



The Australian Association for flexible & inclusive education

- 2022 / 2023 -



The Australian Association for Flexible and Inclusive Education acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country, and their connection to land, water and community. We acknowledge that these lands have always been places of education and we pay our respect to them, their cultures and customs, and to Elders past, and present, and we acknowledge the emerging young people, who play a significant role in the community of Flexible and Inclusive Education Programs.



About Us

AAFIE is the home for all educators, researchers, and policy makers with a shared commitment to providing successful educational opportunities and pathways for young people who have experienced barriers to completing school education.

AAFIE supports the Flexible and Inclusive Education sector who support young people to learn and succeed!

AAFIE Aspiration Statement

At AAFIE, our fundamental belief is all young people, regardless of postcode, have equal access to inclusive, positive future focused educational opportunities, specific to their needs.

AAFIE understands that flexible and inclusive learning programs come in many shapes and forms, but they have in common a desire to change the way schooling is provided to better suit young people for whom traditional schooling approaches have not worked well.

We understand that a young person's access to educational opportunities does not exist in isolation, in fact, education is a central part of the ecology of a young person's life. This eco-system is unique and relies on the support of a broad range of providers to function successfully. For this reason, AAFIE recognises that all young people have the right to:

- A home. Safe, affordable and suitable accommodation
- Relationships that are safe and supportive
- Health care that is tailored and specific to developmental needs
- Mental, physical and spiritual support services
- To be treated fairly by all systems who are charged with responsibility to provide care – youth justice and child protection.



Welcome from the Co-Chairs

We write these words today on the lands of the Gubbi Gubbi nation (Dale Murray) and Muwinina people (Kitty te Riele). We pay our respect to elders past, present, emerging.

Hi AAFIE community, thank you for your commitment to the young people of this nation. For being in relationship with them, for walking alongside them, for respecting their knowledges, for respecting country and community, for your empathy, your care, your shared wisdom.

Thank you for spending time together at Doing School Differently, for listening to the podcasts, for engaging with our developing Special Interest and Working Groups, for your comments and feedback.

Thank you for making AAFIE a place where we as a community can wrangle the persistent problems of systemic barriers, a place where children and young people are at the centre and have voice, a place we as a community are growing to provide a strong voice for change, for inclusion, for flexibility. This is our collective place, a safe place that holds divergent views and celebrates innovation, a place we, as co Board Chairs, encourage all members to participate in, to extend invitation to others, to make part of your places of work, your conversation, your pedagogy and to share.

Professor Kitty te Riele & Mr. Dale Murray

The AAFIE Board



Pictured: Mr. Simon Vaughan, Professor Kitty te Riele, Mr. Dale Murray, Associate Professor Glenda McGregor, Ms Megan Hall & Dr. John Davis.

Absent: Professor Julian Sefton-Green & Dr. Peter Reynolds

Thank you to the valued members of the AAFIE Board. It is owing to their hard work, and commitment to the vision of AAFIE that we continue to thrive and raise the profile of the

important educational opportunities that Flexible and Alternative programs provide for Australia's young people.

This year the Board came together in Queensland to develop a strategic plan to guide our work for the coming years. The key priority areas identified were:

- Young People Voice
- Professional leadership
- Membership
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice
- Profile of AAFIE
- Communications (internal/external)
- Governance

We look forward to progressing this work to grow and strengthen AAFIE into the future as Australia's Peak Body for Flexible and Inclusive Education.



This year we farewell Dr. Peter Reynolds, one of AAFIE's original Directors. Thank you, Peter for your commitment to AAFIE and for providing invaluable support and advice to the Board over many years.

AAFIE Board Directors 2022/23

Co-Chair/Director - Prof. Kitty te Riele (TAS)

Co- Chair/ Director- Mr Dale Murray (QLD)

Director - Dr. Peter Reynolds (WA)

Director - Prof. Julian Sefton-Green (VIC)

Director – Mr Simon Vaughan (ACT)

Director – Associate Professor Glenda McGregor (QLD)

Director – Dr. John Davis

Executive Officer – Megan Hall (QLD)

AAFIE Members



AAFIEs activities focus on promoting the diverse work of professionals and young people who engage, work in and alongside the Flexible and Inclusive education settings across Australia.

With the support of our knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate membership, AAFIE advocates, collaborates and influences education in Australia.

Our aim is to provide agency, voice and identity for young people and professionals within the Flexible and Inclusive Australian educational landscape and we do not walk this path alone.

AAFIE's current membership structure consists of: Individual, Organisational, Student/unwaged, Silver, Bronze, Gold and Supporter members.

To date, AAFIE members are a mix of students, individual and organisations. We continue to see steady gains in membership, which will continue as we approach our 2024 Doing School Differently Conference.

We aspire for FY23/24 to provide more opportunities for our members to take up further active roles in the business of AAFIE and with the development of our newest SIG – Music.

Thank you for your continued support!

AAFIE Queensland Reception

Early in 2023, AAFIE hosted a small networking event at the Hope Café in Brisbane's South, a wonderful social enterprise offering supported pathways to training, employment, and community connection.

The evening was attended by members of AAFIE, and friends from the youth sector in Queensland.



It had been a vision of AAFIE to host small networking events around Australia pre-covid times. While this event was an opportunity coinciding with the Board planning days, it demonstrated the importance of coming together in-person, and we hope to be able to host further events in the future.



The Australian Charities & Not-for-profit Commission



AAFIE is compliant to the Australian Charities and Non-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). Part of this accountability requires meeting ACNC governance standards. The Governance Standards are a set of core minimum standards that deal with how charities are run (including their processes, activities and relationships) – their governance. They help charities remain trusted by the public and continue to do their charitable work. Because the Governance Standards are a set of high-level principles, not precise rules, a charity must decide how it will comply with them.

For AAFIE our focus is:

- Keeping accurate records
- Reporting annually
- Maintaining our charity status

AAFIE reports our activities annually to the ACNC. In 2022/23, AAFIE continues to monitor its governance responsibilities and uses a framework to guide our compliance. We made a commitment to strengthen our policies and procedures this year, and have completed this task with an external contractor, who has placed AAFIE in a sound governance position. We are aware of the ever-changing landscape of compliance and we have committed to upskilling the Board with Company Directors training, delivered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors in FY23/24.

AAFIE continues to maintain its Registered Charity Tick. The Tick is recognition from the ACNC that gives reassurance to the public that the Charity is transparent and accountable and listed on the ACNC Charity Register.

In the 2022/23 financial year, our audit was conducted by Haywards Chartered Accountants.

AAFIE in Conversation



Our Podcast show 'AAFIE in Conversation' continued to grow in strength in 2022/23. Each episode takes an informal conversation style approach to discussing topics that we can all share, learn and grow from.

In 2022/23 we produced the following episodes:

- The School for Nomads ft. Mr. Richard O'Neill
- Trauma Informed Practice & Pedagogy ft Professor Karen Martin
- Voice to Parliament- ft the Young People from Canberra College, joined by Dr. John Davis, Brydie Zorz, Scott Gorringer and words of wisdom and support from Ngunnawal elder Auntie Violet Sheridan.



Special Interest & Working Groups

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are designed to involve a broad range of people in the work of the AAFIE. SIGs allow members to become more actively involved in AAFIE and aim to provide an avenue to explore and deepen member interest in areas of practice, policy and planning. Accordingly, the role of SIGs will vary depending on topic and purpose; however, the overarching role is to ensure that the vision of AAFIE is central and draws on the expertise of the membership to progress its work.

Working Groups are important to the business of the Association and focus on working with the Board rather than with the broader AAFIE Membership.

In 2022/23 AAFIE made progress towards supporting SIGs and Working Groups and will continue this important piece of work.

Flexible Learning Options Database



During this year AAFIE upgraded the Flexible Learning Options Database that resides within the AAFIE webpage.

This geo-located map is an important resource for the sector, and community to locate flexible and inclusive education programs nationally.

We acknowledge that not all programs may be captured in the database, however all programs that are captured have accurate information. We welcome AAFIE members and friends to add programs they know about that are not listed yet, by clicking on <https://aafie.org.au/national-flexible-learning-options-program-database/>

Submissions

AAFIE made submission, with its members into the Australian Government Senate Education Reference Committee Inquiry into “The issue of increasing disruption in Australian Classrooms”.

We were also invited to present at the Public Hearing of the Inquiry. Co-Chair, Mr. Dale Murray represented AAFIE on this occasion.

The AAFIE submission is accessible here:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/DASC/Public_Hearings



Research

AAFIE is honoured to be involved in the following research projects:

- **The GrandSchools Project funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).** This Project acts upon the recommendations from the Inquiry into the Quality of Care and Residential Aged Care in Australia IQCRAC (2018) by developing an inter-generational model for senior living within school campuses in consultation with industry partners. Researchers: QUT, ACU, Deakin with Futon Trotter Architects with Industry Partners: AAFIE, Lutheran Services, Redeemer Lutheran College, Wesley Mission, Minx Architecture, Association for Learning Environments.
More information: <https://grandschoolsproject.wordpress.com/about/>
- **Australian Research Council Linkage Project - Supporting teachers and teaching in flexible and non-traditional schools serving vulnerable young people.** This project is undertaking research into the underrepresented teaching workforce in flexible and non-tradition schools in Australia. Researchers: Griffith University, Southern Cross University, QUT. Partner Organisations: AAFIE, Jabiru Community College and The Youth Inc. Enterprise Academy.
More information: <https://blogs.griffith.edu.au/alt-ed-teachers/project/>

Future Directions & Strategy

AAFIE is committed to building on our reputation and presence as the champions for flexible and inclusive education. There is a need for a national voice to amplify the work of this significant sector in the education landscape. Flexible and Inclusive programs are the leaders in educational innovation and as such AAFIE provides support to this sector, as we advocate with courage and highlight the strengths and needs of the flexible learning sector and the young people it supports.

Moving forward, our focus will be on:

- Doing School Differently 2024 – Sofitel Hotel Brisbane, June 20th & 21st 2024.
- Special Interest and Working Groups of AAFIE to support the critical policy and practice pieces that emerge from these groups
- Production of further AAFIE Conversation Podcast Episodes and the AAFIE Inclusively Inspired newsletter to showcase and share the wealth of wisdom and knowledge.
- Examining our current practices and cultivate an organisation that is culturally safe with authentic embedded Indigenous perspectives and ways of doing into our practice.
- Seeking support and guidance to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan to guide our ways of doing and being.
- Providing voice for the sector through contribution to the national conversation
- Building partnerships and connections to extend the reach of AAFIE across sectors
- Continue our work alongside of partners in Research opportunities that benefit the sector.