WONDERWOOD MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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Newsletter

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Special points of interest:

- Interviews for families who have moved from our Expression of Interest list and registered on our Waitlist will be scheduled in coming weeks.
- Register to be on our Waitlist. Get in early! https://www.mywaitlist.com.au/Waitlist/Apply?CentreID=19892

Introduction to the Board Chair—Bruce Clarke

While primarily a lawyer practicing in the ACT and NSW for over 40 years I have longstanding commitments to a diverse range of community associations. These have included environmental groups, a women's refuge, a youth service and a rural fire service. I currently Chair the Byron Community Association which is primarily dedicated to assisting the homeless in the Byron Bay area.

My involvement with the Montessori Children's Foundation, ("MCF"), the sponsor of the Wonderwood Montessori School, commenced in 2003 when I was appointed to the Board to assist in legal and governmental issues. The Board was then actively focused on schooling in the Torres Strait. My knowledge of Montessori has largely been developed through working alongside some of the best and most committed in the Montessori family.

I remained on the Board until 2012 and then rejoined at the invitation of the Masterman family in September 2019. I continue as Chair of both MCF and Wonderwood Montessori School.

My partner, Joanne Rees, and I operate a legal firm in Canberra but divide our time between Canberra and our main home in Byron Bay. Originally a "Shire boy" from the Cronulla area in Sydney I have lived for extended periods in Coffs Harbour, Sydney, Canberra and Byron Bay, My three children are now working in Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and Bali.

I have mostly lived by the ocean and my favourite forms of relaxation have been surfing and scuba diving - and now spending time with 6 lovely grandchildren.

Update on our campus at Irene Street

We are but weeks away from being able to have access to our campus. Much work and good will has gone into its development.
Once our registrations are in hand, the school will commence operations with three classrooms. The staff are excited to set up the rooms in preparation for the first group of students.

Further planning and building will continue during 2026 to allow for more classrooms to open next year.

Our school has been fortunate to have the expertise and dedication of our builders, MyBuild.

Thank you to Beau and the team for all the work and dedication you have put into this project.

History Corner—Bob Masterman

In our last edition, we introduced the journey leading to the development of Wonderwood Montessori School, a vision that began with Bob Masterman's to implement Montessori education for Aboriginal communities Australia-wide.

After Bob's passing, legal challenges delayed the allocation of his bequest, despite initial efforts by the Cape York Land Council and the creation of pilot Montessori programs in remote communities and at Cairns West State School.

Although these early initiatives were well-received by local families and demonstrated positive outcomes, they lacked formal recognition and sustainability due to organisational and administrative hurdles.

Eventually, with persistent advocacy, the Montessori association secured the bequest, but initial projects struggled with focus and long-term impact. A significant shift occurred when Bob's grandson Jorian Cunliffe became CEO of the Montessori Children's Foundation, stabilising funding and introducing targeted programs such as parenting classes, playgroups, and tutorial support.

These efforts culminated in preparations for the 2026 opening of a permanent Montessori school—Wonderwood—on land owned by the O'Shane family, under the leadership of experienced principal Des Reuben, fulfilling the original vision for a sustainable, community-embedded Montessori initiative.

Montessori 101

Essential Books and Resources for Montessori Beginners

In a previous edition, we suggested that those new to Montessori to read **The Absorbent Mind** by Maria Montessori. If you're keen to learn more about Montessori education, there are some classic texts and modern guides that offer a solid foundation.

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius by Angeline Stoll Lillard – This book provides insights into the scientific research supporting Montessori methods.

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way by Tim Seldin – A practical guide for parents with hands-on advice and activities.

Education for a New World by Maria Montessori – Another classic, focusing on Montessori's vision for education and society.

Montessori from the Start by Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen – Ideal for those interested in early childhood Montessori principles.

Fun fact:

The name of our school — "Wonderwood Montessori School" was suggested by Bob Masterman's great-granddaughter.

Still awaiting an update on our registrations from NSSAB & ACECQA

"Patience is not the ability to wait but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting" - Joyce Meyer.

As we continue to prepare for the opening of our school, we are eagerly awaiting the outcome of our two applications.

The applications process has necessitated dual applications. NSSAB deals with school based registration. Whereas, ACECQA deals with early learning. We have been successful in attaining provider status with ACECQA, however, we are in final stages of working towards achieving service approval.

Montessori at Home

Montessori at home is about creating a child-centred environment that encourages independence, curiosity, and practical life skills. The focus is on independence, respect, and hands-on learning. Ideally we allow children to explore, make choices, and develop skills at their own pace while participating in meaningful daily activities.

Prepared Environment: Organise your home so children can access toys, books, and tools independently. Use low shelves, child-sized furniture, and step stools making spaces reachable.

Practical Life Skills: Involve children in daily tasks like cooking, cleaning, folding clothes, or gardening.

Development: Observe your child's readiness and interests, offering activities that match their developmental stage without forcing participation.

Order and Accessibility: Keep spaces tidy and organised, with a place for everything. Rotate toys and materials to maintain engagement

Examples include:

Entrance: Low hooks for coats, baskets for shoes.

Kitchen: Child-accessible shelves for snacks, utensils, and a small pitcher for pouring water.

Bathroom: Step stools, reachable toiletries, and child-friendly sinks.

Bedroom: Low shelves for books and toys, clothes arranged for self-dressing.

Living Areas: Open spaces for movement and exploration, safe areas for independent play.

Waitlist Applications—the steps forward

Step 1 – Application to the Waitlist

Waitlist Application Fee: $100

Step 2 – School Tour with the Principal

Step 3 – Interview with the Principal

Step 4 – Formal Enrolment Offerings

Enrolment Fee $ 200

Enrolment Bond $1250.00

Your Child Is Enrolled!

Email: enrolments@wonderwoodmontessori.com

Tours

Once we have access to our campus we will commence tours with the Principal. Details will be shared in time.

WMS on WWW

Thank you for your patience with the delay on our website.

We look forward to sharing our new site shortly.

Wonderwood Montessori School

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The future is bright

"A child thrives in an environment where cooperation replaces competition, and where people of different ages work together as part of a shared community."

WONDERWOOD MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Follow Us on Social Media

Stay connected with us on Facebook and LinkedIn for news and updates.

We look forward to engaging with our community and sharing the wonderful achievements of our children when the school opens its doors.

Facebook posts will be stories about the progress of WMS community.

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61577686941767

LinkedIn will also convey stories but aimed to attract and recruit Montessori staff from around the globe.

https://au.linkedin.com/company/wonderwood-montessori