

ANNUAL REPORT 2004/5

OMEP **Australia**

Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire



OMEP is an international, non-governmental organisation, founded in 1948 to benefit children under the age of 8 years throughout the world

National President's Report—Sue Harper



It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report which outlines the activities for the period ending 30 June 2005, to the members of the Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire, (OMEP) - the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education.

Annual Reports and Annual General Meetings provide a useful opportunity to focus on the achievements of the last year and to once more consider the important history which underpins this organisation. OMEP's origins date back to immediately post World War II, when a strong humanitarian concern led a small group of educators and people interested in the welfare of young children to seek a way to engage others committed to these aims. Meetings have been the principal mechanism of bringing together people from all over the world, without any criteria other than an objective to share information and initiate actions to benefit young children everywhere.

promote for each child the optimum conditions for his well being, development and happiness in his family, institution or society

In July 2004, at the beginning of this reporting period, OMEP Australia hosted the XXIV World Assembly and Congress in Melbourne. As stated in previous annual reports held during the planning phase, the generosity and willing support of numerous members and friends of OMEP was overwhelming and feedback both informal and in letters indicate that the event was an outstanding success. The energy and careful attention to detail has resulted in a significant financial gain.

It was with sadness that early in 2005 we heard deaths of two of OMEP's most highly regarded members.

- ◆ Former National President and Life Member, Western Australian, Marcia Fleming had fought ill health for some time and with sheer determination attended the Congress in July. OMEP members in Australia and internationally will remember Marcia's contribution to the establishment of OMEP as an independent organisation in Australia.
- ◆ Nancy Bastow reached the remarkable age of 93 and was still attending most OMEP functions in Victoria. Nancy's generosity is on going and OMEP has been advised that it is a beneficiary of her estate. At this time we are unable to be exact about the extent of the bequest, except to say that it may be as much as \$100,000. The responsibility for managing these funds for the benefit of young children is significant and provides a further reason for streamlining the structure and operation of OMEP.



In the last Annual Report, I reported that our honorary lawyers, Freehills were providing legal advice about structuring OMEP in a way that would be manageable and would best place the organisation to receive donor gift recipient status – to enable OMEP to access philanthropic funds. A meeting of the Directors and Freehills was convened in February where Directors raised issues for clarification and sought adjustments.

The President's Report.....continued

The Directors were unanimous

- In their willingness to retain the existing legal structure as a Company Limited by Guarantee to enable the organisation to trade across state and territory borders,
- In their desire to pursue DGR status in the best long term interests of the growth of OMEP Australia, and
- In expressing their confidence in the wise advice provided by Freehills.

In March, a special appeal was launched in which members were asked to contribute funds which would form part of an OMEP international tsunami effort. In just three weeks, members of OMEP Australia donated the incredible amount of \$11,000 to the OMEP International tsunami appeal. OMEP, working with UNICEF has been a front runner in determining the needs of communities and seeking out projects which will assist in restoring a sense of safety and stability in these ravaged communities.

help in any undertaking which could improve any early childhood care and education

In May, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Hon Senator Dr Kay Patterson launched Joan Waters latest book *A New Challenge, Helping in Early Childhood Settings*. This is Joan's fifth book for OMEP and was made possible with the financial assistance of the Forest Hill Early Childhood Foundation in Victoria. OMEP records its sincere appreciation to Joan for her continued generosity as the proceeds of many of her books has been directed to OMEP.

The National Newsletter News was produced four times during the year. A special thanks to the President of the Western Australian Chapter, Dawn Butterworth who edited a number of editions of the Newsletter, but the tyranny of distance, coupled with a limited budget made the task extremely difficult. We thank Dawn and her talented daughter Maree for their contribution and for their ideas on production and layout which we will take up as we can.



The Secretariat has met monthly and the Directors have met by teleconference for one hour each in November and June with two, two day face to face meetings in Melbourne in August and February – a total of 4 meetings. The additional face to face meeting was scheduled to enable the Directors to meet with Freehills and to progress the work on the new Constitution.

The Directors are:

New South Wales	Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis	4 meetings attended
South Australia	Bev Hall	3 meetings attended
Western Australia	Michelle Sullivan	3 meetings attended
ACT	Gillian Styles	3 meetings attended
Victoria	Carlene Bolden (resigned 31/3/05)	3 meetings attended
	Susan Lancaster (appointed 1/4/05)	1 meeting attended
	Susan Harper	4 meetings attended

The President's Report.....continued

We record our sincere thanks to retiring Director, Carlene Bolden. As Secretary, Carlene has played a pivotal role in OMEP over the last few years and her attention to detail and focus ensured that nothing was missed and that the myriad of tasks in the lead up to the Congress were completed. Carlene will maintain her interest in OMEP as the new Editor of the Newsletter and Sue Lancaster, a member of the Secretariat replaced Carlene as a Victorian Director.

*support
scientific
research which
can influence a
child's
conditions*



The Directors have willingly given their time in the interests of young children everywhere. Sincere thanks to them all. Directorships of Companies carry considerable responsibilities and personal liabilities. It is not possible for Directors to delegate their responsibilities by using proxies and a considerable commitment is asked of Directors, to ensure the efficient and effective operation of OMEP.

Some of the issues discussed by the Directors have included:

- Directors Liability Insurance
- The Constitution and the future of OMEP
- The roles and responsibilities of Directors
- Membership targets
- The 0-3 Survey
- The tsunami appeal
- Development of the web page – www.omepaustralia.com.au
- Launch of *A New Challenge*
- Finances including credit card facilities
- A national project – Water Conservation
- The Newsletter and the Journal
- Membership postcard

Chapters have continued to work in the interests of young children and it is pleasing that the higher membership of 250 at the lead up to the Congress was maintained. Despite the best efforts of everyone, Chapters do not operate actively in every state however almost all states and territories are represented in the membership.

The commitment and energy shown by the Secretariat in the period leading up to, during and following the Congress has been maintained throughout this financial year. This is quite incredible given the energy required to plan and manage the Congress. In a period following a massive project it might be expected that interest could diminish. Remarkably this has not been the case. As a result the membership has grown two and a half times and the organisation is now financially sound.

The Secretariat has come a long way in developing systems. There is always room for further improvement and although time consuming we believe that future office bearers will find that their task may be a little easier. Particular thanks must go to

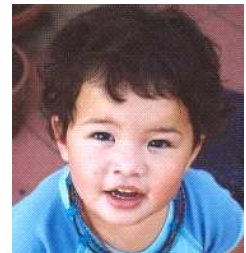
The President's Report.....continued

Sue Lancaster who has fulfilled the dual roles of Secretary of Secretary and Treasurer – no mean feat! Pat Cooper has maintained accurate and current membership records and she and Sue have provided wise counsel and been part of a willing and supportive team. In addition, one of our members Fiona Lynch has assisted us in beginning to develop our business plan and has provided sound advice on the future potential of the web page.

Although weary, the Secretariat continues to be a wonderful support to me and to each other. Cheerful, positive, humorous, willing and sensible the Secretariat has maintained energy for OMEP and a desire to ensure its long term viability.

Finally, OMEP is an important organisation, established by people at a time when travel was slow and communication was more difficult. Our Regional Vice President, Joan Waters has worked hard to improve communication and has been a key person in the allocation of funds raised on behalf of children affected by the tsunami tragedy. Joan has worked tirelessly to ensure that OMEP member countries in the Asia Pacific region are kept informed of events and we thank her for her time, interest and effort on behalf of children of the world.

Today, the world seems a smaller place where children face issues which should not be part of their experience. We, the members of OMEP have a unique opportunity to improve things for children. OMEP membership is open to all people with an interest in the early years. Early childhood professionals - nurses, teachers, children's services workers, paediatricians, lawyers, administrators and parents must work together; together we can make a difference. We know that children and their families fare best when people with a range of skills work cooperatively – each part of a very powerful whole.



Sue Harper
National President

*contribute
towards
understanding
between mankind*

Membership Report—July 2004 to June 2005

All new members continue to receive a golden OMEP Badge and this year Membership Certificates were issued to our members Organisations. We hope these have been displayed in a prominent place within these organisations to promote the links with OMEP.

Overall membership during this past year did decline after the Congress in July 2004 however it is interesting to note that there has been an increase in the number of Organisations joining OMEP.

State	2002/3	2003/4			2004/5		
	Members	Members	Individual	Organisations	Members	Individual	Organisations
ACT	4	9	9		7	7	
NSW	17	26	19	7	26	14	12
N.T.	1	4	2	2	2		2
QLD	17	15	10	5	19	8	11
S.A.	17	40	37	3	34	30	4
VIC	74	126	96	30	127	94	33
W.A.	21	36	30	6	31	26	5
TOTALS	151	256	203	53	246	179	67

Patricia Cooper
National Membership Secretary

*contribute
towards peace of
the world*

Thank you to our National Secretariat

PRESIDENT	Sue Harper
SECRETARY	Carlene Bolden [until 31/3/05]
TREASURER	Sue Lancaster
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Patricia Cooper
PROMOTION & MARKETING	Fiona Lynch



Registered Office of OMEP Australia Ltd:

C/- The Lady Gowrie Child Centre, 36 Newry St, North Carlton, VIC, 3054

ABN: 97 060 578 092

OMEPA Life Members

- ◇ Gillian Beddington
- ◇ Rosamonde Combes
- ◇ Mary Folkl
- ◇ Joan Waters
- ◇ Marcia Fleming (deceased)

Marcia passed away early 2005. She will be remembered as the first President of the company OMEPA (Aust) and the effort she put into making the organization an independent body. Marcia had a long and distinguished career in education, her outstanding courage, optimistic spirit and zest for life were an inspiration.



Chapter Report

ACT

*champion
children's rights
under the UN
convention*

This year has again been very quiet in the ACT. Our membership has dropped to seven. As in other states, members have found pressure in juggling all commitments in busy lives and so there has been little activity.

We have maintained contact with each other over coffee and email. Our discussions reveal members willingly support projects such as the national tsunami appeal.

Gillian Styles—Director

Chapter Report

New South Wales

During the year we endeavoured to increase the membership of OMEP by contacting many people in New South Wales especially those who attended the Congress in Melbourne and encouraged them to join OMEP. We had some new members joining. However, it is difficult for many of them to become involved in the work of the chapter.

The Reports of the participants who were successful in obtaining assistance from the NSW Department of Community Services scholarship to attend the OMEP Congress was compiled and sent to the Minister for Community Services.



The Chapter donated \$350 to the OMEP Australia Tsunami Appeal and individual members also made generous donations and it was a great effort because a large sum of money was raised and sent to the OMEP World body to assist the Asia Pacific Region countries who were most affected to restructure and provide early childhood education to the children.

The Chapter responded to the request of the OMEP Vice-President for the Asia Pacific Region, Ms. Joan Waters to contribute to the OMEP Project 2005, Children from Birth to three years survey of Asia Pacific Countries, by providing comprehensive information regarding children 0 to three years in New South Wales, their education and research done in this area.

interested in the welfare of young children and engage others committed to these aims

Chapter President, Diane Duvall with Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Sydney presented an all day training event with international presenters Deb Curtis and Margie Carter who spoke on "The Many Paths of In-Depth Work with Children" on 28th June, 2005 in Orange and all the proceedings of this very successful event were donated to the NSW Chapter. The amount raised was \$3,700. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Lady Gowrie Child Centre committee, Diane and staff for their generous donation. The 165 participants who came from Orange and many rural areas driving hundreds of kilometres were rewarded from the expertise, experiences and skills of the two eminent speakers who encouraged educators and participants to share their experiences and models of working with children. The participants in their evaluations stated that they were inspired, extended their learning experiences, rejuvenated their enthusiasm and broadened their knowledge of working with children

Information was provided to participants of OMEP Australia and we have attracted some members from regional NSW.

An Annual General meeting was organised but for various reasons it did not eventuate as there was poor response. However, there are many committed members who are interested in the work of the Chapter and OMEP and are continuing its work and contribute to OMEP Australia. The Chapters are keeping alive the OMEP spirit and have been and are vital to its work since its inception.

Diane Duvall—President

Vivi Germanos-Koutounadis—Director

Chapter Report

South Australia

The South Australian Chapter, as one of a proliferation of South Australian groups who speak and are concerned for children in the early years, has sought to find its own niche for contributing to and focussing on the needs of children.

To this end we are represented on the proposed Unified Professional Affiliation (Early Years), the planning committee for the Our Children The Future biennial conference and the Children's Week Association of South Australia. Membership of each of these groups affords us opportunities to publicise the work of OMEP both nationally and at the State level, and to gain support for our projects across a wide network.

The Chapter participated in the development of a constitution for the anticipated Unified Affiliation and advertised its work through a poster at the OCF Conference, "Challenging Realities –Rights, Relationships, Research".

Children's Week projects where possible follow an aspect of the United Nations designated year. In October last OMEP presented a month-long Rice is Life Exhibition in the gallery at the Department of Education and Children's Services. The work of children in child care, preschool and junior primary settings in discovering the importance of rice in the culture of a significant portion of the world was recorded and displayed for a large number of visitors.

This year a micro-credit project involving children statewide in working for the welfare of the children in tsunami-affected Aceh is in process.

Our projects allow people in the country as well as in the city to know something of the work and concerns of OMEP.

At least twice per year, the chapter gives members and the community an opportunity to participate in a presentation relating to the early childhood field. Three students who were supported by the chapter in attending the Melbourne OMEP Congress – Siobhan Grunwald, Rebecca Harding and Kylie Sharrock – gave lively and thoughtful reflections on their conference participation at the SA Chapter annual meeting. At a dinner in May, Cate Fowler and Julie Orchard from Windmill Performing Arts, with Jeff Meiners from UniSA, enthralled the gathering with an account of their research into drama for young children which is age-relevant, while taking account of all the aspects of scene, character development and plot, which any theatregoer might expect. The productions exemplify the adage that what is good enough for children is good enough for anyone.

Fundraising for projects, the contribution to the world subvention fee and the world council fund has continued through a dinner and two film nights, the last shared with the deLissa Association of Early Childhood Graduates. Members attending the chapter AGM provided a large hamper for Adelaide's Magdalene Centre Christmas Parcels for the Homeless.



*contribute
towards peace of
the world*

Angela Norris—President

Bev Hall—Director

Chapter Report

Victoria

Spurred on by the success and challenge of the world congress and the inclusion of new members onto the committee, it has been a time of reflection, discussion and planning for the future. While valuing and acknowledging the enormous contributions made by past members, we have worked collaboratively to look forward and respond to the needs of new members. We have been exploring ways to increase awareness about OMEP and for this to translate into a growing membership base. We have been identifying ways we may stay true to the world wide focus of OMEP while also engaged in local innovative projects.

As a part of the Chapter's ongoing thinking and streamlining subcommittees have taken responsibility for guiding group activities.

The ***Craft Making Group*** has continued to meet and make wonderful items, as well as providing a social element and networking. New skills have been learned and shared. Sale of items has contributed to OMEP funds.

The ***Education Group*** has actively pursued opportunities to engage members across the state in a variety of educational forums. The group focused on themes arising from the Congress and there have been some excellent meetings. There have also been the opportunity to gather before functions and interact socially.

Social Activities have continued with some past and popular favourites such as the card morning and the Peridot Theatre. We also hosted some new events, such as the afternoon tea that was held at the Studley Boathouse. Thanks to those who organised these events.

A ***Special Project*** to provide 'care bags', the 'brain child' of Michelle Smith was born and excitedly accepted by Anglicare as a pack that would be given to children going into emergency care. The pack has a range of items to meet the needs of the different ages, eg under three's nappies, cuddly teddy (knitted by members), toothbrush, comb socks etc. This ongoing project could involve all members statewide. The project will be launched with Anglicare later in the year.

In May the committee accepted Dannie Dupliex's resignation as President. Following Dannie's resignation, Fiona Lynch and Wendy Seidler Mendes agreed to take on the President's role in a co-chairing capacity.

We would like to thank all our Office Bearers for their support, goodwill and organisational skills, in particular Shayne Collins, Heather Feldman and Alison Gorman.

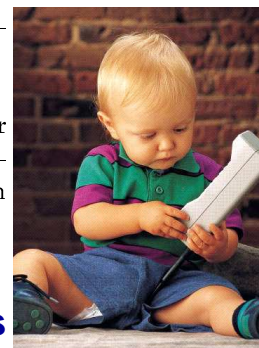
Finally, we would like to most sincerely thank all members of the Victorian Chapter for their commitment, their willingness to 'go the extra mile', and ultimately for their passion to make a difference in a child's life, anywhere in the world, in accordance with OMEP's vision.

Fiona Lynch & Wendy Seidler Mendes—Co- Presidents

Carlene Bolden—Director (June- March)

Sue Lancaster—Director (April - June)

*benefit children
under the age of 8
years throughout
the world*



Chapter Report

Western Australia

Activities

The year started with a burst of enthusiasm following attendance by several members at the OMEP World Conference in Melbourne. Insights and experiences were shared with members at a very successful World Conference *Highlights with High Tea* session in August.

A small group of members enjoyed a Springtime picnic to the ALCOA mine site at Pinjarra to see how bauxite is mined for refining into aluminium, but more particularly to see how the environment is rehabilitated following mining. We greatly enjoyed studying the flora and fauna of the jarrah forest and relaxing in the Aussie bush.

Our early December AGM and Christmas buffet at the Perth Flying Squadron Yacht Club resulted in more camaraderie, the election of a new committee and a stimulating and impressive talk by Rebecca Duncan (winner of the Minister's Early Childhood Teachers' Award).

In January, the OMEP Committee packaged and delivered 250 School Starter Kits to needy children, ready for the first day of the school year. We acknowledge the generosity of the Swan River Trust in providing bags and the creative children who decorated them; Wooldridge Educational Supplies for donating materials for 200 kits; and the children of All Saints Junior School for their donation of \$470 towards the project. Once more a film afternoon proved the most effective and economical means of raising the funds necessary for our projects.

In February, the school year received a "kick start" with a cocktail party at the Butterworth residence where members watched the sun go down over the Swan River and reminisced about the "good or bad old days" (whatever the case may be). Hospitality and friendship extended to others included a boat trip and barbecue for a group of Aboriginal children and their careers from the Tjukurla Remote Aboriginal Community in the Gibson Desert and visits to a range of educational centres and cultural venues for Early Childhood Educators visiting from Malaysia.

Donations

Donations made by the WA Chapter included teaching and cleaning resources to Sister Aurora for kindergartens in East Timor; curriculum materials to schools in Indonesia; medical equipment to the children's ward at Kwinana/Rockingham District Hospital; and library books to Women's Refuges and an Early Intervention Program in a Commonwealth recognised high need area.

Membership and Publicity

Membership remains low, with publicity an ongoing problem. In an effort to publicise our organization, the President spoke to early childhood members of the *Independent Junior Schools Association* and to members of the *National Council of Women (NCW)* about OMEP and its work. She also represents OMEP on the NCW, *Centrelink* and *Kidlinks Kwinana Early Intervention Programs*. The major problem in publicizing OMEP is that the acronym OMEP does not directly relate to the English translation. For this reason, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to calling our organization the *International Organisation for Early Childhood (IOEC)* which would be immediately meaningful to the general public.

*educate the public
about issues
relating to young
children
throughout the
world*



Dawn Butterworth—President
Michelle Sullivan—Director

Financial Report 2004/05

*an objective to
share information
and initiate
actions to benefit
young children
everywhere*



At the end of the financial year OMEP Australia showed a cash balance of \$143,635. I am absolutely delighted to announce a substantial profit from the World Congress hosted by OMEP Australia in July 2004. Our audited accounts indicate a profit of \$106,398 from the Congress.

Those of you who were part of the organising committees for this Congress will recall many statements of anxiety and anguish regarding the financial viability of such a large undertaking in Australia. The 'tyranny of distance' factor that we face in Australia from most other OMEP countries and the turn in world events which made travel precarious and a general sense of caution throughout the regions all contributed to the risks associated with conducting such an event.

Congratulations to all members and non-members who made this Congress a financial and organisational success. As the National Treasurer, I would like to acknowledge the work of Gilda Howard in undertaking the task of Congress Treasurer. Monitoring the cash flow was a key element in ensuring the Directors could comply with their responsibilities to ASIC. Thank you Gilda for your valuable contribution in managing this heavy load and taking responsibility for such a considerable financial undertaking.

We are also grateful to the State Government of Victoria for providing major funds for the Congress. Without this contribution we could not have got the event off the ground nor would we have been able to provide translation and interpreter services, a requirement of any OMEP Congress.

I would like to acknowledge the support and advice received throughout the year from Michelle Westhorpe of Selby Westhorpe and Partners our Accountant and Auditor. Michelle has always been available and has shown a keen interest in OMEP, its activities and its commitment.

With the increased responsibility and opportunity that substantial resources bring it is imperative that OMEP seeks and obtains Donor Gift Recipient (DGR) status and adopts a Constitution and Guidelines that will build and secure our future. In this way we will be able to build on our capital to generate income for the long term viability of OMEP and the ongoing support for children in need across Australia and Internationally; providing material aid and resources, and opportunities for research, global networking and support.

Sue Lancaster
National Treasurer