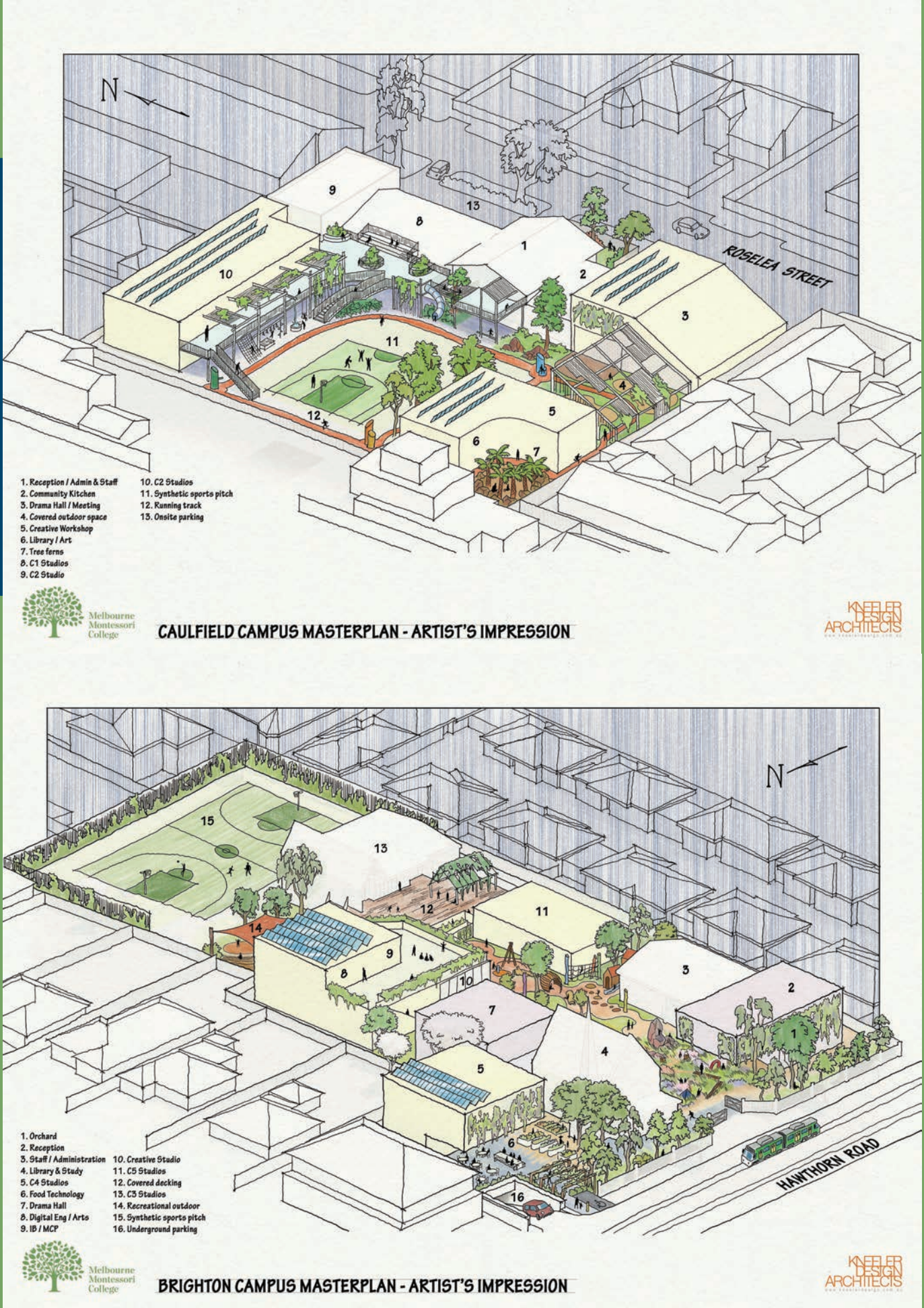
The master planning process took place from March to July 2024. It included fortnightly design meetings with the MMC leadership team, hands-on workshops with students from all year levels, consultations with parents and caregivers, a dedicated session with teachers, and concluded with the presentation of the final Masterplan to the College Board.

Environmentally sustainable design is integral to the architecture as an expression of the college’s philosophy of protecting and caring for the Earth. Each campus will have a hall to accommodate the whole school, and a creative hub for project-based learning.

The Caulfield Campus studios are modelled on the traditional Montessori classrooms with integrated art/food preparation areas, while the Brighton Campus will have STEM and hospitality facilities to support a secondary school curriculum, including VCE VM studies.

Learning spaces have been designed to accommodate students across different age groups and developmental levels and support the hands-on learning that is a pillar of Montessori pedagogy. This will allow various modes of learning to take place in the same space – from communal and collaborative activities to individual and reflective study.

We are thrilled with the opportunities that our Masterplan offers our college, and look forward to sharing future updates with you.





# How to Support the Foundation

We hope that you will be inspired to give to the Foundation to help ensure the best possible opportunities for future generations of MMC students and families.

The Foundation's mission reflects a spirit of shared experience and mutual encouragement, as each MMC generation preserves the legacy of opportunity that as been received, strengthens it, and passes it on.

The Foundation runs Giving Appeals and seeks gifts in support of the following funds:

**Legacy Fund** - The MMC Legacy Fund was established in 2024 as an endowment fund to provide a permanent and growing funding source for MMC. The MMC Legacy Fund is the college's highest philanthropic priority.

**Building Fund** - The MMC Building Fund supports the physical infrastructure of the college, ensuring students can enjoy the best possible learning environment. The Building Fund is a vital source of funding for building projects and renovations.

**Scholarship Fund** - The MMC Scholarship Fund provides means-tested Senior School scholarship opportunities to current and prospective students who would otherwise not be able to access a Montessori education.

**Library Fund** - The MMC Library Fund supports the ongoing development and renewal of its library spaces. The Library Fund ensures students across both campuses have access to online and hardcopy learning and research resources.

Alternatively, donors can choose from a range of giving initiatives to make a real difference to our students. All donations to the Foundation are tax deductible.

Supporting the MMC Foundation guarantees returns beyond measure. Every donation, regardless of its size, has the power to transform lives and shape destinies and the benefits reverberate far beyond an initial act of kindness.

For more information on how to support the Foundation, please contact [foundation@mmc.vic.edu.au](mailto:foundation@mmc.vic.edu.au)







# MMC Foundation Board

The MMC Foundation was founded in 2014 to advance the college and to promote the culture of giving that exists within our community.

The Foundation supports MMC by nurturing our strong community connections and fundraising to support the college’s strategic agenda. As an independent school, MMC relies on the support of the entire community to fund new capital projects, to maintain existing buildings and for the college’s scholarships and bursary programs.

The Foundation works with the Principal and the Board to help achieve the objectives of the Towards 500 Strategy and the Masterplan. It does this by raising financial and in-kind support and building an endowment fund to provide long-term financial security to support the college’s priorities now and into the future. The Foundation also creates strong community connections through the engagement of alumni and friends of Melbourne Montessori College.

The Foundation oversees the Scholarship Program and is accountable for the management, allocation and investment of any gifts that are received.

Supporting the MMC Foundation guarantees returns beyond measure. By contributing to our Legacy Fund or the Scholarship, Building and Library Funds, you enhance the lives of students and strengthen the foundations of our community. Every donation, regardless of its size, has the power to transform lives and shape destinies and the benefits reverberate far beyond an initial act of kindness.

The MMC Foundation Board comprises a group of dedicated volunteers, including current and past parents and caregivers, who bring experience and a deep commitment to the college’s fundraising goals.

Their leadership and dedication exemplify the strong sense of community and commitment that defines Melbourne Montessori College.



**Melissa Schraner**  
Board Chair



**Julian Isaacs**  
Finance Director



**Sonja Felderhof**  
Director



**Hali Halphen**  
Director



**Sascha McGregor**  
Director



**Sarah Turkopp**  
Director



**LJ Ryan**  
Former Chair  
Resigned May 2024



# Melbourne Montessori College

## Donors 2024

Our appreciation and thanks are extended to the following families of the MMC community for their support of Melbourne Montessori College Foundation during 2024.

Thank you for supporting our remarkable students and for making a significant difference to what we can achieve. Whether contributing to scholarships, buildings or other programs, your support shapes and enhances the opportunities for every student.

Ashman Family  
Antonino & Princi Family  
Lisa Bardas  
Birks Family  
Danielle Conroy & Adam Gurney  
Cook & Schraner Family  
Dacal Family

Farrant Family  
Alois Gasser  
Joanne Gay  
Haas Family  
Sarah Hua & Family  
Alex Huang  
Ife & Ezme  
Julian Isaacs

Leadership Victoria  
McGregor Family  
LJ Ryan  
The Jack & Robert Smorgon Families Foundation  
Goran Stefkovski  
Lisa & Beppo Stettwieser

**Thank you to the families wishing to remain anonymous**







**[mmc.vic.edu.au](http://mmc.vic.edu.au)**

**Caulfield Campus**

6 Roselea Street  
Caulfield South VIC 3162

**Brighton Campus**

741 Hawthorn Road  
Brighton East VIC 3187

**Contact Us**

03 9131 5200  
[foundation@mmc.vic.edu.au](mailto:foundation@mmc.vic.edu.au)