

ANNUAL REPORT 2005/6

OMEP Australia

Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire



OMEP is an international, non-government organisation, founded in 1948 to benefit children 0—8 years throughout the world.

President's Report—Sue Harper



It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report which outlines the activities for the year ending 30 June 2006, to the members of the Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire, (OMEP) - the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education.

The year 2006 marks the Golden Anniversary of OMEP in Australia – fifty years of interest, action and commitment. OMEP is privileged to have had the continuing and active involvement of a number of women who have been members of OMEP since its beginning. These women of vision understand the value of sharing ideas, values and hopes for the future. As a result of their passion, Australia was the first country in the Asia Pacific region to become an OMEP member country, and it is satisfying to note that after fifty years, OMEP Australia now has more than 200 members.

This Annual Report covers the period between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. It has been a time of considerable frustration for the Directors and, I am sure, for the membership too. A new Constitution was drafted by Freehills, OMEP's lawyers, and accepted by the Directors as ready to be put to the members for consideration and vote at the Annual General Meeting last October. The special resolution to alter the OMEP constitution was however, withdrawn by the Directors – a decision taken to enable members to have more time to carefully consider the implications and to enable the Directors to circulate more information to facilitate informed debate. Following this decision a Special General Meeting was convened in April with the only item of business being to vote on the proposed Constitution. The result of this vote was that the motion was lost by the slimmest of margins. Since that time the Directors have struggled to find ways to meet their legal obligations within the current constitution and as a consequence, during this last year a great deal of work has been done on developing policies to guide the operation of OMEP.

The World Assembly was held in Havana, Cuba in July. A devastating hurricane had wreaked havoc with power, water and food for Cubans in short supply. Cuban hospitality ensured that delegates to the Assembly were able to visit preschool programs despite fallen trees and disrupted communities. The Assembly determined to progress the spending of monies contributed by the generous donations of many countries – Australia being the largest donor - to assist communities ravished by the tsunami in December 2005. The two countries selected for assistance by a small committee appointed by our Regional Vice President, Joan Waters, were Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In June 2006, Joan visited the projects so that she could report to the membership at the OMEP World Assembly in August 2006. Other important issues discussed at the Assembly in 2005 were the OMEP international website – www.omep-ong.net and the exciting international research (of which Australia is a part) relating to children aged 0-3 years.

As Joan had previously advised the OMEP World Executive of her intention not to seek a second term as Regional Vice President, her term officially ended in December 2005. For the first half of 2006, Joan later agreed to fulfill the role of Acting Regional Vice President until the position is filled at the World Assembly in Tromsø,



The President's Report.....continued

Norway in August 2006. We acknowledge the tireless work of Joan Waters as Regional Vice President for the Asia Pacific Region of OMEP. When nominating Joan for this role, I am sure that none of us had any real understanding of the magnitude of the task. Joan has worked diligently to ensure that the tsunami money was spent and continues to take a keen interest in its progress. She instigated the regular eNews communication sheet to all OMEP member countries in the Asia Pacific region which has ensured that channels of communication have been open. We, like everyone in the Asia Pacific region, thank Joan for her work on behalf of OMEP.

In the last Annual Report, I reported that OMEP Australia was a beneficiary of the estate of Nancy Bastow a long time member. Over the last few months of the financial year, OMEP received a part of the monies that were bequeathed to it and these, along with profits from the World Congress held in 2004 have been invested in a separate account through Goldman Sachs JB Were. OMEP Australia was referred to this company by Freehills, and OMEP will be treated as one of their philanthropic accounts. These investments are conservative and long term, and aimed to produce income and capital growth. The income that is generated will enable OMEP to support many worthy projects within Australia for years to come. In addition, the Directors are keen to build up the World Assembly fund to ensure that Australia is represented at OMEP World Assembly meetings. 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. The responsibility on the OMEP Directors to ensure the appropriate management and protection of its funds is significant and provides a further reason for streamlining the structure and operation of OMEP.

The National Newsletter was produced four times during the year. A special thanks to Carlene Bolden who as Editor, produced the Newsletter during the year. Carlene has worked tirelessly in an attempt to make the Newsletter truly reflective of the national nature of OMEP. She took on the responsibility in the knowledge that Anne Magyar would be her assistant. As many of you know, sadly Anne died suddenly last October making Carlene's task more onerous and not as she had hoped. Sincere thanks to Carlene for her work on our behalf.

The Secretariat has met seven times and the Directors have met by teleconference for one and a half hours each in October and March with two, two day face to face meetings in Melbourne in October and April, and a one day face to face meeting in November. This special one day meeting was scheduled to enable a meeting with Freehills followed by discussion about the objects of a new constitution. 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 have met a total of 5 times.



The President's Report.....continued

The Directors are:

New South Wales	Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis (resigned 14/10/05)	1 meetings
	Diane Duvall (appointed 14/10/05)	4 meetings
South Australia	Bev Hall (resigned 14/10/05)	0 meetings
	Merilyn Webb (appointed 14/10/05)	5 meetings
Western Australia	Michelle Sullivan	5 meetings
ACT	Gillian Styles	5 meetings
Victoria	Susan Lancaster	5 meetings
	Susan Harper	5 meetings

The time commitment for Directors is significant and involves their considerable effort if OMEP is to function efficiently. The Directors have almost completed a Business Plan which will shape priorities and act as a check list for the immediate work, and a blue print for the medium term. Without this, OMEP runs the risk of sailing on in a haphazard way at a time when effort must be focused and directed towards an outcome we all want to see for an organisation to survive into the future.

Some of the issues discussed by the Directors have included:

Business Plan

Investment Plan

Immediate priorities

Budget

History of OMEP Australia

Directors Liability and Public Risk Insurances

The Constitution and the future of OMEP

The roles and responsibilities of Directors

Membership targets

The web page – www.omepaustralia.com.au

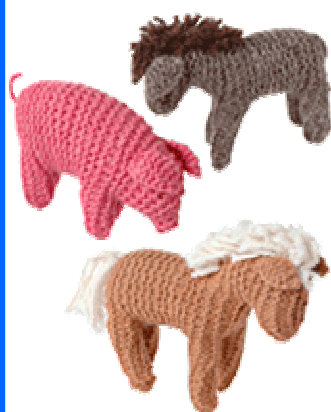
A national focus – *Isolated children/ Children of the Outback*

The Newsletter and the purchase of a memory stick

Membership postcard

Grandfather Stories

Development of policies



The President's Report.....continued

Delegate to World Council in Tromso, Norway

Office space

Almost all states and territories continue to be represented in the membership however it is of some concern that in some states, meetings have not been convened for more than 12 months. In general, the membership is not consulted in the decision making process. I am sure that it is the hope of us all, that Chapters will be active and transparent in operation with opportunities and encouragement for members to become increasingly involved.

Following the finalisation of the work and accounts associated with the Congress, we vacated the office that we had been so generously loaned by the Smith Family, in Collingwood. We sincerely thank them for their generosity. It became clear that OMEP needed space to keep important records and papers in an orderly and appropriate manner rather than in boots of cars or under dining room tables and beds. It was very pleasing that OMEP was accepted as tenants by Ross House, a non-profit, non-government, community based organisation who allows "acceptable organisations" to rent space. Mr Ross bequeathed the building to the community on the proviso that it was managed by the community of users and tenanted only to like minded community groups. OMEP is fortunate to have been accepted as a tenant.

The Secretariat continues to explore new and more efficient systems and has spent countless hours of unscheduled meeting times. Very special thanks must go to the Secretariat, Sue Lancaster and Pat Cooper, who have been friends, supporters, advisers, nurses and protectors. Following an illness in November 2005 they have watched over me and encouraged me with wisdom and humour – their positive energy has been heart warming and inspirational.

Finally, OMEP members continue to maintain a passion for care, education and wellbeing for all children and for the communities in which they live. As Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) said, "There is only one child in the world; and the child's name is All Children."



Improvvised play materials Cuba 2005

**Sue Harper OAM
President**

Membership Report—July 2005 to June 2006

Individual membership has increased by 7 in this past year there has been a decrease of 19 organisational membership resulting overall in 12 members less than the previous year. While 32 **new** members joined OMEP during 2005/6 this did not compensate for those members who did not rejoin.. We are therefore faced with the challenge of engaging members within our organisation to maintain their commitment and involvement. New members received a 'gold' badge and membership certificates were provided for organisational members.



State	2003/4	2004/5			2005/6		
	Members	Members	Individual	Organisations	Members	Individual	Organisations
ACT	9	7	7		3	3	
NSW	26	26	14	12	20	10	10
N.T.	4	2		2	3	1	2
QLD	15	19	8	11	13	7	6
S.A.	40	34	30	4	29	27	2
VIC	126	127	94	33	123	100	23
W.A.	36	31	26	5	43	38	5
TO-TALS	256	246	179	67	234	186	48

Pat Cooper
Membership Secretary

Secretariat

PRESIDENT	Sue Harper
SECRETARY	Sue Lancaster
TREASURER	Sue Lancaster
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Pat Cooper

NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Carlene Bolden
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OMEPE Life Members

- ◇ Gillian Beddington
- ◇ Rosamonde Combes
- ◇ Mary Folkl
- ◇ Joan Waters

Thank you for your contribution, commitment and passion, past and present, for early childhood education



Improvvised play materials Cuba 2005

Queens Birthday Honours

It is an honour for the organisation that Sue Harper was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the 2006 Queen's Birthday Honours List - 'For services to children and particularly the organisation OMEP'. This is reflective of the leadership Sue has provided to the organisation particularly during the time of the OMEP World Congress in Melbourne in 2004.

Grandfather Stories

The Grandfather Stories, twelve recollections that provide a snap shot of Australian grandfathers at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A group of men reflected on how the relationship with their grandchildren compared with the relationship that they had with their own children.

These men were also asked to describe aspects of the grandfather role that they found to be the most and least enjoyable.

Special thanks must go to Dawn Butterworth and her daughter, Marie who undertook the difficult task of editing and designing this booklet which is intended to be circulated to members at the time of membership renewal.



Chapter Report

New South Wales



The New South Wales Chapter has not had a meeting for some time. Considerable thought has been given to ways of engaging members more effectively in the future, using educational opportunities in partnership with other like minded organisations.

The book written by Joan Waters, "A New Challenge: Helping in Early Childhood Settings," has been selling in NSW. It has been taken out to rural and remote locations as well as included as a benefit in Sydney metropolitan trainings, resulting in sales of 95 copies.

Diane Duvall—Director

Chapter Report

ACT

This year has again been very quiet in the ACT. Our membership dropped to three.

In Canberra it seems that people working in the early childhood field acknowledge OMEP as an organisation but choose to belong to other groups that have immediate relevance to their day to day employment. This lack of membership is an ongoing challenge for our organisation. There is so much change happening in the workplace that the focus is sometimes away from the immediate needs of children.

In June this year Trish Keller was awarded the Order of Australia medal for her services to children and the community. Trish has been a member of OMEP in the Act for a number of years.



Gillian Styles—Director

Chapter Report

South Australia

The chapter in recent years has found it helpful to work cooperatively with others in the education field, especially as there is such a range of groups in which early childhood professionals may participate. To this end we are represented on the ‘Our Children the Future’ conference planning committee [Dept. of Education and Children’s Services], the interim committee for the planned Unified Professional Affiliation [for the early years] and the Children’s Week Committee. Early this year we were delighted to accept an invitation to send a representative to the course review committee for the B. Ed [Early Childhood] at Uni S.A. Apart from having the opportunity for input to these groups our representation also gives us access to advice on public lectures and other events, and affords the opportunity for publicising OMEP projects and activities. Projects connected to Children’s Week for example, are included in flyers and the programme book, which go to every school and children’s centre in South Australia.

Much of the effort for the 2005-2006 year went into a project in which children, teachers and carers in junior primary schools, pre-schools, child care centres and Out of School Hours Care programs from around the state were invited to celebrate the International Year of Microcredit, by participating in a micro-credit exercise, OMEP provided \$50 grants to the total of \$950. The children, staff and parents used these funds in many imaginative ways, to make that money grow for the children of Aceh and the restitution of children’s services in the tsunami devastated Indonesian province. Ian McLeish an Australian volunteer working in the final year teacher education course at Syiah Kuala University invited 2 of his students to investigate the needs and purchase equipment for 16 kindergartens. Thus \$950 became \$5000 and helped both pre-school children and their future teachers. Funds were transferred for us by Rene Schinkel of Coffey International, which conducts projects for AusAid. We are grateful to Anne Glover AO and Karen Gillespie for the contacts which allowed safe conduct and spending of the moneys raised.

Further fund raising initiatives were a film night shared with the de Lissa Association of Early Childhood Graduates at which we saw the British “Fairy-tale” Millions, and the annual dinner in May which was addressed by Anne Glover on her post-tsunami work in Aceh for AusAid. Anne gave a graphic account of the destruction, the anguish of the people and the anguish of the helpers when they came to leave.

The chapter proposed Ms Margo Walker of Ceduna for a Children’s Week award in recognition of her stirring service to both the aboriginal and the wider communities in her work in child care, kindergarten and mentoring of other aboriginal educators. It was a delight to see her come to Government House to receive an award.

At the annual meeting of the chapter in November, Dr Bev Hall gave an account of her participation in the OMEP meetings in Cuba. Erica Gehling presented a DVD of the kindergarten children at the Cora Barclay Centre for the Hearing Impaired, who were cooking for the micro-credit project and then selling their wares at the local primary school. At an end of year gathering members had an opportunity to see the photographic records of the wonderful efforts of so many other children in their various micro-credit projects.

A great deal of chapter time over 6 months was spent on constitutional matters. We are sad that there has been some disharmony over divergent views on the constitution but pleased that OMEP is still “working for the children of the world”.



Merilyn Webb—Director

Chapter Report

Victoria

Following on from plans and hopes that had arisen out of the world Congress in 2004 we continued to plan for the future, focusing on implementing new ideas and involving members more actively. It has been a challenge to ascertain the interests and commitment of members and disappointing to see member's interest decline while there is still an enthusiasm to make a difference in the life of children. Despite the frustrations the commitment of the committee has been outstanding.

In February the committee accepted the resignation of Fiona Lynch as co-president due to travel and work commitments and we wish to thank Fiona most sincerely for her drive, vision, expertise and skill and her forward thinking.

As part of the streamlining and thinking from last year in relation to the subcommittees the notion of the social group has been interwoven throughout all events. The networking group (craft) continued to meet and make many wonderful creations; however in October 2005 the sudden death of long time OMEP member Anne Magyar shocked and saddened the Victorian chapter and has had an impact on the group.

The education group has continued the challenging task of identifying the interests of the membership. The lack of response to surveys and events has been disappointing however, despite the frustrations there have been excellent meetings and events. Our most successful event held in 2005 was Dr Francis McNabb address at Swinburne. This session was held in conjunction with the student teachers and OMEP members. This appears to be an excellent way to organise these events, linking in with another organisation which might also benefit from what OMEP has to offer and a way to advocate for OMEP. Sincere thanks to the small education committee for their outstanding efforts and commitment.

There have been a number of other small and successful occasions organised for members, some have become favourite annual events such as the card day at Greenacres golf course and theatre nights; others of both a social and educational/networking nature such as the Victorian Tapestry Workshop are new and a response to member's requests. Our thanks to members Margaret Walpole, Alison Gorman and Marion Lang for taking on this challenge.

In November 2005 in conjunction with Anglicare Eastern Region the Carepack project commenced. Each step of this project was a challenge, sourcing the materials and organising the packing into suitable age groupings. The launch was an enormous success and the excitement in the room was palpable. There have continued to be positive reports from Anglicare workers and foster care parents on the benefits of these packs for the children. In discussion with Anglicare the committee agreed to make this an annual event. The committee will be looking to members for their assistance.



Special thanks to Heather Feldman, treasurer who has continued to present and plan in a highly efficient and thoughtful manner, to Shayne Collins, secretary for her calm manner in managing the organisational details, to Alison Gorman who edits and organises the Chapter insert and Michelle Smith for coordinating the carepack project.. Finally we would like to thank all members of the Victorian Chapter for their commitment and their willingness to go the extra mile and untimely for their passion to make a difference in a child's life, anywhere in the world, in accordance with OMEP's vision. We would urge other members to become involved at either a committee level or at a grassroots level, there is room and work for everyone.

Sue Lancaster & Wendy Seidler—Co-Presidents

Chapter Report

Western Australia

The past year has been busy and fruitful as we sought to improve the lives of young children and their families living in WA and the Asia-Pacific Region. Meetings in the first part of the year turned on a consideration of the proposed new Constitution and the need to remain true to the ideals of this international organisation, whilst conforming to the demands of Australian Corporations Law.

In the spirit of cooperation with other organisations having similar aims to our own, we took part in a celebration of Children's Week at Whiteman Park in October 2005, providing bubble-blowing for the children and publicising the work of OMEP. This year, we are twinning with the Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital (WA) in a stall at the closing ceremony of Children's Week in the beautiful Hyde Park. Young children will be able to try out medical equipment and OMEP will give out dramatic play medical kits comprising such items as masks, caps, stethoscope etc.

Camaraderie and hilarity were provided at a High Tea function in November 2005, where exotic teas and delectable dainties were consumed to the strains of Italian tenors in the background. This was the precursor to the AGM and Christmas Buffet in December at the Perth Flying Squadron Yacht Club, where office bearers were elected and we heard with interest about the Kwinana Early Years Services from their manager, Lynette Itstein.

January 2006 once more saw the executive busy packaging 250 school starter kits and delivering them to needy children commencing school throughout WA. Of course, all the prior organisation had been completed by our Project Officer, Pauline Starkey and the materials had been donated by ALCOA, Wooldridges and Ashton Scholastic, with EDWA assisting with postage to rural areas.

Refugee welcoming kits comprising a backpack, welcoming letter, toys, toiletries, drawing materials and simple clothing items have been distributed through English language classes and currently through the Refugee clinic at PMH. Responding to the plight of children appearing inappropriately dressed, donations of good used clothing have been made, along with a store of household goods from which needy parents are invited to choose items.

To celebrate 'International Year of Deserts and Desertification,' 200 fleecy beanies donated by ALCOA were distributed to young children living in the Gibson Desert. In addition, resources have been distributed to the schools in the Ngaanyatarru Lands to facilitate study of conservation, caring for the environment and deserts of the world and students have been invited to display the outcomes of their projects.



Improvised play materials Cuba 2005

On the back of WA's contribution to the tsunami appeal, other needy young children in our region have not been forgotten! As a result of the WA President's visit to a colleague establishing preschool education in the jungles of Paitan, Sabah, donations of toys, clothing and money for resources were made. In addition, an outboard motor was donated so that children could be taken to school down river by boat, negating the need for a 1 hour trek through the jungle to reach school. This is an ongoing project for us as more centres are progressively established in neighbouring villages. An audiology clinic in Surabaya, Indonesia was also assisted with a bag of soft toys to comfort young hospitalised children awaiting surgery.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the contribution made by our Director, Michelle Sullivan, whose term will end at the Annual General Meeting.

Dawn Butterworth—President

Financial Report 2005/06

Please find attached to the Annual Report a full audited copy of the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2006 provided by Selby Westhorpe & Partners Pty Ltd.

As you will read in the financial statements the outcome for the company for the financial year was a loss of \$7,267. It has been a difficult year with regard to the operational budget of the organisation. Although income from memberships for the year, the organisations main source of income, remained relatively stable with an income for 2006 of \$11,307 compared to an income of \$11,639 in 2005 there have been considerable additional costs to the organisation which are reflected in this outcome. These include:

Director and Public Liability Insurance which was previously covered under the Service Agreement for the Congress with the Department of Human Services.

It should be noted that the amount of \$4,598 includes cover for the period 2005-07.

Accounting fees of \$3,927 include preparation of statements for the Australian Taxation Office relating to the Congress.

Legal costs of \$770 in relation to the Estate of Ms Nancy Bastow.

Travel and Accommodation of \$5,209 includes an additional Face to Face meeting required to support Constitutional reform.

Higher than usual postage and printing relating to Constitutional matters.

However, the year has seen the growth in the Company's assets. OMEP is extremely fortunate to have made a considerable profit from the Congress, reported in the financial statement 2005. This together with the generous bequest of Ms Nancy Bastow is capital to be invested in the coming financial year and will generate interest to further the work of OMEP into the future.

As in past years I acknowledge the support and advice given to the organisation by our accountant Michelle Westhorpe. Michelle has advised that as of 1 July 2006 new Auditing Standards have been introduced. This will mean that future audits will rely less on the judgment of the auditor and more on regulation as set out in the new Standards.



Sue Lancaster
Treasurer