

A Brief History

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) is a membership-based, not-for-profit organisation providing professional development and networking opportunities for its members. AGECS members work, or have worked, in the field of Early Childhood education and care and/or they have significantly contributed to the field in other ways.

The Association has a history of 100 years of philanthropic work, which continues through its establishment of the Foundation of Graduates of Early Childhood Studies.

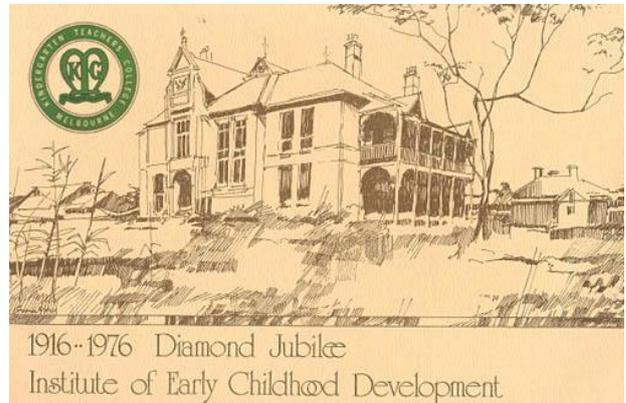
History of the Association

The history of the Association goes back to 1922 when the principal of the Melbourne Kindergarten Training College, Kew, Miss Mary Gutteridge encouraged the students to form the Past Students Association (PSA). Its aim was 'to bring together graduates for the purpose of fellowship, to maintain links with, and to contribute to, the College and to explore ways of establishing a home where deprived children enrolled in the Free Kindergartens could spend a holiday and have their health restored.

In 1926 land was purchased at Forest Hill an outer suburb of Melbourne and a holiday home was established for children from disadvantaged areas from Melbourne's inner suburbs.

In 1937 the Association launched an appeal to raise 4000 pounds for a second holiday home at Forest Hill. Miss Helen Sage a kindergarten teacher conducted the appeal at the offices of an accountant in which Mr Fred Davey was a senior partner. On 30th May as the appeal drew to a close Mr Davey presented to Miss Sage (representing the PSA) the gift of his home 'Ware', in Ringwood East Melbourne, for another holiday home. Later a more comprehensive early childhood complex was built on the extensive property and was named Warrawong.

The establishment of both properties was made possible through the efforts of the members of the PSA who raised money by washing cars, rolling newspapers to sell, gardening, sewing and all types of manual jobs as well as garden parties, dances etc. This group of enthusiastic and innovative young women graduates laid the foundations and



established the ethos of what is now known as the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies.

In 1991 in response to a change in Government policy, Forest Hill was sold and part of the income from the sale was used to establish the Forest Hill Early Childhood Foundation. In 1995 the Foundation granted funds to establish the Mooroolbeek Chair of Early Childhood Studies at the University of Melbourne. In 2003 Warrawong was sold, again due to changes to Government policy. In 2005 The Forest Hill Early Childhood Foundation was renamed The Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies and amended to incorporate the Warrawong Fund.

Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies has always had a philanthropic focus and makes a major financial contribution to early childhood education and care through the Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies. In earlier times it established holiday homes for children from inner city suburbs at Forest Hill and Ringwood. When times changed and government took over providing these kinds of services, the large tracts of land, on which these holiday homes stood, were sold. With the proceeds the Association established a philanthropic trust that distributes funds to projects associated with early childhood education and care.

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies entrusts the management of The Foundation to a Board of Trustees working under a charter to guide their deliberations. The Foundation distributes money through the Forest Hill Fund and the Warrawong Fund. The Charitable Trust has a separate [website](#). Details of past and upcoming grants are available on the AGECS website.

Brief History of the Melbourne Kindergarten Training College

The first Victorian Free Kindergarten was opened in 1901. The need for training for Kindergarten teachers under the auspices of the Free Kindergarten Union was greatly felt, and in 1916 a Training Course was established. In 1921 the number of students entering for training warranted the purchase of Mooroolbeek, a beautiful old property, standing in its own grounds, with a commanding view of Melbourne. The Kindergarten Training College was opened in March, 1922. In 1925 the two-year course of training was extended to three years, thus making the Kindergarten Training College a pioneer of a three-year diploma course for teachers in Victoria. The Melbourne Kindergarten Training College was renamed Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College, and later State College of Victoria: Institute of Early Childhood Development before being absorbed into the University of Melbourne in the 1990s.