



**aafie**  
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

# ANNUAL REPORT

*2021/2022*

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*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.*

# Introduction to AAFIE

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 need
- 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 Mouheneenner people (Kitty te Riele). We pay our respect to elder's past, present, emerging.

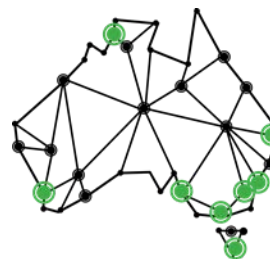
Hi AAFIE community, thank you for your commitment to the young people of this nation. For being in relationship with them, for walking alongside them, for respecting their knowledges, for respecting country and community, for your empathy, your care, your shared wisdom.

Thank you for spending time together this year 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 centred 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.

*Kitty & Dale*



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# The AAFIE Board

AAFIE acknowledges the important role that our Board Directors play in the operation of the organisation to progress its goals. Building and growing AAFIE relies on the dedication, knowledge, and connection of the Directors to progress our commitment to raising the profile of and supporting the important work of the Flexible and Inclusive Education sector who support young people to learn and succeed.

*Thank you AAFIE's Directors, for what has been a challenging yet positive year for the organisation*

## AAFIE Board Directors 2020/21

Co-Chair - Prof. Kitty te Riele (TAS)  
Co-Chair - Dale Murray (QLD)  
Director - Dr. Peter Reynolds (WA)  
Director - Prof. Julian Sefton-Green (VIC)  
Director - Simon Vaughan (ACT)  
Director - Dr. Glenda McGregor (QLD)  
Executive Officer – Megan Hall (QLD)

During the 2021/22 financial year, AAFIE welcomed Dr. John Davis to the AAFIE Board. Dr. Davis is the former CEO of the Stronger Smarter Institute, now Director of Riteways and Senior Research Fellow at Deakin - Indigenous Knowledge Systems Lab.

AAFIE is grateful to John for joining us, and we look forward to walking with him to examine and embed Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives into the work of AAFIE.





# AAFIE Members

AAFIE is building a steady momentum with regards to its membership. All delegates at DSD2022 were automatically given 12 months membership to AAFIE and we are excited to have so many new faces in our Flexi community.

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

To date, AAFIE has 569 members, a mix of students, individual and organisational members. a significant increase on 2020/21. We feel positive about being in an increased position move into the next phase (post DSD2022) of support and advocacy and provide more opportunities to connect with our Membership.

We are eager to support our members to take more active roles in the business of AAFIE moving forward. This is an exciting phase for us, and we look forward to hearing your voice in the coming months.



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# *The Australian Charities & Not-for-profit Commission*

AAAFIE 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, your 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 2021/22, AAFIE continues to monitor its governance responsibilities and uses a framework to guide our compliance. We are seeking to strengthen our policies and procedures in the coming year.

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 2021/22 financial year, our audit was conducted by Haywards Chartered Accountants.



# Doing School Differently 2022

After a long-anticipated wait, we were overjoyed to deliver our Doing School Differently (DSD) Conference in-person! DSD is the pinnacle event hosted by AAFIE and is focused on bringing together a range of participants from across education and academia, social work, psychology, wellbeing, community, family, youth services and Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse specific practitioners to discuss the spectrum of flexible and alternative learning options for young people who do not always find engagement with mainstream systems easy.

We have hosted DSD in 2016 in Melbourne and 2018 on the Gold Coast and have seen more than 1000 delegates attend and delivered a range of offerings, including Masterclasses, Keynote presentations yarning space and workshops presented by a diverse group of local and international speakers.

DSD2022 was held in Adelaide, on Kurna Country on 30 June – 1 July 2022 and was attended by more than 400 delegates from all over Australia, including teachers, youth workers, First Nations support workers, policy makers and researchers.

The conference was opened with a Welcome to Country by Senior Kurna Man, Mickey Kumatpi O'Brien, who noted how the area that is now Adelaide has always been a meeting place for exchanging knowledge and learning from others.

There were four keynote presentations by: Helen Connelly, Commissioner for Children and Young People in South Australia, Dr Tom Brunzell, Director of Education at Berry Street, Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney, University of South Australia and Dr John Davis, Riteways and Deakin University, Dr Luci Pangrazio, Deakin University.

The program, as in previous years showcased the innovative work of those in the Flexible and Inclusive Education sector. Over the 2-day conference, delegates were treated to over 60 opportunities within the program to engage with their peers, hear new and wonderful ideas to 'do school differently' and share practice wisdoms in a safe, supported, and fun environment. We also had time to relax and unwind with a social mingle after a big day 1 conference program.

We were of course saddened that Aunty Thelma Parker couldn't be with us in 2022 to share the yarning space. However, we all know that there have been many bumps in the road over the last few years, and our health and wellbeing must be prioritised. We do note that this was a significant gap in this year's program. Aunty we missed you.

We were also honoured to host an amazing panel of local Adelaide young people on day two. These young folk joined us from Special Assistance School for Youth and Youthinc. Thank you also goes to Fred and Rose from Youthinc and Dave and Allira from SASY for supporting these young folk through the process. Presenting to a large conference can be intimidating and these young people were absolute pros.



We thank Taila- Jane, Lily, Jazz, Red, Ash and Tai – we thank you for your honesty, bravery and generosity of spirit to be with us at DSD. We know that really hearing the voice of young people is bottom line the most important aspect of the work we do.

A large-scale conference like DSD takes many hands, and we thank you all for all that you brought to the space. Thank you to our Young People, Keynote Speakers, Presenters, Delegates, Sponsors, AAFIE Board and the Conference Planners.

Thank you for your generosity of wisdom and spirit, thank you for the joy and love you brought to the space, thank you for the connection and for reigniting our Flexi Community after a few years hiatus. We are humbled to be walking this journey with such amazing people. Thank you for ‘Doing School Differently’, we know our young people are in the best hands.





# AAFIE in Conversation

Our Podcast show 'AAFIE in Conversation' was originally introduced as a response to a global pandemic and the cancellation of all in-person events, however the show continued to grow in strength in 2021/22. Each episode takes an informal conversation style approach to discussing topics that we can all share, learn and grow from.

Adding to the 3 podcasts we produced in 2021, 2 additional episodes were produced in 2021/22,

Ep. 4 – Supporting re-entry for in-person learning: Rhythms, Routines and strategies to support our young people Ft. Dr Tom Brunzell.

Ep. 5 – A Special Interest Group for AAFIE & What's on at DSD2022



## We're Doing School Differently

AAFIE introduced a further show – 'We're Doing School Differently' in to build momentum towards the DSD conference.

Ep. 1 - DSD2022 Insights with Commissioner Helen Connolly

Ep. 2 - DSD2022 Insights with Professor Martin Mills, Dr. Aspa Baroutsis and Dr. Glenda McGregor

Ep. 3 DSD2022 Insights with Dr Luci Pangrazio

Ep. 4 - DSD2022 insights with Dr Tom Brunzell



## Town Hall

In late 2021, AAFIE hosted a virtual Town Hall led by the topic: Fairness – what is it to be fair, and how can we create, promote and nature fairness in our communities.

This open space forum, facilitated by Nick Johns of Social Ventures Australia provided opportunity for members to yarn together and connect in a alternative space with common ground and focus. We extend our thanks to Nick for his continued support of AAFIE.



# Special Interest 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.

First steps are being taken presently to form the following SIGs of AAFIE:

- The Voice of Young People in flexis
- Curriculum to enable accredited outcomes
- Post-flexi Pathways
- Supporting Parenting Young People in flexis

We thank Youthinc & SASY, Dr. Andrew Bills, Nigel Howard, Kirra Greaves, Racheal Radvanyi and Glen Rowe for their support with progressing these Special Interest Groups for AAFIE members.

## Working Groups

Working Groups are groups of members who support AAFIE as an Association.

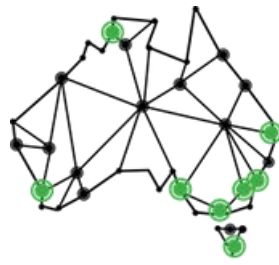
The role/purpose of a Working Group should be seen as important to the business of the Association and focusses on working with the Board rather than with the broader AAFIE Membership.

First steps are being taken presently to form the following Working Group of AAFIE:

- Advocacy in the Flexible and Inclusive Education Sector.

Thank you Dr. Robbie Lloyd, Dr. Glenda McGregor and Simon Vaughan for supporting our members with this working group of the Board.





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# *Future Directions*

AAFIE is committed to building on our reputation and presence as the champions for flexible and inclusive education. We know that there needs to be a national vehicle to ensure that this significant sector in the education landscape has voice and is seen as leaders in educational innovation.

We believe that AAFIE can provide this 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:

- Further development of Special Interest and Working Groups of AAFIE and support the critical policy and practice pieces that emerge from these groups
- Continue to produce our AAFIE Conversation Podcast to showcase the wealth wisdom and knowledge
- Examine our current practices, and cultivate an organisation that is culturally safe with authentic embedded Indigenous perspectives and ways of doing into our practice
- Seek support and guidance to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan to guides our ways of doing
- Supporting the development of policy positions and establish a robust advocacy platform and pathway
- Build partnerships and connections to extend the reach of AAFIE across sectors
- Start planning for DSD2024