



# AGECS

## AGECS 100 Year Anniversary Projects Final Report

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### **Committee**

Helen Baker

Wendy Grenfell

Alexandra Heard

Nichola Marriott

Sophia Patitsas

This report is a summary of the 100 Year Anniversary Projects Committee of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) activities and spending. It was written by Engagement Coordinator Alexandra Heard.

## 1. Final Costings

Final Costings	Costs
<b>The AGECS '100 Years of Excellence' Awards</b> Awards for teachers or educators working in the field who embed excellence in their practice.	
11 x \$200 awards vouchers from social enterprise Magabala Books	\$2,200.00
11 x Award Certificates printed and posted to recipients	\$53.69
<b>AGECS '100 Years of Excellence' Grants</b> Grants of up to \$5000 for small projects that embed high quality practices in early childhood settings. Summaries of grants will be published in a subsequent AUDAX issue.	
31 grants	\$71,804.38
<b>Anniversary Luncheon</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> October luncheon at Epocha. AUDAX Special Edition gifted to each attendee (and each contributor to the journal).	
Set menu \$130 x 22	\$2,750.00
+ Additional cheese selection	\$152.00
+ 10% venue service charge	\$413.10
Drinks by consumption	\$1,229.00
<b>AUDAX Special Edition</b> Printing and postage of a Special Edition of AUDAX.	
Printing (170 copies at \$29 per copy)	\$4,930.00
Postage (138 copies at \$6.20 per copy)	\$855.60
+Additional posting for late addresses (\$4.80 per AUDAX)	\$28.80
<b>Total Costings</b>	<b>\$84,416.57</b>

## **2. 100 Year Anniversary Projects Committee**

The 100 Year Anniversary Projects Committee was formed at the June 2021 Council Meeting. It was originally comprised of Nichola Marriott, Wendy Grenfell and Sophia Patitsas and organised by Engagement Coordinator Alex Heard. Following the 2021 Annual General Meeting, Helen Baker joined the Council and joined the 100 Year Anniversary Projects Committee.

The group met for the first time on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021.

The group quickly established that the 100 Year Anniversary celebrations should not be restricted to a one-off, expensive event. Instead, it was seen as an opportunity to celebrate the sector more broadly. This had the added benefit of a marketing tool to raise name awareness in younger early childhood professionals, meeting AGECS' charitable purpose and adding positive language and celebration to a tired workforce.

Early meetings saw the formation of the plan which included a large event, awards, mini-grants and a Special Edition of AUDAX to tell stories of excellent early childhood professionals over the years.

The group met on a semi-regular basis for the remainder of 2021 and early 2022. They held official meetings on:

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021

27<sup>th</sup> September 2021

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

12<sup>th</sup> September 2022

The group were active on email chains between meetings. Alex took on an administrative role for the group, organising the meetings, collating thoughts, taking minutes and writing budgets and proposals based on the group's ideas.

## **3. 100 Years of Excellence Awards**

The concepts of the grants, the event and the awards were generated in the same initial meeting. The event changed a lot over the course of the committee, but the awards and grants kept their initial structure.

The main purpose of all of the projects was to share the celebrations amongst the general early childhood community, rather than limiting it to the AGECS Council and membership base. Secondary purposes included the name awareness generated for AGECS because

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of the shared celebration projects, but most importantly the committee wanted to raise the self-esteem and professional identity of the workforce. This was identified as crucial due to the ongoing strain on teachers and educators throughout the Covid-19 global pandemic, and also the recognition that the workforce was fatigued and depressed prior to the pandemic.

The '100 Years of Excellence Awards' were then brainstormed as a way to reward excellent teachers and educators, and to generate feelings of gratitude between colleagues or for oneself. The committee wanted teachers and educators to receive both recognition as well as some kind of financial benefit. The group discussed vouchers to social enterprises, and chose Magabala Books, a First Nations online book retailer and publisher. Each awardee was gifted a \$200 Magabala Book Voucher and a signed certificate of excellence (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Certificate of Excellence

The awards were announced at the 2021 Annual General Meeting and closed in February 2022.

The nomination process was a Google Form document with AGECS branding. The Google Form was attached to the [eventscoordinatoragecs@gmail.com](mailto:eventscoordinatoragecs@gmail.com) account. The prompt for the nominations was 'Who are you nominating and how do they embody excellence in their practice?' Nominators were given 200 words to answer this question.

12 nominations were submitted. 11 of those nominations were unique and one was a duplicate. The 11 unique nominations were then reviewed to see that they met the minimum standard, and those that did were automatically approved. All 11 met the minimum standard. The committee considered doing a second round of nomination intakes, but due to the changing conditions around the 100 Year Anniversary event this did not occur. The approvals of the submissions occurred during the mini-grants panel (discussed in the next section), but winners were not informed until much later in the year.

The winners being announced was linked to the celebration event and the Special Anniversary Edition of AUDAX. As the event was continually pushed back, it was not until October 2022 that the winners were informed of their awards. They were then invited to attend the 2022 Annual General Meeting to receive their awards virtually. Certificates were posted in the lead up to the AGM, and Magabala Book vouchers were emailed through at the same time.

The 11 winners were Felicity Morley, Kerrie Gould, Kim Brodribb, Laura Pearce, Louise Fitzpatrick Leach, Melissa Adam, Melissa Mugford, Patricia Beh, Rachael McBrien, Rifka Ash and Sarah Louise Gandolfo.

#### **4. 100 Years of Excellence Mini-Grants**

The 100 Years of Excellence mini-grants were planned and announced at the same time as the 100 Years of Excellence awards. The committee decided on grants of up to \$5000 to help services embed high-quality practices, especially for small projects that may not meet the criteria for other grants. The decision was made to extend the scope of the grants to family day care providers, privately run long day care services, occasional care providers and Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) providers, as these groups are often not eligible for other grants. These groups are also not as engaged with AGECS as an organisation, and the committee hoped that this would help to shift the perception that AGECS is only for stand alone kindergarten services. The only requirement for eligibility was AGECS membership, which is limited to those holding qualifications in early childhood.

As with the awards, the mini-grant applications were submitted via Google Forms attached to the [eventscoordinatoragecs@gmail.com](mailto:eventscoordinatoragecs@gmail.com) account. Applicants were asked to name their project, list the benefits to the children, families and/or the community and to provide an itemised budget. The decision to keep the application process short and simple was twofold. Firstly, it was to ensure that as many people who wanted to apply could apply, as it would not take too much time or mental energy. Secondly, it ensured an efficient approval process for the volunteer panel.

Each applicant also had to agree to supply a post-project story or interview for submission to AUDAX in 2023.

Applications closed on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, and by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 the applications were collated and sent to the panel for a decision by the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The panel was comprised of the committee, excluding Alex due to her role as an AGECS contractor. The panel received individual PDFs of the grant applications, sorted by number in order of date submitted. The panel finalised their grants approvals on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022.

There were 48 grant applications submitted via Google Forms. One submission was a duplicate and eight applications were deemed ineligible due to the AGECS membership requirement. The eight applicants were reached out to: one was deemed ineligible as they did not have the requisite qualification to apply for AGECS membership and the other seven were not members and did not respond to emails requesting they apply for membership. This left the panel with 39 grants to review. Of those 39 applications, 32 grants were approved for full or partial funding. The seven grant applications that were unsuccessful were deemed so due to their itemised budgets, with applications either not submitting a budget or submitting a budget that did not align with the proposed outcomes of the project.

Once the grants were approved Alex reached out to each successful applicant, informing them of the approved amount and giving the services the opportunity to turn down the grant if they could not complete the project with partial funding. Only one applicant turned down the grant funding, and this was due to a role change meaning she could no longer undertake the project. Alex then took on the administrative role of collating service payment details and passing this on to the Treasurer Sophia Patitsas and Bookkeeper Trevor Jewell to be paid.

31 grant payments were made to the sum of \$71,804.38.

The successful applications are listed in Appendix 1, service name, project name and funding amount. Applicant name has been removed from this public version of the document.

Wendy and Alex will reach out to these applicants in the beginning of 2023 to collect submissions for the 2023 Autumn and 2023 Spring editions of AUDAX.

## 5. AUDAX Special Anniversary Edition

The AUDAX Special Edition was conceptualised during the planning of the celebratory event. As Editor of AUDAX, Wendy wanted a special edition of the journal that assembled the stories of 100 excellent teachers and educators from the past 100 years.

The committee understood the necessity of a stand-alone event to celebrate the 100 Year Anniversary of AGECS. However, due to AGECS's status as a charitable organization, the committee wanted to ensure that the event had a dual purpose. The event will be discussed in full detail in Section 6 (below). As such, the initial plan was that the special edition would be launched at the anniversary event. This was planned to coincide with the regular Autumn release of AUDAX. This proved to be ambitious, both for AUDAX and for the celebratory event.

Early in 2022, as a result of the ever-present risk of Covid-19 super spreader events, the committee chose to delay the event to the second half of 2022. This gave Wendy more time to collect stories and also reimagine the special edition. It was quickly established that 100 stories would be both difficult to collect and difficult to edit and print, so the benchmark of 50 stories was set. Wendy then reached out to former colleagues and other early childhood professionals she knew, to collect stories. Wendy also requested each Council member submit a story. In April, Alex then included a 'call cut for contributors' in the AGECS newsletter inForm, and continued to do this until part way through the year. Between them Wendy and Alex were able to collect 52 stories for inclusion in the special edition. A small number of these were posthumous articles repurposed from other publications, with approval. The collection of stories lasted from January 2022 to September 2022, at which point Alex and Wendy had to start editing the first draft so that they would be able to print by late October for the celebratory event. This process took longer than anticipated, as over the weeks more stories were being submitted or discovered.

As the stories were being collected, it was also decided that with the special edition it was time for AUDAX to get an updated look and format. Fortunately, during 2022 the AGECS Council undertook a rebranding process with company Percept. AGECS was supplied with new graphic devices, logos, images and fonts. Alex used these to create a new template for AUDAX (see Appendix 2). The design was sent to Wendy for approval. As the fonts were limited to contractor devices, it was decided that Wendy would collate all the stories into a word document and send to Alex for the final edit, to ensure cohesive design.

Alex and Wendy had an in-person meeting on the Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September to work on the first draft and establish a timeline to get AUDAX printed before the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Alex received the first draft on 20<sup>th</sup> September and the final draft was sent to Scott's Prints on the 10<sup>th</sup> October. Scott's Prints in Carlton are the service that print and post all of AGECS' official documents. Each copy cost \$29.00 to print and \$6.20 to post. A copy was printed

for the existing hard copy mail out list of 114 people, and we decided to print and deliver copies for all of the contributors and for the guests at the celebratory event. We also printed extra copies for archiving. All up 170 copies were printed, and 138 of those copies were posted. The remainder were either hand delivered or archived.

## **6. AGECS Anniversary Luncheon**

The 100 Year Anniversary event changed a lot from the beginning of the committee to the end. The original idea was to hold a large event to celebrate the sector and particularly those who had long term relationships with AGECS. The original date for this event was going to be April/May 2022. As previously mentioned, this was to align with the Autumn edition of AUDAX.

There were issues with booking spaces and developing a guest list of 100 plus people. As the event drew nearer, and Covid-19 cases were still very high, the committee made the decision to postpone the event to October 2022. This allowed more time to plan the event and set a number of goals for the purpose of the event, to align with AGECS charitable status.

The following objectives for the event were set:

- To celebrate the 'go getters' of the past and present, in line with the AUDAX special edition
- To educate attendees with informative speeches/presentations
- To increase membership numbers / awareness of AGECS
- To increase awareness of The Fellowship Grant
- To increase awareness of AUDAX

Many of the goals of the event also aligned with the goals of other projects. Fortunately, this meant that when the nature of the event changed, the objectives were still met.

In September the committee decided to cancel the large event. Following the pandemic, in person events were still very new in September, and many had decreased numbers, in part due to the enormous stress the sector was under regarding workforce shortages, illnesses and burn out. The concern was that AGECS would not only waste money on a larger event, but that there would be a lot of food wastage as well. As such, the 100 Year Anniversary Luncheon was planned.

The event was a small, invite only luncheon with some minimal formalities on the 29<sup>th</sup> October from 12pm onwards. The venue Epocha in Carlton was chosen after RSVPs were received, with the decision including its proximity to parking and public transport options as well as number of attendees. The committee made a guest list of 47 people, based on past or present relationships with AGECS. This included Council, Trustees, contractors,



advisory boards and past Council members from 2012–2022. We set this time frame for past Council members as we could not find a comprehensive list of past AGECS Council members, and did not want to risk inviting some and missing others. See Appendix 3 for the list of invitees and attendees.

There were minimal formalities on the day. Aboriginal Cultural Consultant AJ Williams-Tchen provided an Acknowledgement of Country. President Sarah O'Donnell, Trustee Ray Bullen and Committee member Wendy Grenfell provided brief speeches about AGECS, from their own unique role perspectives.

The event was a successful day, with 22 of the 23 respondents attending. The feedback generated on the day and after was all extremely positive.

## **7. 100 Year Anniversary Webpage**

The final element of the 100 year anniversary projects was the webpage. This was a late project, undertaken by Alex. In 2021 Dorothy Connop delivered boxes of historical photos and documents from AGECS to Alex's address. Throughout 2022 Alex went through these boxes, documenting interesting historical elements. Not wanting this work to be wasted, Alex determined that a webpage that featured the history, the present and the future of AGECS would be a digital historical document that could be shared with the community more broadly.

The webpage will be launched in December 2022 to close out the anniversary year.

## **8. Outcomes from the 100 Year Anniversary Projects**

Although the following cannot all be attributed to the 100 Year Anniversary Projects, it can be assumed that a high percentage of new memberships and 'follows' on social media in 2022 were a result of the grants and other anniversary projects. Those applying for grants had to be AGECS members, and the anniversary projects gave our social media channels content to be shared across a large network of early childhood professional communities.

The mini-grants also have future benefits, as we will have content from all successful applicants to share in AUDAX and inForm, regarding their projects. This will hopefully see a rise in the uptake of the Fellowship for Leadership and Change Program.

The other outcomes generated from the committee are the resources that were made specifically for the anniversary. In particular, AUDAX and the webpage. Both of these items are resources that are historical documents. They are also shareable documents which will help generate name awareness of AGECS. This name awareness will increase

engagement with AGECS charitable purposes, either through attendance at free professional learning events, use of other resources or application for grants.

## Appendix 1

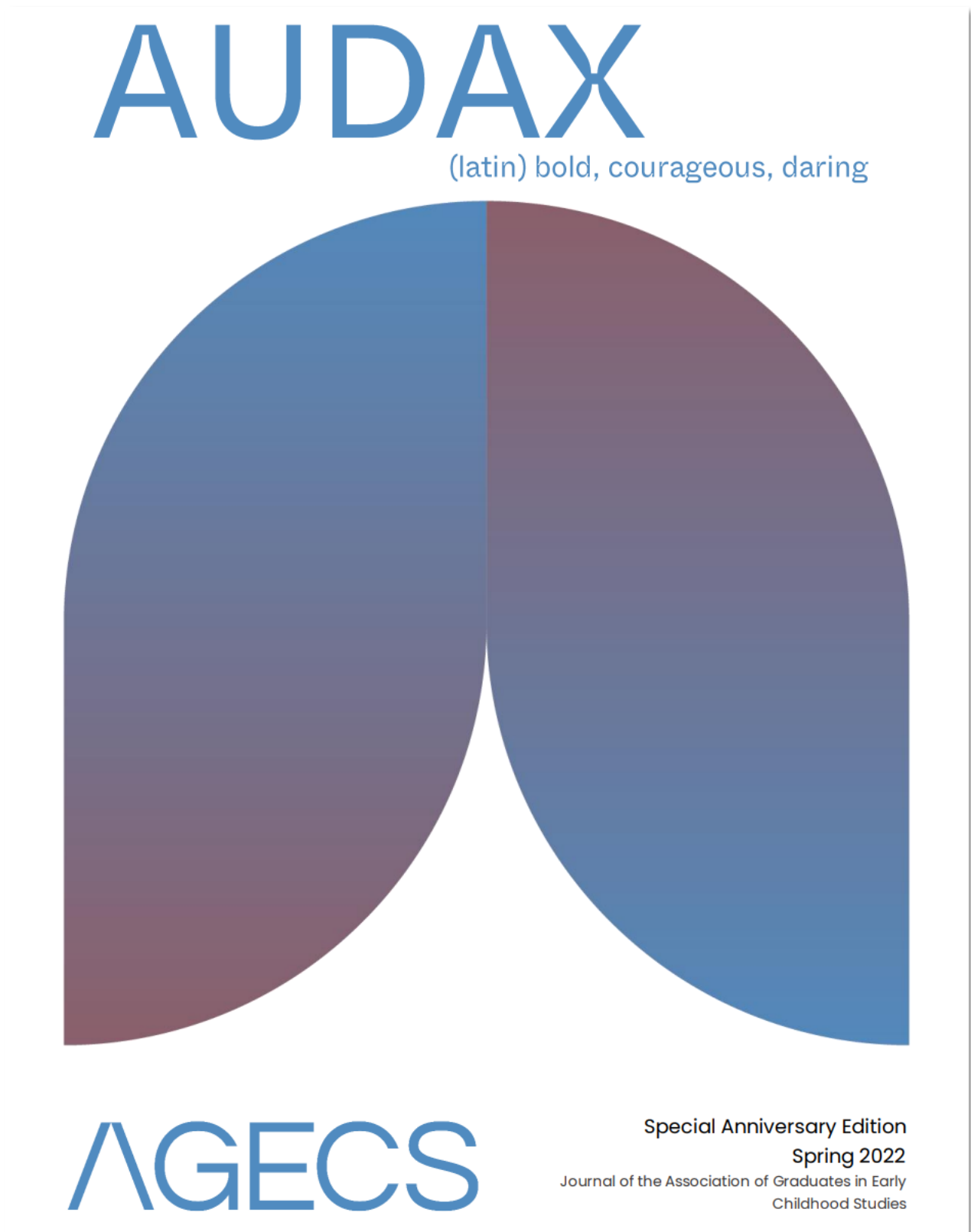
### 100 Year Anniversary Grant Recipients List

<b>Service Name</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Acacia Indochinese Children Centre Incorporated</b>	Curriculum Coaching Project	\$2,500
<b>Nathalia Community ELC</b>	Outdoor Wellbeing	\$2,000
<b>Pope Road Pre-school Ass.</b>	Truth Telling, Culture and Language	\$800
<b>NCC Early Learners Buderim</b>	Full STEAM Ahead	\$2,000
<b>Balnarring Preschool</b>	Bundjil Nest Project	\$1,200
<b>Rye Preschool</b>	Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives - Booster	\$1,150
<b>Goodstart Rosebud Boneo Road</b>	Sensory Room	\$2,000
<b>Kangaroo Ground Preschool Inc.</b>	No Such Thing as Bad Weather	\$2,550
<b>St Peter's Kindergarten</b>	Reconciliation in Action	\$2,300
<b>Carrum Family and Children's Centre</b>	A Safe Place to Live and Be	\$2,000
<b>Lilian Cannam Kindergarten</b>	Celebrating 100 Years	\$1,500
<b>Braybrook ELC</b>	Deepening Indigenous Knowledge and Connections	\$2,000
<b>Goodstart Operating</b>	Street Library and Street Pantry	\$800
<b>Early Childhood Intervention Australia VIC/TAS</b>	Best Practices in ECI Guidelines Information Sheet Translation	\$2,500
<b>Killarney Vale Preschool Kindergarten Inc.</b>	Sun Safety for All	\$2,500
<b>Uniting Victoria and Tasmania</b>	Bike Track and Yard Repair	\$4,500

<b>City of Yarra</b>	Sensory Play and Trauma	\$1,829.38
<b>Meruka Childcare Cooperative</b>	Bring it Outdoors	\$2,500
<b>Jack and Jill Kindergarten Berowra</b>	ECS Learning Hub Training	\$3,175
<b>Early Childhood Management Services Incorporate</b>	Coaching the Coach – Unlocking Potential	\$5,000
<b>Explore and Develop Lilyfield</b>	Soulful Art: Connecting our Hands, Hearts and Minds	\$3,000
<b>Occasional Child Care Centre Diamond Creek Inc</b>	Building Secure Attachments with Infants	\$5,000
<b>Glenroy Memorial Preschool Centre</b>	Inclusive Practices	\$1,000
<b>Cawongla Playhouse Incorporated</b>	Children and Community: Action Research Project	\$2,000
<b>Robina Scott Kindergarten</b>	Connecting with Country	\$3,100
<b>Kinglake Ranges Children’s Centre</b>	KRCC Aspiring Towards Excellence Conference	\$3,500
<b>Western Sydney University Early Learning Penrith</b>	Child Wellbeing Space	\$1,200
<b>Western Sydney University Early Learning Parramatta</b>	Robotic Technology and Enhancing Children’s Digital Literacy	\$2,500
<b>Western Sydney University Early Learning Blacktown</b>	Wellbeing for Young Children – Creating Calm Environments	\$2,000
<b>Gowrie Broadmeadows</b>	Connecting to Country and Community	\$2,500
<b>Brimbank Pre School Association</b>	Sensory and Sustainability Grant	\$1,200

## Appendix 2

### Rebranded AUDAX Template Front Cover



## Appendix 3

### AGECS 100 Year Anniversary Luncheon Guest List

Guest List	29. J Dunn
Contractors	30. A Broughton
1. L Potter	31. T Brooks
2. A Heard	32. P Jewell
3. A Williams-Tchen	33. H Holden
4. K Douglas	34. C Koch
5. B James	
6. T Jewell	Trustees
Council	35. M Wiggins
7. S O'Donnell	36. H Hodges
8. L Farquhar	37. K Fell
9. N Marriott	38. M Paleologoudias
10. S Patitsas	39. R Bullen
11. W Grenfell	40. T Lawson
12. H Baker	41. K Weston
13. S McCarthy-Wilson	Warrawong Advisory Committee
14. A Dore	42. A Houghton
15. Dr S Emmett	43. A Saunders
16. Prof B Raban	44. K Margetts
17. E Boag	45. R Holmes
18. J Fitzgibbon	46. J Visscher
Fellowship Advisory Committee	47. S Clarke
19. Prof C Campbell	
20. Prof A Nolan	
Forest Hill	NO RESPONSE 15
21. S Cleeve	RSVP YES 23
22. G Ryan	RSVP NO 12
23. G Grummett	
24. A Follacchio	
25. M Cruz	
Past Council 2012 – 2022	
26. D Connop	
27. G Shelley	
28. A McHugh	