



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AAFIE acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn, and work. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present, and we recognise the enduring connection that First Nations peoples hold with Country – to land, waters, skies, and community.

As educators, we honour the world's oldest living cultures by listening, learning, and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise that teaching and learning have always been part of Country – where knowledge has been shared through story, language, and connection across generations.

In our work to educate future generations, we are guided by these traditions of care, respect, and shared learning. We commit to nurturing environments where all young people can grow strong in identity, spirit, and purpose – learning from the wisdom of the past to create a more just and connected future.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

We begin by acknowledging the lands on which we write—those of the Gubbi Gubbi nation (Dale Murray) and the Muwinina people (Kitty te Riele). We honour and pay deep respect to Elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise the enduring wisdom and strength of First Nations communities.

To our incredible AAFIE community—thank you. Thank you for standing beside young people, for walking with them through challenge and triumph, for listening deeply to their stories, and for honouring their knowledge, their communities, and their cultures. Your empathy, your care, and your unwavering commitment are the heartbeat of this movement.

Whether you contributed to Special Interest Group, listened to a podcast episode, participated in the Data Collaboration Project, shared your insights and feedback or read our monthly newsletter (and clicked on a few links), — you've helped shape AAFIE into a vibrant, inclusive space for collective action.

Together, we are tackling the persistent barriers in education. We are building a place where young people are not only supported but centred—where their voices guide our work. AAFIE is becoming a powerful platform for change, for inclusion, and for flexibility.

This is your space. A space for innovation, for diverse perspectives, for courageous conversations. As Co-Chairs, we invite you to keep growing this community—bring others in, embed AAFIE's values in your practice, and continue sharing your wisdom.

Let's keep doing school differently—together.

Kitty & Dale



OUR STORY SO FAR



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!

OUR ASPIRATION

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.

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 including a safe home, safe and supportive relationships, health care specific to their needs, mental, physical and spiritual supports, fair treatment by all systems.

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 a knowledgeable, experienced and passionate membership, AAFIE will advocate, collaborate and influence 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.

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.

2024/25 HIGHLIGHTS

Data Analysis for Flexible & Inclusive Education

During the year AAFIE and Latitude Network launched the Flexi Data Collaboration Project, a data collaboration initiative designed to transform how flexible and inclusive education providers understand and improve their impact. This pioneering effort brings together schools across the sector to share insights, benchmark performance, and drive strategic change through data.

This Project empowers educators with interactive dashboards, live benchmarks, and deep-dive analytics that illuminate student needs, program outcomes, and sector-wide trends. By securely aggregating anonymised data, the project enables participants to answer critical questions—like what’s working, where gaps exist, and how to better support young people.

Foundation Phase

1. **Establishing a secure data infrastructure with monthly updates and AI-supported alerts.**
2. **Launching quarterly Learning Labs to foster shared learning and sector-wide reflection.**
3. **Delivering custom dashboards for each organisation, tailored to their strategic and operational needs.**
4. **The development of the first *State of the Sector* report, offering a panoramic view of service delivery, demand, and outcomes across Australia.**

The Project is more than a data project—it’s a movement toward a data-empowered social sector, where collaboration fuels innovation and evidence drives advocacy. With a strong governance model and a commitment to privacy, the Project sets a new standard for ethical, impactful data use in education.

Strategic Communications for Impact: Think HQ & AAFIE

During the year, AAFIE partnered with Think HQ, a leading strategic communications agency, to elevate its national presence and amplify its voice in the flexible and inclusive education sector. With the upcoming Doing School Differently conference in 2026 as a key milestone, AAFIE sought expert support to refine its messaging, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and build a sustainable communications strategy and profile for the sector.

This partnership ensures AAFIE’s messaging is not only strategic and consistent but also co-designed with the very people who will use it—making it authentic, actionable, and impactful.

BOARD LEADERSHIP & STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the AAFIE Board Directors for their unwavering commitment and allyship. Their dedication to our shared vision continues to elevate the profile of Flexible and Inclusive Education across Australia.

It is through their strategic insight and tireless advocacy that AAFIE thrives—championing educational pathways that meet the diverse needs of young people who have been underserved by traditional schooling models.

Guided by our strategic plan, the Board remains focused on key priorities: strengthening professional leadership within the sector, amplifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through inclusive governance, and mobilising collective action through Special Interest Groups and localised community connections.

These efforts ensure that AAFIE remains a dynamic force for change, innovation, and equity in education. The year ahead is filled with promise and momentum.

In 2025, we proudly welcomed Ms Chloe Hand to the Board. Chloe brings a wealth of experience from the education and youth justice sectors. Her work in creating alternative education pathways for disengaged youth has reshaped possibilities for many. As a passionate advocate and leader of Blended with EREA, Chloe continues to inspire and drive forward new initiatives that expand choice and opportunity for young learners.

Pictured Megan Hall, Simon Vaughan, Kitty te Riele, Julian Sefton-Green, Glenda McGregor, Dale Murray. Absent: John Davis & Chloe Hand



BOARD DIRECTORS

2024/25

Professor Kitty te Riele	Co-Chair/Director
Mr. Dale Murray	Co-Chair/Director
Professor Julian Sefton-Green	Director
Mr. Simon Vaughan	Director
Professor Glenda McGregor	Director
Dr. John Davis	Director
Ms. Chloe Hand	Director
Ms. Megan Hall	Executive Officer



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & ENGAGEMENT

The momentum generated by our [Doing School Differently Conference](#) has sparked a meaningful expansion in AAFIE's membership—a testament to the growing recognition of our work and the strength of our community.

This growth is more than numbers; it reflects a shared commitment to reimagining education for young people who have been excluded or underserved by traditional systems.

Our members—knowledgeable, experienced, and deeply passionate—are the guiding light of AAFIE. They help shape our direction, inform our priorities, and energise our efforts across the sector. Their diverse perspectives and lived experiences continue to enrich our work and ensure it remains grounded, inclusive, and impactful.

AAFIE's membership structure is designed to be inclusive and accessible, with categories including Individual, Organisational, Student/Unwaged, Silver, Bronze, Gold, and Supporter members.

Our community is made up of students, educators, and organisations from across Australia, and we're proud to see steady growth in engagement and participation.

Looking ahead to FY25/26, we're excited to create more opportunities for members to take active roles in shaping AAFIE's future. This includes a 10-year celebration of our Doing School Differently Conference in Naarm Melbourne (June 4th & 5th 2026) expanding our Special Interest Groups, extending our Data Collaboration Project and fostering deeper local connections.



UPHOLDING OUR CHARITABLE STANDARDS

AAFIE remains fully compliant with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), guided by its Governance Standards—principles that ensure transparency, accountability, and public trust in our operations. These standards shape how we manage our activities, relationships, and responsibilities, and we take pride in meeting them with integrity and diligence.

Our governance focus is anchored in three key areas:

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

In 2024/25, we continued to strengthen our governance framework to ensure alignment with the Australian Accounting Standards. This included a commitment to seek external expertise to support our financial reporting processes, reinforcing our accountability and operational resilience. Our annual audit was conducted by Haywards Chartered Accountants, providing assurance of our financial health and compliance.

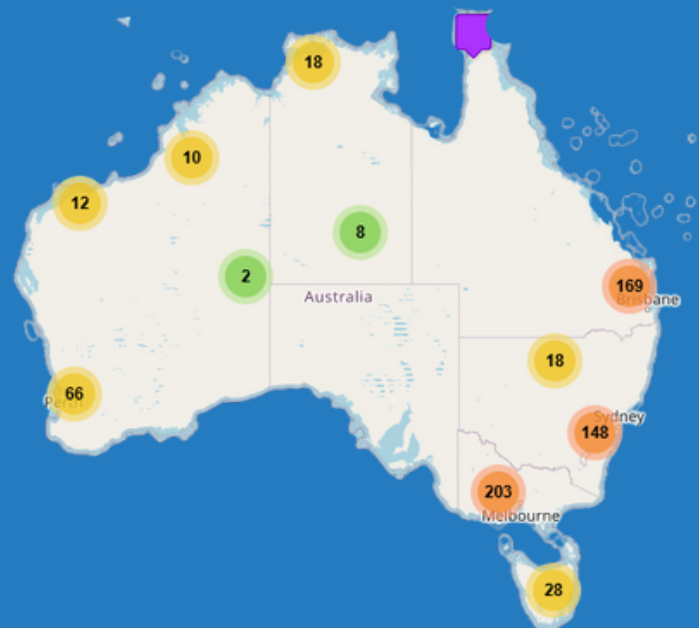
MAPPING POSSIBILITIES

AAFIE proudly maintains Australia's only geo-located Flexible Learning Options Database—a vibrant, ever-evolving map that connects communities to inclusive and alternative education programs nationwide.

This tool isn't just a directory; it's a gateway to opportunity, designed to help educators, families, and young people discover learning environments that meet diverse needs and spark potential.

Every program listed reflects AAFIE's commitment to accuracy and relevance, offering trusted information to those seeking flexible pathways. While we know there's more out there, this database grows stronger with your input.

Help us expand the map! If you know of a program that's not yet listed, we invite you to contribute and ensure every young person can find the right fit for their learning journey.



IN CONVERSATION AMPLIFYING SECTOR VOICES



Our podcast series, AAFIE in Conversation, continues to offer a unique and authentic voice within the Flexible and Inclusive Education sector. With its informal, conversational style, each episode invites listeners into meaningful discussions that foster shared learning, reflection, and growth.

In 2024/25, we released a special episode celebrating the launch of a new Special Interest Group—an exciting milestone that emerged from the energy and collaboration of our Doing School Differently Conference. This episode spotlighted the passion and innovation driving our members and set the tone for what's to come.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we're thrilled to be planning a broader podcast program. With more voices, more stories, and more opportunities to connect, AAFIE in Conversation will continue to be a platform where ideas are exchanged, challenges are explored, and the sector's collective wisdom is celebrated.

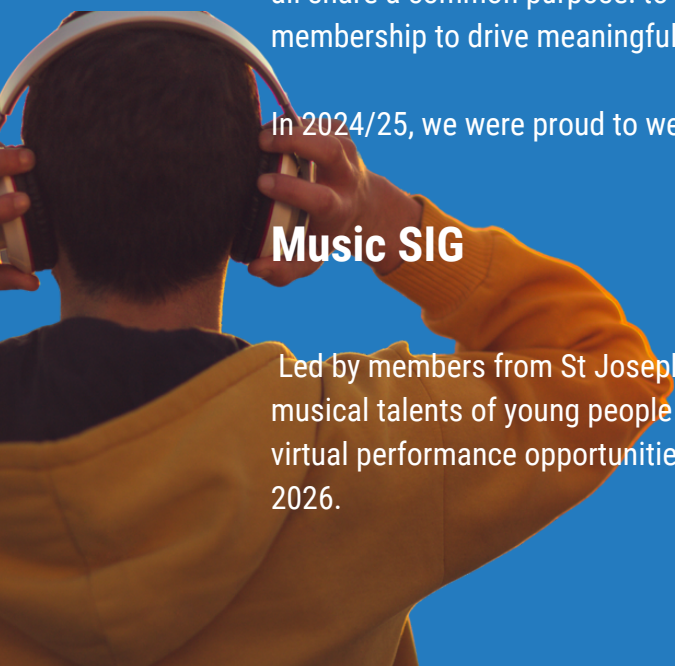
SPECIAL INTEREST DRIVING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) continue to be a vital part of AAFIE's collaborative ecosystem—bringing together a diverse range of voices to explore, deepen, and advance practice, policy, and planning across the sector. Each SIG is shaped by its unique focus, yet all share a common purpose: to centre AAFIE's vision and harness the expertise of our membership to drive meaningful change.

In 2024/25, we were proud to welcome two new SIGs:

Music SIG

Led by members from St Joseph's Flexi and SongMakers, this group is amplifying the musical talents of young people across Flexi programs. Their vision includes creating virtual performance opportunities and showcasing student work at Doing School Differently 2026.





Career Education & Wellbeing SIG

This group's membership comprises of a diverse group of professionals in the flexi space and is focused on strengthening career development practices across Flexi settings, led by experienced educator Kirra Greaves. Through case studies, feedback loops, and shared methodologies, they are exploring how to better support young people's transitions, including:

- Gathering evidence of impact in career education
- Providing feedback to VET trainers and improving TAE delivery
- Advocating for training that reflects relationship-building and non-accredited learning
- Enhancing professional development for career educators
- Elevating young people's voices in program design and delivery

These SIGs exemplify the power of member-led initiatives and the importance of creating spaces where innovation, collaboration, and lived experience guide our collective work.

RESEARCH

As the peak body for flexible and inclusive education, AAFIE plays a vital role in ensuring that research in this field is both informed by and responsive to the realities of practice. By actively participating in research projects, AAFIE helps to amplify the voices of educators, students, and communities who are often underrepresented in mainstream education studies. Its involvement ensures that findings reflect the diversity, innovation, and complexity of flexible learning environments, and that recommendations are grounded in authentic experience.

Teachers in Flexible and Non-Traditional Schools

This landmark research, conducted over four years and funded by the Australian Research Council, shines a spotlight on the educators working in Australia's flexible and non-traditional schools—settings that support young people who have disengaged from mainstream education.

Partnering with AAFIE, and other Industry Partners the project explored the unique conditions, challenges, and strengths of teaching in these schools. Drawing on surveys, interviews, and case studies from six schools across four states, the report provides deep insights into workforce demographics, teaching practices, and the relational nature of these learning environments.

The report offers 12 strategic recommendations for policy makers, school leaders, and teacher education providers, including the need for:

- Greater sector visibility and workforce data.
- Stronger university partnerships.
- Inclusive recruitment strategies.
- Robust induction and wellbeing support.

KEY FINDINGS



High job satisfaction among staff, despite complex workloads and emotional demands



Strong relational and trauma-informed pedagogies that centre student wellbeing and voice



Diverse roles and pathways, with many staff coming from non-traditional backgrounds



Curriculum and assessment innovations tailored to student interests and real-world relevance



Challenges in recruitment and retention, with calls for better induction, professional development, and equitable pay

This research affirms the critical role of flexible education in re-engaging young people and highlights the need to support and celebrate the educators who make it possible.



Pictured ARC Research Team: Glenda McGregor (Griffith University), Dale Murray (AAFIE), Aspa Baroutsis (Southern Cross University) & Martin Mills (Queensland University of Technology).

Accompanying resources include a Capabilities Framework, audiovisual materials, and provocations for professional learning—available at the AAFIE website and the project's YouTube channel.

SCAN ME



Teachers & Teaching Workforce YouTube

Videos include:

- What does it take to work in a flexi?
- What is it like working in a flexi?
- The value of positive relationships in flexi schools
- Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment in a flexi

GrandSchools Project: Bridging Generations Through Learning

AAFIE continues to support the GrandSchools Project, funded by the NHMRC, is transforming how generations connect—by integrating senior living into school campuses as an Industry Partner. Responding to aged care reform recommendations, GrandSchools introduces a shared campus model that's person-centred, health-focused, and socially inclusive. It's designed to work across urban and regional settings, fostering stronger community ties.

The project also tackles workforce gaps by creating school-based vocational pathways in senior living, giving students hands-on experience while enriching the lives of older Australians.

At its heart, GrandSchools is about co-learning, co-care, and co-creation—building spaces where relationships flourish, isolation fades, and generations grow together.

Research teams across Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria are driving the development of GrandSchools' intergenerational living and learning model through five innovative PhD-led projects:



Cooperative Spaces

Investigates how environment, tasks, and individual factors influence wellbeing in intergenerational programs across creative arts, hospitality, IT/media, and fitness.

PhD Scholar: Hannah Forbes



Youth Social Enterprise Employment

Explores how intergenerational initiatives can reduce social segregation and shift attitudes, while identifying sustainable youth-led enterprise opportunities.

PhD Scholar: Mizan Ahmed



Inclusive Campus Environments

Examines spatial design and planning models that integrate education and senior living, using mapping tools to inform future campus layouts.

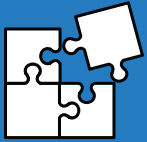
PhD Scholar: Wanjiru Karanja



Feasibility of Intergenerational Spaces

Develops a framework to assess the economic and policy viability of intergenerational campuses across diverse Australian contexts.

PhD Scholar: Sarah Aita



Spatial Design & Pedagogy

Connects learning environments with curriculum and pedagogy to propose a model for authentic, reciprocal intergenerational education.

PhD Scholar: Alice Kulbat

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*Thank
you!*

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Learn more about AAFIE [here](#)