



MacKillop
Family
Services

The MacKillop
Institute



MacKillop
Seasons



Lead the Way Conference 2025



11–12 August | Melbourne | Rydges

Strengthening Wellbeing and Safety
through Collaboration

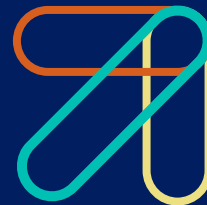


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About

Across two days of keynotes, panel discussions, research presentations, and interactive workshops, the conference will explore:

- Cross-sector insights for strengthening safety and wellbeing.
- How evidence-based approaches improve outcomes.
- What real-world examples of practice look like across sectors.



Inspiring Keynotes

Experts on trauma, culture, child safety, wellbeing and leadership.



Cutting Edge Research

Evidence-informed insights for safer environments.



Real-World Case Studies

Examples of practice transforming schools and organisations.



Networking

Connect with leaders across sectors.



The conference is a celebration of collaborating across sectors, providing an opportunity for knowledge sharing and promoting the critical importance for us all to have a deep understanding of trauma and its impact on the families and children we support, and the staff who support them.



Dr Robyn Miller AM

Chief Executive Officer
MacKillop Family Services

Keynote Speakers



Meena Singh

Acting Principal
Commissioner and
Commissioner for Aboriginal
Children and Young People



Joe Ball

Commissioner for LGBTIQ+
Communities



Dr Ross Greene

Clinical Psychologist
New York Times
Bestselling Author



Prof. Pasi Sahlberg

Professor
Educational Leadership
University of Melbourne



Prof. Leah Bromfield

Director
Australian Centre for
Child Protection
University of South Australia



Prof. Anne Graham

Director
Centre for Children &
Young People
Southern Cross University

Guest Speakers



A/Prof Lisa McKay-Brown
Associate Professor
Diversity & Inclusion University of Melbourne



A/Prof Tim Moore
Associate Professor
Institute of Child Protection Studies
Australian Catholic University (ACU)



Zoë Robinson
NSW Advocate for Children
and Young People



Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji
CEO
Third Culture, Victorian Youth
Multicultural Commissioner



Esmail Manahan
National Director,
Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islander Services
MacKillop Family Services



Jocelyn Bignold OAM
CEO
McAuley Community
Services for Women



Jahin Tanvir
CEO
Australian School of
Entrepreneurship



David Burroughs
Founder
Australian Psychological
Services



Rabbi Zalman Kastel AM
Founder
Together for Humanity



Fiona McCallum
General Manager
MacKillop Seasons



Dr Beau Hu
National School Partnerships Manager
Together for Humanity



Dr Gemma McKibbin
Senior Research Fellow
University of Melbourne



Annette Schneider
CEO
Together for Humanity



Dr Phil Lambert PSM
Adjunct Professor
University of Sydney



Simangaliso Nyoni
Multicultural Practice Lead
MacKillop Family Services



Allison Wainwright
CEO
Family Life



Louise Hall
National & International
Partnership
MacKillop Seasons



Josh Darby
Project Lead
Whanaungatanga
Fire & Emergency
New Zealand



Dr Nikki Jamieson
Defence –
Strategic Advisor
Suicide Prevention,
Lived Experience
and Moral Injury



Matthew Spicer
Director
Clinical Training Services
The Centre for Positive
Behaviour Support (CPBS)



Keeva Mostyn
Seasons for Life Lead
MacKillop Seasons



Cameron Burgess
Program Director
Sanctuary



Dr Trixie James
Lecturer
School of Access Education
CQUniversity



Douglas Russel
Senior Research Officer
Institute of Child Protection
Studies, ACU



Kathy Karatasas
Founder & CEO
CulturalWorks

Guest Speakers



Cleo Westhorpe
Founder, PIVOT
Professional Learning



Prof Myf Maple
Prof of Social Work
University of New
England



Dr Tracy Castileno
Founder
ShantiWorks



Tammy Wallace
Strategic Manager
Engagement and Inclusion
Churches of Christ



Kate Martin
Head of Practice Quality
and Impact
Endeavour Foundation



Clare Pritchard
Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive
Yoga Facilitator (TCTSY-F)



Emma Esposito
School Social Worker
Coburn Primary School



Hayley Wainwright
Project Manager
Australian Research Council
Grant Monash University



Dr Justine Grogan
Senior Advisor for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Education
Australian Institute for Teaching
and School Leadership



Kathleen McInnes
Student Wellbeing Case
Manager
Coburn Primary School



Phil Slade
Co-founder
Switch4Schools



Selba-Gondoza Luka OAM
CEO
Afri-Aus Care Inc.



Lee Bromley
Founder
Eternity Aid



Deb Tsorbaris
CEO
Centre for Excellence in
Child and Family Welfare



KA McKercher
Founder
Beyond Sticky Notes



Robert Boucher
Principal,
Swifts Creek P-12



Peta Simpson
eSMART Engagement
Manager
Alannah & Madeline



Kathy Warwick
Head of Trauma Consulting
Alannah & Madeline



Genevieve Bloxsum
Researcher
University of Melbourne



Camille Schloeffel
Founder
The STOP Campaign



Justin Roberts
National Program Director
ReLATE



Dr John Molineux
Senior Lecturer
Deakin Business School
Deakin University



Alex Dalton
Peer Researcher
Orygen



Smeeta Singh
National Program Director
Power to Kids



Alison Parolo
Principal
Baldvis Secondary College

Presenting Organisations



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Conference Streams and Topics

Sessions across the two days are grouped to match the role of audience members, but real impact comes from cross-sector learning. Attendees are encouraged to explore all streams, gain fresh perspectives, and strengthen practice by learning from colleagues in other sectors.

Below are some of the topics already confirmed for the conference.

STREAM A: EMPOWERED SCHOOLS: WELLBEING, SAFETY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Cultivating Cultural Responsiveness

Supporting Identity and Belonging for Young People

Equipping Young People for the Future

Wellbeing, Inclusion and Opportunity through Entrepreneurial Education

Building Emotional and Grief Literacy

Supporting Whole-of-School Communities Following a Suicide or Other Loss Event

The Power of Paws

Animal-Assisted Education Interventions to Support Social Emotional Skills with Students

Supporting Students

Experiencing 'School Can't' to Re-Engage in Learning

We Belong

The Practical Implementation of Collaborative Practice in Schools

Empowering Educators to Have Brave Conversations

Power to Kids in Schools and the Role of Staff in Safeguarding Children

STREAM B: STRONGER COMMUNITIES: CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN PRACTICE

Building Bridges in Fractured Spaces

Intercultural Understanding as a Foundation for Safe and Inclusive Communities

Grief Support

Building Capacity to Support the Grief Experiences of Children & Young People Living in Out-of-Home Care

Belonging, Identity & Mental Wellbeing

A Roadmap for Young People

Responding to Harm, Building Safety

Co-Designed Prevention Strategies for Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Child and Youth Services

Moral Injury

A New Dimension to Trauma

Trauma Informed

Integrating Trauma-Informed Care into Child and Family Services: Strategies for Practitioners

Innovations in Child Protection

Research-Driven Strategies for Preventing Abuse

STREAM C: THRIVING WORKPLACES: CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH

Psychosocial Safety at Work

How Organisations Can Assist or Hinder Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health

The Whanaungatanga Program

A New Approach to Mental Ill Health Prevention in Emergency Workforces

Healing Organisational Systems

From Trauma-Affected to Trauma-Informed Systems

Contemporary Leadership for the Human Professions

Safe Harbours or Turbulent Seas?

The Invisible Toll

Combatting Vicarious Trauma in Human-Centred Workforces

Designing for Wellbeing

Building Resilience and Positive Psychology in Adult and Adolescent Learners

Building Organisational Cultures of Safety

Agenda

DAY 1 | MONDAY, 11 AUG 2025

Conference Seminar Key:

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS: WELLBEING, SAFETY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION	STRONGER COMMUNITIES: CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN PRACTICE	THRIVING WORKPLACES: CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH
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8.00 AM - 9.00 AM	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION LEVEL 1, RYDGES HOTEL							
9.00 AM - 10.30 AM	OPENING PLENARY						CENTRE STAGE	
	Welcome Ceremony Welcome to Country Opening Address - Meena Singh , Acting Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People and Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Commission for Children and Young People Keynote - Professor Pasi Sahlberg, Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Melbourne - Lead the way toward the future we need Dr Robyn Miller AM, CEO, MacKillop Family Services							
10.30 AM - 11.10 AM	MORNING TEA - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2						MINDFUL YOGA 11.00 AM - 11.10 AM - MEETING PLACE 2	
ROOM	CENTRE STAGE 1 LEVEL 1	CENTRE STAGE 2 LEVEL 2	MEETING PLACE 2 LEVEL 1	MEETING PLACE 3 LEVEL 1	MEETING PLACE 4 LEVEL 1	TERRACE 1 LEVEL 2	TERRACE 2 LEVEL 2	TERRACE 3 LEVEL 2
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1	Rabbi Zalman Kastel AM Together for Humanity <i>Grappling with Diverse Beliefs, Identities and Cultures.</i> Session: 60 minutes 11.10 am-11.40 am	David Burroughs Australian Psychological Services <i>Psychological Safety in Practice.</i> Session: 60 minutes 11.10pm - 12.10pm	Associate Professor Lisa MacKay-Brown University of Melbourne <i>International Practices Improving Student Attendance.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am	Genevieve Bloxson & Dr Gemma McKibbin University of Melbourne <i>Financially Coerced "self-produced" Child Sexual Exploitation Material: How Do We Intervene?</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am	Cleo Westhorpe Pivot Professional Learning & Robert Boucher Swifts Creek P-12 <i>Taming the Seahorse Curve: Understanding and Improving Student Connectedness P-12.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am	Skye Staudé MacKillop Education <i>Leading Well in Complex Environments.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am	Louise Hall MacKillop Seasons & Jas Perry MacKillop Family Services <i>Building Capacity to Support the Grief Experiences of Children & Young People Living in Out-Of-Home Care.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am	Advanced Life Photography <i>Have a professional photo taken by our Gold Sponsor: AdvancedLife Photography</i> Session: 11.10 am-12.25 pm 75 mins
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2	Panel Discussion: Chair: Annette Schneider Panellists: Dr Beau Hu, Simangaliso Nyoni, Selba-Gondozo Luka OAM, Anish Varghese Frazer Bekele <i>Cultivating Cultural Responsiveness - Supporting Identity and Belonging for Young People.</i> Session: 40 minutes 11.45 am-12.25 pm	Alex Dalton Peer Researcher, Orygen Foundation <i>Whole of Self-Affirming Care: What is it and Why is it Important?</i> Session: 15 minutes 12.10 pm-12.25 pm	Dr John Molineux Deakin University <i>Secondary Trauma and Educators' Pathways to Mitigating its Impacts.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm	Douglas Russell Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University <i>It takes a village community to keep a child safe!</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm	Dr Trixie James CQ University <i>Let's Be Positive Together: Empowering Equity Students Through Positive Psychology.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm	Alison Wainwright Family Life <i>Family Life - Safe, Connected and Thriving: Trauma Capable Models of Community and Systems Healing.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm	Louise Hall MacKillop Seasons & Lee Bramley Reiby Juvenile Centre <i>Seasons for Growth: Supporting the Loss and Grief Experiences of Young People in The Juvenile Justice Setting.</i> Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm	
12.25 PM - 1.25 PM	LUNCH - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2						MINDFUL YOGA 1.05 PM-1.25 PM - MEETING PLACE 2	
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3	Panel Discussion: Chair: Esmal Manahan Panellists: Graham Briggs Daphne Yarram <i>Culturally Humble Collaborations.</i> Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes	Panel Discussion: Chair: Cameron Burgess Panellists: Matt Spicer Tammy Wallace Kate Martin Tenille Abell <i>How Organisations Change: Beyond Change Theory to Change Practice.</i> Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes	Smeeta Singh The MacKillop Institute <i>Challenging Ourselves to Have Challenging Conversations with Children and Young People About Sexual Safety.</i> Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes	Fiona McCallum MacKillop Seasons & Karen Evans Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools <i>Improving Wellbeing and Building Hope - Supporting Students with the Stormbirds, Natural Disaster Education Program.</i> Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes	Jahin Tanvir Australian School of Entrepreneurship <i>Equipping Young People for the Future: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Opportunity through Entrepreneurial Education.</i> Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm	Josh Darby Fire and Emergency New Zealand <i>The Whanaungatanga Programme: A New Approach to Mental Ill Health Prevention Across Workforces.</i> Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes	Emma Esposito & Kathleen McInnes Coburn Primary School <i>We Belong: The Practical Implementation of Collaborative Practice in Schools.</i> Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm	Dr Justine Grogan Australian Institute for Teaching & School Leadership (AITSL) <i>Shifting Across the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Continuum in Teacher Education: Insights from Research and Practice.</i> Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 4					Phil Slade Switch4Schools <i>Switching on Emotional Intelligence: The Neuro-Science of Leadership and Student Success.</i> Session: 40 minutes 2:00 pm-2:40pm		Alison Parolo Baldavis Secondary College <i>Collaboration to Build a Sense of Belonging and Identity in School.</i> Session: 35 minutes 2:05 pm-2:40 pm	Margaret Hepworth The Gandhi Project <i>Positive Reality: Bringing Hope into the Picture for Students.</i> Session: 35 minutes 2:05 pm-2:40 pm
2.40 PM - 3.20 PM	AFTERNOON TEA - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2						MINDFUL YOGA 3.10 PM - 3.20 PM - MEETING PLACE 2	
3.20 PM - 4.50 PM	Closing Ceremony Keynotes - Professor Anne Graham AO , Director of the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University Professor Pat Dudgeon , School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia						CENTRE STAGE	
5.00 PM - 7.00 PM (DAY 1 ONLY)	NETWORKING DRINKS AND CANAPES - TERRACE							

Agenda

CONFERENCE AGENDA

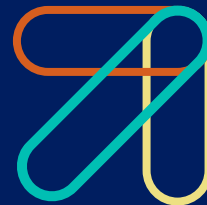
DAY 2 | TUESDAY, 12 AUG 2025

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS:
WELLBEING, SAFETY AND
INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

STRONGER COMMUNITIES:
CHILD, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN
PRACTICE

THRIVING WORKPLACES:
CULTURE, LEADERSHIP AND
MENTAL HEALTH

8.00 AM - 9.00 AM	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION LEVEL 1, RYDGES HOTEL							
9.00 AM - 10.30 AM	OPENING PLENARY						CENTRE STAGE	
	Welcome Ceremony Keynotes - Professor Leah Bromfield, Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia - Reimagining Our Response to Abuse and Neglect Dr Ross Greene, Founder, Collaborative, Proactive Solutions' - Live Remote Keynote							
10.30 AM - 11.10 AM	MORNING TEA - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2						MINDFUL YOGA 11.00 AM - 11.10 AM - MEETING PLACE 2	
ROOM	CENTRE STAGE 1 LEVEL 1	CENTRE STAGE 2 LEVEL 2	MEETING PLACE 2 LEVEL 1	MEETING PLACE 3 LEVEL 1	MEETING PLACE 4 LEVEL 1	TERRACE 1 LEVEL 2	TERRACE 2 LEVEL 2	TERRACE 3 LEVEL 2
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 5	Panel Discussion: The National Postvention Leadership Group Chair: Fiona McCallum Panellists: Tanja Hirvonen Kristen Douglas Amanda Glenwright Prof Myf Maple Leading the Way – Strengthening school and community support through national collaboration.	Dr Tracy Castellino ShantiWorks Reflexive Leadership in Unprecedented Times. Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am	Justin Roberts The MacKillop Institute Educator Wellbeing: What 3,000 Educators Have Taught Us About Wellbeing in Schools. Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm	Aunty Ivy Yarram & Nina Levin Yoowinna Wurralung Aboriginal Health Service Cultural Humility, Responsiveness and Belonging. Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am	Associate Professor Tim Moore Australian Catholic University Empowering Young Survivors: Trauma- Informed Approaches to Sexual Health and Relationship Education. Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am	Dr Nikki Jamieson Moral Injury Australia Understanding moral injury in the workplace and its impact on the helping professions. Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm	Camille Schloeffel & Dr Gemma McKibbin University of Melbourne What victim-survivors of children's harmful sexual behaviour need from the service system: Learning from Lived Experience. Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am	Hayley Wainwright Monash University Improving the Implementation of Transition Planning in Out-of-Home Care. Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 6	Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm	Dr Phil Lambert PSM University of Sydney & Nanjing Normal University Contemporary Leadership for the Human Professions: Safe Harbours or Turbulent Seas? Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm		Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji Third Culture Australia & Youth Victorian Multicultural Commission Belonging, Cultural Identity & Mental Wellbeing: A Roadmap for Young People. Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm	Peta Simpson & Kathy Warwick Alannah & Madeline Foundation Embedding a Trauma Informed Lens to Online Safety Education. Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm		Jocelyn Bignold McAuley Community Services for Women Safe at Home: Intervening early to support the safety and wellbeing of people experiencing family violence. Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm	Simangaliso Nyoni MacKillop Family Services What if you didn't know who you are , where you come from?. Multicultural Cultural Support Plan Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm
12.25 PM - 1.25 PM	LUNCH - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2							
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 7	Deb Tsobaris Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare 'I Don't Need to be a Professional, But I Want to be Treated Professionally': Carer Perspectives on Working with Australia's Most Vulnerable Children. Session: 30 minutes 1.25 pm-1.55 pm		Brona Walsh MacKillop Education Best Practices for Therapy Dogs in School Settings Session: 75 minutes 1:25 pm-2:40 pm	Jose De La Gama MacKillop Family Services Introduction to Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). Session: 75 minutes 1.25pm-2:40 pm	Keeva Mostyn MacKillop Seasons Building Emotional and Grief Literacy: Supporting Whole-of- School Communities Following a Suicide or Other Loss Event. Session: 75 minutes 1.25pm-2:40 pm	Matthew Spicer The Centre for Positive Behaviour Support (CPBS) TBA Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm	KA McKercher Beyond Sticky Notes Co-Designing with Care: Centering care, dignity and choice in our engagement with families and each other. Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm	Kathy Karatasas University of Western Sydney Using Intentional Questions to Design Culturally Inclusive Services with the SELF Framework. Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 8	Zoe Robinson NSW Advocate for Children and Young People TBA Session: 25 minutes 2.00 pm-2:25 pm		Kris Bardon MacKillop Education TBA Session: 30 minutes 2.10 pm-2:40 pm					
2.40 PM - 3.20 PM	AFTERNOON TEA - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2							
3.20 PM - 4.50 PM	Closing Ceremony Keynotes - Joe Ball, Commissioner for LGBTQIA+ Communities Meena Singh, & Members of Youth Council, Commission for Children and Young People - Genuine Collaboration with Children and Young People						CENTRE STAGE	



Who we are

MacKillop Family Services is a leading provider of education, child and family support, and out-of-home care services across Australia. Guided by our values of justice, hope, and collaboration, we are committed to supporting vulnerable children, young people, and families by delivering programs that promote healing, resilience, and long-term wellbeing.

At MacKillop Family Services, we are committed to supporting some of Australia's most vulnerable children, young people, and families. Across 53 locations, our 2,300 dedicated staff deliver integrated family services, out-of-home care, disability support, and trauma-informed education to over 16,000 families each year. All our programs aim to create safe, nurturing environments for children, families, and the staff who support them.

Our work is grounded in evidence-based practice, research, and community engagement, ensuring that we provide effective, sustainable solutions to complex social challenges. The Lead the Way Conference is an extension of our mission to empower professionals with the tools and knowledge they need to drive change within their organisations and communities.





The MacKillop
Institute



Have Questions? Contact Us

For sponsorship enquiries, please contact:

Christopher Higgins

**National Programs Director,
Development and Innovation
The MacKillop Institute**

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mackillopinstitute.org.au



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MacKillop Family Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in each of the communities where we work.



As a Rainbow Tick organisation, MacKillop values an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTIQ+) have the right to be safe.