

Reggio Emilia Australia
INFORMATION EXCHANGE
re search for a new culture of childhood

REAIE Network Convenors and Co-Convenors Resource



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About Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange

Vision

REsearch for a new culture of childhood

Mission

In response to the educational project of Reggio Emilia and its implications for Australian contexts, REAIE makes a commitment to:

- Promote a strong and positive image of children as citizens and active participants in democratic communities through the promotion of the critical role of research, observation, documentation and interpretation of children's processes of action and thought.
- Advocate for social justice and democracy in education, giving priority to active constructive creative learning by children.
- Sustain the strong relationship between REAIE and Reggio Children, as an invited representative of the Reggio Children international Network, through the promotion of dialogue, professional learning and research about the educational project of Reggio Emilia.

Values

When making decisions and advocating for the work of the organisation, Reggio Emilia Australia information Exchange staff, volunteers and committee pledge to:

- Honour children;
- Act with respect and integrity
- Be democratic and ethical; and
- Support learning, teaching and research.

We believe that these values reflect the vision and mission of the organisation and will support our decision making processes

Constitution

To view REAIE's Constitution click [here](#).

Annual Report

Click [here](#) to view REAIE's latest Annual Report

Useful Information

Click [here](#) for link to Network tools:

Agenda, minutes proforma and application for network funds.

[Network Convenors Webpage](#)



Welcome from the REAIE Committee

Dear Network Convenors and Co-Convenors,

Thank you for undertaking the important role of Ambassador and Network Convenor for the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE). REAIE Network Groups play a pivotal role in supporting the organisation and actively promoting our Vision and Mission, ensuring a sense of purpose, collegiality and direction across Australia.

This resource has been co-constructed by REAIE Committee Members, Network Convenors and Network Co-Convenors.

This resource aims to support REAIE Convenors in their role of leading, developing and sustaining Network Groups in different geographical locations. It has been designed to provide you with important information about REAIE, the role and expectations of the Network groups, Network Convenors and Co-Convenors.

We look forward to working in partnership with you.
Please do not hesitate to contact the office for any support and information.

Kind regards

Ruth Wallbridge

REAIE Chairperson on behalf of REAIE Committee



History of REAIE

REAIE was initially known as the Reggio Emilia Information Exchange (REIE) and was established in 1995 to provide an opportunity for dialogue about education within Australia.

In 1992, Jan Millikan, founder member, organised the first Australian Study Tour to Reggio Emilia, joined by a group of 15 educators from across Australia. It was during this first tour that Jan and Mary Featherston, (Australian design maven) met with Loris Malaguzzi to begin talks about securing the Hundred Languages Exhibition to visit Melbourne. With the support of both Melbourne University and the Museum of Victoria, the Exhibition arrived in Melbourne in 1994, accompanied by a conference with speakers from Reggio Emilia and the USA. This conference was the first of many that would be facilitated by REAIE in ensuing years.

A newsletter was developed in 1992 -1993 in response to the many requests from the participants in the study tours to Reggio Emilia. Study tour participants came from many States and Territories of Australia who had expressed a desire to stay connected with these ideas. The newsletter became a vehicle of communication for disseminating information about the Exhibition and upcoming conferences. This newsletter was the beginning of what would later become The Challenge Journal.

In 1995, the newly established Reggio Children invited Jan Millikan to be the International representative for Australia. As a result of this request, Jan founded the Reggio Emilia Information Exchange, a private entity. REIE responded to the interest in the provocation of the educational project of Reggio Emilia for the cultural context of Australia. Later the name was transferred to establish an incorporated, non-profit organisation in collaboration with a small group of colleagues.

At this time, 'RE-search' discussion groups began in Melbourne, closely followed by Sydney in 1996. These discussion groups were also established in other States and Territories, and now REAIE has numerous Network Groups meeting regularly across the country. These Network Groups inspired research and dialogue and focused on the implications for practice in Australian educational settings.

In 2001, the Reggio Emilia Information Exchange was the recipient of a bequest that assisted their work. This funding enabled the lease of an office located in Melbourne University's Hawthorn Campus. The ownership of the name Reggio Emilia Information Exchange was transferred to the committee of the Victorian Network, which at that time consisted of 300 members across Australia. The committee decided that the Reggio Emilia Information Exchange should become a national membership organisation. Jan Millikan was appointed as Director of REIE at this time, and the first draft of the Vision and Mission statement was shared in The Challenge magazine for member collaboration.

In 2006, the Reggio Emilia Information Exchange became Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE). At the 2007 Annual General Meeting, the title evolved to reflect the Vision and Mission of the organisation to:

Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange: re search for a new culture of childhood.

Today, REAIE continues the work that began in 1995. REAIE is governed by a Committee of Management with representation from most States and Territories of Australia and supported by employed staff in Melbourne. The REAIE Committee provides strategic direction for the organisation that promotes the implementation of the Vision and Mission.

The current version of this resource for Network Convenors and Co-Convenors was developed collaboratively between the Network Convenors Project Group and Network Convenors from various States and Territories both online and face-to-face during 2018 and 2019.



REAIE Business

In June 2018 a strategic planning day was held with staff and committee members where the vision and mission of the organisation was revisited. A new set of values were developed and a commitment made to work within these values.

Following the work undertaken at the strategic planning day the committee approved the decision to work in a different way in order to support the continued development of the organisation.

An overarching aim for the organisation was identified: ***To bring to fruition the REAIE vision, mission and values.***

In order to support this overarching aim, four key organisational objectives were developed:

- To develop a sustainable business where income generation consistently exceeds expenditure by 5%.
- To improve marketing and communications and increase membership by 10% per year.
- To facilitate research and development and publish two projects per year.
- To develop and implement a professional learning strategy that generates 100% profit and contributes to the growth and sustainability of the organisation.

As a result of the strategic planning day four project groups were established:

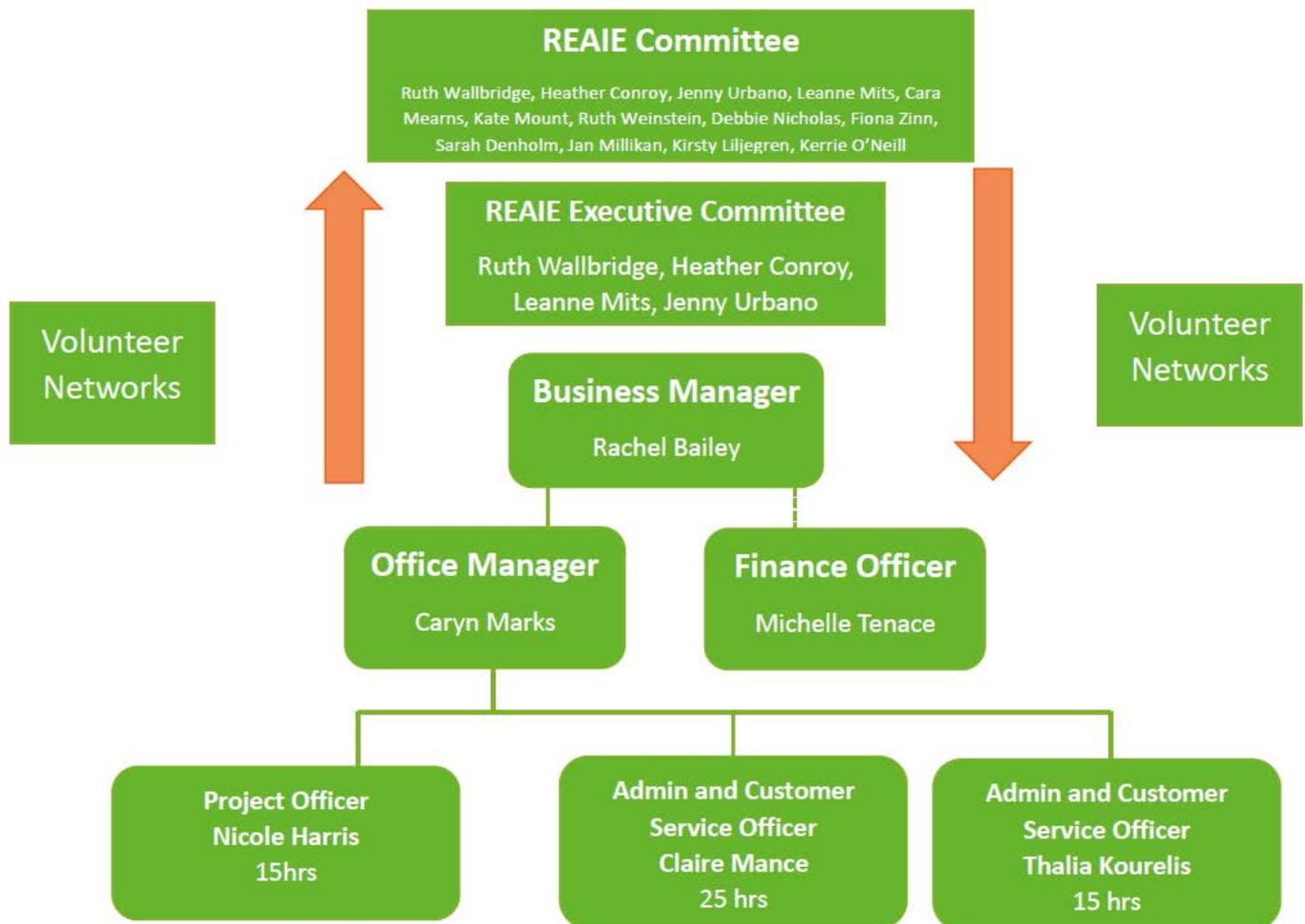
- Business Development
- Marketing and Communications
- Research and Development
- Professional Learning

These four project groups have been operational since July 2018 and each group has representation from staff, committee members and volunteers. The responsibility of the project groups is to drive forward business activity to support the achievement of the related business objective.

REAIE Networks are crucial to the ongoing development of REAIE and Network Convenors and Co convenors are critical to supporting the infrastructure of REAIE.



Relationship & Communication Chart for REAIE





The 2019 REAIE Committee

The REAIE Committee is a group of volunteers that serves the members through project groups and collaborative decision-making. The Committee are elected for a two-year term and meet monthly. The current Committee members are listed below.

Executive

- Ruth Wallbridge - Chairperson
- Heather Conroy - Vice Chairperson
- Jenny Urbano - Treasurer
- Leanne Mits – Secretary & Public Officer

Committee

- Cara Mearns
 - Debbie Nicholas
 - Ruth Weinstein
 - Jan Millikan
 - Kate Mount
- Sarah Denholm
 - Kirsty Liljegren
 - Fiona Zinn
 - Kerrie O’Neill



Definition of a Network Group

The definition of a Network Group is a group of REAIE members organised by geographical location and/or special interest who meet regularly to actively promote the Vision, Mission and initiatives of REAIE ensuring a sense of purpose, collegiality and direction across Australia.

Network Groups are a benefit of REAIE membership, and REAIE members can attend any Network Group meeting across Australia.

REAIE Networks Groups:

- Are ambassadors for REAIE, instrumental to the growth and development of the organisation
- Contribute to the work of the REAIE Committee in advocating for children's rights and active citizenship within their contexts
- Provide a forum for mutual support and exchange, enabling educators to safely share ideas and experiences and critically reflect on their own practice and pedagogy in relation to the values and principles of the Educational Project of Reggio Emilia
- The identity of each Network Group reflects and responds to its unique context, meeting the needs of individual REAIE members.

Purpose of Network Groups

REAIE Networks bring together, for the purpose of creating a strong network, like-minded educators interested in further developing and extending their knowledge of the values and principles of the educational project of Reggio Emilia.

Jan Millikan

Network Groups will:

- Actively promote the Vision, Mission and initiatives of REAIE
- Facilitate professional learning and collaboration
- Provide forums where members feel a sense of connectedness with each other
- Organise centre/school visits, which serve as provocations for deepening learning and further the reciprocal exchange of practice and values
- Support members to share their practice and research projects by submitting articles for the Challenge
- Support the growth and development of existing and new members.



How are Network Convenors appointed?

Network Groups have evolved differently in different States and Territories. For example, in some States and Territories, small working groups have formed to support the work of Network Convenors and in others Network Convenors have appointed Co-Convenors. Some groups are represented by individual Network Convenors.

In line with the REAIE Strategic plan, the members of these working groups should be referred to, in the future, as Co-Convenors.

Historically, Network Convenors were self-appointed, initiated by a desire to meet other people interested in the Educational Project of Reggio Emilia. It was agreed in 2019, in collaboration with Network Convenor and Co-Convenor representatives to adopt a more formal and strategic approach. These appointments will coincide with the annual appointment of REAIE Committee members in March each year.

The process will be as follows:

- When a new Network Group has been operational for two years, members of that group are eligible to apply, through an expression of interest, to undertake the role of Network Convenor.
- Prospective Network Convenors and Co-Convenors in established Network Groups may submit an expression of interest (click [here](#)) to the REAIE office for a two-year term of office.
- Expressions of interest will be considered by the identified criteria for the role by the REAIE Business Manager in consultation with the Professional Learning Co-ordinator and Network members
- Eligible candidates who are willing to agree to the REAIE Network Convenors Code of Conduct will be notified of the outcome of their application. If there is more than one candidate that meets the criteria, an online voting process will be initiated by the REAIE office. Successful applicants will be notified, and the relevant Network Group will be informed.



Roles and responsibilities of Network Convenors and Co-Convenors

Biannual Network Convenor and Co-Convenor Meetings

Network Convenors and Co-Convenors will:

- Sign the Network Convenor and Co Convenor code of conduct annually (click [here](#)).
- Ensure that one representative from each Network Group will attend, in person or online, at least two Network Convenor meetings per year. REAIE will schedule these meetings to coincide with professional learning, conference events or the Annual General Meeting.
- REAIE commits to funding the airfare and accommodation (if required) for one representative (Network Convenor or Co-Convenor) from each Network Group twice per calendar year.
- The agenda for the Network Convenor meetings will be co-constructed between the Network Convenors Project Group and Network Convenors and Co-Convenors.
- The agenda will be emailed by the REAIE office to Network Convenors and Co-Convenors (where applicable) two weeks before the meeting.

Network Group Meetings

A Declaration of Intent for the upcoming calendar year will be developed by the Network Convenor/Co-Convenors in collaboration with the Network Group and can be completed online by the 30th June annually. Please click [here](#).

The Declaration of Intent will include:

- Dates for at least 3 Network Group meetings or events during the upcoming twelve months.

Responsibilities at Network Group Meetings

- Prepare and keep a copy of the agendas and notes or minutes of each Network Group meeting and send a copy to the REAIE office for filing.
- Invite all REAIE members in the relevant geographical location to that meeting. This will be emailed by the REAIE office to Network group members before your next meeting.
- Designate a person or persons in the Network to take notes or minutes at each meeting to be compiled and sent to all members before the next meeting.



Other responsibilities

1. The Network Convenors and Co-Convenors should keep an archive of materials to be handed to future convenors.
2. Network convenors should store any materials or REAIE resources left over from events and return to REAIE.
3. Contact the REAIE office if the Network Group would like to apply for the Network funds (click [here](#)).
4. You could consider collaborating with Network Group members by doing any of the following:
 - a) Find out the interest and capacity of members of your Network in contributing to the ongoing work of the Network Group – e.g. organising events, preparing printed materials, preparing presentations, publicity, etc.
 - b) Encourage Network Group members to participate by using their individual skills and expertise to accomplish the Network Group's goals.
5. Ensure that the report template is completed and returned to the REAIE office annually by the end of January for inclusion in the REAIE Annual Report.
6. Present the Network Group annual report to your Network Group.



Ideas for Network Meetings

There are many possibilities for Network Group meetings. Most meetings run for approximately two hours and may follow the following format:

6:00 pm – 6:15 pm	Arrival, greetings and refreshments
6:15 pm – 6:40 pm	Introductions (60 second introductions by each member followed by introduction of any guests)
6:40 pm – 7:20 pm	Guest speaker or open forum discussion
7:20 pm – 7:30 pm	General discussion and information dissemination

Ideas for meetings/events:

Guest speakers:	Guest speakers may draw on expertise in your local community, but they may also be opportunistic, e.g. a visitor to your city/town or organised through the REAIE Professional Learning coordinator.
Sharing documentation:	Dialogue around documentation is a good basis for a meeting. Documentation may come from the network, but it may also be work done in other contexts. These discussions are extremely valuable for developing knowledge and practice.
Group research:	Networks research the same topic with children, for example, 'Children and the City' and discuss the progress of the research at each meeting.
Study Group:	A number of networks take a book club approach where a reading about Reggio Emilia is studied and discussed each month. This is a very effective way to develop understanding about the Reggio Approach.



The REAIE National Office

The REAIE office is located within Melbourne University's Hawthorn campus, 442 Auburn Road, Hawthorn, Victoria.

Contact details:

 admin@reggioaustralia.org.au

 +61 3 98103166 or +61 3 98103126

REAIE Network Coordination

The role to support Network Convenors in the running of their groups and to facilitate the relationship between Network groups and the REAIE Committee is facilitated by staff in the REAIE office. Pedagogical mentoring can also be requested through the REAIE office to support Network Convenors.

How the REAIE Office can assist Networks

The REAIE Office can:

1. set up an @reggioaustralia email account for your group.
2. set up Network meetings as events requiring everyone to preregister. REAIE members who log in will be able to register for free; non-members will need to pay online at the time of booking (this fee will vary depending on the meeting). The Office can then send a list of attendees to Convenors; anyone who has not registered can add their name and contact details and the Office will invoice them if they are a non-member.
3. create postcards for your network group from images and text supplied by you.
4. create Network-specific areas on the REAIE website for communication and uploading readings etc.
5. provide Convenors with a list of current REAIE members.
6. send out notification of meetings and events to your Network.
7. assist with flyers for meetings and events thereby ensuring consistent branding.

Please ensure all formal correspondence; flyers and advertising are created by the office so that we continue to present a professional image using approved styling and branding.



FAQs and Helpful Information

How often should a network meet?

This is up to each network but should be at least three times a year. Some networks meet each month; others meet each school term. Regular meetings help build relationships amongst members.

Can non-members attend?

REAIE Network Groups are for REAIE members. Network group meetings are free of charge for REAIE members; non-members may be able to attend one meeting before becoming a member.

Do I need to keep meeting attendance records and minutes?

Yes. It is a good idea to keep track of each meeting. Meeting records vary from being formal minutes, to notes of proceedings. Please send these to the REAIE office for filing.

Templates for meeting minutes can be found [here](#)

Where can I find readings for the Network group to study?

Sets of readings around selected topics can be requested through the REAIE office who will be happy to help source the information that you require. Currently, the following sets are available:

- Introduction to Reggio Emilia: Basic Principles
- Documentation: Children and Teachers as Researchers
- Environment, Spaces, and relations
- Children as protagonists in their own growth and development
- The Hundred Languages

How do I contact the REAIE Committee?

All questions and comments to the Committee can be directed to the REAIE office who will forward your email to the relevant Committee member/s.

The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition

The Hundred Languages of Children is a travelling exhibition that has been telling the story of the Reggio Emilia educational experience worldwide to thousands of visitors for over twenty-five years (1981-2008). It is available for lease by Networks – contact the office for more details.



Funds

REAIE Networks make an enormous contribution to supporting REAIE members and the vision and mission of REAIE as a whole. The REAIE Committee supports the Networks by setting aside all money raised through the National Twilight Visits program (less 20% administration) in a fund. This fund can be accessed by each of the network groups (upon application and approval by the Business Manager), enabling them to offer their own speakers and events.

The criteria for accessing these funds were developed by the Committee in consultation with Network Group Convenors.

Criteria for accessing funds:

1. The degree to which the proposed project or event supports the mission of REAIE:
 - i. Defend and promote the rights of all children.
 - ii. Promote a strong and positive image of children as citizens and active participants in democratic communities.
 - iii. Promote dialogue, professional learning and research about the educational project of Reggio Emilia.
 - iv. Advocate for social justice and democracy in education, giving priority to active, constructive and creative learning by children.
 - v. Promote the critical role of research, observation, documentation, and interpretation of children's processes of action and thought.
 - vi. Sustain and strengthen the relationship between REAIE and Reggio Children and continue to be their national reference organisation in Australia.
2. The percentage of network members who are also individual members of REAIE.*
3. The degree to which the funded program or event provides opportunities for participation from members from other networks, especially where more than one network group operates in the same State.

** As funds have been raised by REAIE, it is important that priority is given to supporting REAIE members*

To access funds:

To access funds send a written request to: admin@reggioaustralia.org.au :

- i. signed by 3 REAIE individual members;
- ii. outlining the purpose of the grant;
- iii. Demonstrating how the request meets the criteria

Click [here](#) to view application form.



REAIE Networks

ACT	Tanya Stevenson Subhadra Chapman	canberra@reggioaustralia.org.au
NSW	Cathy Milwidsky Samantha Mott Ruth Weinstein	easternsuburbsnsw@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Jessica Rix Paula West	researchconversationsnsw@@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Ruth Mules Deb Garrett	innerwestsydneyreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Wendy Boyd Shauna McIntyre	northernriversnsw@reggioaustralia.org.au
QLD	Renee Mitchell Letitia Harvey	brisbanereggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Karen Humphreys	goldcoastreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Marion Hayes	capricorncoastreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
SA	Holly Baulderstone	sareggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Sally Gower	limestonecoastreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
TAS	David Gilkes	tasreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
VIC	Jo Dowling	melbournereggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Pat Barbieri	mornpenreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au
	Andrea Menon	westernsuburbsmelbourne@reggioaustralia.org.au
WA	TBC	perthreggio@reggioaustralia.org.au



Keeping in Contact with Your Group

To ensure consistency in the branding and presentation of REAIE we recommend the following guidelines when sending emails on behalf of REAIE.

1. Use the BCC field when sending emails to network group participants.
2. Contact the REAIE office to arrange to have mailing lists set up.
3. Ensure the content of the message, only has the message relevant to the Network Group.
4. Try not to forward previous conversations.
5. Do not reply all, unless the conversation is relevant to all recipients.
6. A well-chosen “subject line” can help get your message read.
7. It’s often a good idea to get someone to proofread a message before you send it, especially if it contains a lot of information.