

## ACA Victoria Executive Board Nomination 2025

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**Nominee:** Max Bergh

**Service Provider:** AMIGA Montessori

**Bio:**

Max is the CEO and Approved Provider of AMIGA Montessori, bringing almost 20 years of experience in early childhood education. She co-founded AMIGA with her family in 2006 and has grown the organisation to 15 centres across Victoria and South Australia.

Max is a values-driven leader with hands-on experience across all aspects of service delivery, from the classroom to executive leadership. She is passionate about quality education, staff wellbeing, and sustainable sector growth, with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing providers today.

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**Describe your experience in the early childhood education and care sector.**

With over 20 years in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector, I began as a Montessori assistant and now serve as CEO of AMIGA Montessori, a family-owned group of 17 centres across Victoria and South Australia. I lead more than 600 staff and 2,500 children, overseeing operations, pedagogy, compliance, and financial performance. Under my leadership, AMIGA has doubled its revenue in three years and was recognised at the 2024 Pemba Capital Partners Summit Awards as one of Australia’s fastest-growing education providers. I was also honoured with the 2024 Montessori Australia Business Administration Living Legends Award for leadership and contribution to the sector. As a lawyer and advocate, I bring strong governance, regulatory, and strategic expertise—grounded in a lifelong commitment to authentic Montessori education and the advancement of the ECEC profession.

**Tell us what makes ACA Victoria’s mission meaningful to you.**

ACA Victoria’s mission matters deeply to me because it champions balance—between quality and viability, advocacy and accountability, children and business. In a sector often divided by ideology or regulation, ACA Victoria stands for practical, united solutions that help providers deliver exceptional care while remaining sustainable. The organisation’s core work—advocating for fairness, sustainability, and authentic quality in early learning—has been pivotal in guiding the sector through rapid change. As we stand at an inflection point, with Universal Childcare, workforce reform, and funding pressures reshaping the landscape, ACA Victoria’s leadership and advocacy will be more critical than ever. I see its mission as one of stewardship: supporting providers through conflict and complexity, ensuring their voices are heard, and safeguarding the stability of a sector built to serve children and families well into the future.

**Describe any Board Leadership experience you have had to date.**

I have served on the Board of the Wyndham Vale Montessori Centre Group for five years, where I implemented regular board meetings, performance KPIs, and governance frameworks to strengthen accountability and decision-making. This experience deepened my understanding of strategic oversight, stakeholder management, and operational governance within an early childhood context. Since May 2024, I have also served on the ACA Victoria Board, contributing actively to internal initiatives, lending a strong and pragmatic voice to board discussions, and representing the organisation at events and national working groups. Through these roles, I've developed a balanced perspective that combines governance discipline with practical operational insight—ensuring that decisions remain both principled and achievable in the realities of our sector.

**Outline any skills, connections, resources, or expertise you can provide to improve the services ACA Victoria offers to its members.**

I bring a blend of strategic, legal, and operational expertise developed through leading a large Montessori organisation across Victoria and South Australia. As CEO of AMIGA Montessori, I oversee governance, financial strategy, compliance, workforce planning, and quality practice across 17 centres—experience that translates directly to supporting ACA Victoria's members in navigating regulatory, workforce, and operational challenges. My background as a lawyer provides strong governance and policy insight, particularly in compliance and legislative interpretation. I have extensive networks across the ECEC, legal, and corporate sectors, and actively collaborate with regulators, advisors, and providers to translate policy into practical solutions. I also bring communication and advocacy strength—able to articulate provider perspectives clearly, build partnerships, and mobilise engagement—supporting ACA Victoria's mission to be both a trusted voice and a unifying force for the sector.

**Confirm that you can commit to the time required for meetings and other duties as outlined in the Executive Board Position Description.**

I confirm I am able to commit to the requirements.

**What are your thoughts on the key challenges and opportunities facing the Early Childhood Education and Care sector?**

The sector is at a pivotal moment. The transition toward Universal Childcare presents both extraordinary opportunity and serious risk. The greatest challenge lies in ensuring that a supply-side funding model is costed and structured in a way that sustains high-quality education and care into the future—without disadvantaging smaller or independent providers. True reform must protect quality, diversity, and viability across all service types. At the same time, there is an opportunity for ACA Victoria to lead the dialogue—not just on policy design, but on public perception. The sector deserves a stronger, more visible voice in the media—one that showcases the excellence, innovation, and dedication within our services, and supports providers navigating public scrutiny or misinformation. With the right advocacy and unity, we can position ECEC as both an economic necessity and a cornerstone of Australia's social infrastructure.

**Indicate how you might use your time on the ACA Victoria's Board to address these challenges and opportunities.**

If re-elected, I would use my time on the Board to help ensure that ACA Victoria remains a strong, solutions-driven advocate as the sector navigates major reform. My focus would be on three key areas:

1. **Advocacy and representation:** Working to ensure all providers—from small independents to larger groups—have their interests represented in the design and costing of a Universal Childcare model that supports long-term quality and sustainability.
2. **Visibility and influence:** Supporting ACA Victoria to strengthen its media presence and communications strategy—telling the positive stories of our sector and ensuring providers feel supported when facing public or regulatory scrutiny.
3. **Policy to practice:** Drawing on my operational, legal, and governance experience to translate policy into practical, achievable frameworks that help services thrive, not just comply.

**What are your ideas to enhance ACA Victoria’s engagement with its members?**

I believe genuine engagement begins with listening. Our professional development offerings should be shaped directly by members—identifying their real challenges and designing in-person, role-specific training that delivers practical skills and immediate value. Each session should leave members equipped with tools they can implement the next day.

Equally important is support beyond training. ACA Victoria can strengthen engagement by working closely with members during times of crisis—whether that’s media scrutiny, compliance pressure, or critical incidents—and being a visible, reliable source of guidance and advocacy.

At the same time, we should be proactive in the public space, showcasing the outstanding work being done across our sector and positioning early childhood education as a profession defined by excellence, not crisis. Engagement must empower, protect, and celebrate our members in equal measure.