



# Lead the Way Conference 2026



## Sponsorship Prospectus

**2-3 September | Melbourne | Rydges**

Strengthening Wellbeing and Safety  
through Collaboration



# About

**500 Attendees**

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**School Principals and  
Leaders**

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**Community Service  
Executives**

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**Mental Health  
Professionals**

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**Child and Family  
Services**

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**2 Days – of keynotes,  
presentations, workshops,  
networking events**

The Lead the Way Conference 2026 is set to bring together 500 influential leaders across education, community services, child and family services, and mental health professionals. Over two days of insightful keynotes, presentations, workshops, and networking events, this conference offers a unique platform for businesses and organisations wishing to engage with school principals and leaders, community service executives, mental health professionals, and child and family services to expand their reach, amplify their impact, and demonstrate their commitment to corporate responsibility in strengthening wellbeing and safety.

**Watch 2025 Highlight\_Video**







# Welcome

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The Lead the Way Conference 2026 is a premier event bringing together 500 professionals from education, community services and mental health professionals to explore evidence-based approaches to strengthening safety, wellbeing, and mental health for those we serve and our staff.

Two days of compelling keynotes, evidence-based research, practical case studies, and interactive workshops, attendees gain insights, tools, and strategies from across sectors to drive meaningful change in schools, community services, child and family services and mental health professions.

Sponsors will have direct access to primary school and secondary school principals and leaders, CEOs and directors of community service organisations and not for profits in child, youth and family services, government department leaders, academics, and researchers from across Australia.

As a sponsor, you have a unique opportunity to align your organisation with thought leadership, innovation, and best practice in whole-school, whole-organisation, community wellbeing and child safety. We invite you to partner with us to increase your brand visibility, engage with key decision-makers, and showcase your leadership in building safe and supportive communities.



# Why Sponsor

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## Direct Access to Decision-Makers

Connect with 500 professionals, including school principals, community organisation executives and leaders, mental health professionals and university researchers.

## Brand Visibility

Gain exposure across digital and print conference materials, social media, and high-traffic event spaces.

## Thought Leadership Opportunities

Position your organisation as an expert through speaking engagements and panel discussions.

## Exclusive Networking

Engage with delegates in a setting designed to foster meaningful connections and future collaborations.

## Support a Meaningful Cause

Demonstrate your commitment to improving the wellbeing and safety of children, young people, and professionals across education, community service, family and child sectors.

## Targeted Audience Reach

Engage directly with key decision-makers and influencers in education, community services, and government sectors to drive your brand's growth.



# 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.

## Last Years Keynote Speakers



**Meena Singh**

Acting Principal  
Commissioner and  
Commissioner for Aboriginal  
Children and Young People



**Joe Ball**

Commissioner for LGBTQIA+  
Communities



**Prof. Leah Bromfield**

Director  
Australian Centre for  
Child Protection  
University of South Australia



**Dr Ross Greene**

Clinical Psychologist  
New York Times  
Bestselling Author



**Prof. Pat Dudgeon**

Professor  
Indigenous Studies  
University of Western Australia



**Prof. Pasi Sahlberg**

Professor  
Educational Leadership  
University of Melbourne



**Prof. Anne Graham AO**

Director  
Centre for Children &  
Young People  
Southern Cross University



**Dr Robyn Miller AM**

Chief Executive Officer  
MacKillop Family Services

# Last Year's 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**  
Advocate for Children and  
Young People  
Office of Youth



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



**Esmai Manahan**  
National Director,  
Nanyubak Unit: First  
Nations Practice and  
Partnerships  
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

# Last Year's Guest Speakers



**Cleo Westhorpe**  
Founder, PIVOT  
Professional Learning



**Jas Perry**  
National Leader Foster  
Care Development  
MacKillop Family Services



**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 (TCTS-Y)



**Emma Esposito**  
School Social Worker  
Coburn Primary School



**Hayley Wainwright**  
PhD Candidate  
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 Mc Kercher**  
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 Bloxson**  
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  
Baldivis Secondary College

# Last Year's Guest Speakers



**Tegan McDonald**  
Principal,  
St Patrick's Primary School



**Shona Loudon**  
Assistant Principal,  
St Patrick's Primary School



**Ian Hamm**  
Chairperson  
Indigenous Land and Sea  
Corporation



**Taryn Hopper**  
School Counsellor  
Xavier Catholic College



**Hannah Jamieson**  
Seasons for Life Coordinator  
VIC/TAS - MacKillop Seasons



**Anish Varghese**  
Project Manager  
Afri-Aus Care Inc.



**Frazer Bekele**  
School Community Liaison Officer  
Afri-Aus Care Inc.



**Margaret Hepworth**  
Founder - The Gandhi  
Experiment  
Vic Education Coordinator  
- Together for Humanity



**Nicole Lempriere**  
School Nurse - Druin  
Secondary College



**Renae Pettit**  
Seasons for Life  
Coordinator NSW/ACT -  
MacKillop Seasons



**Karen Evans**  
Lead Pastoral Care  
Services,  
Diocese of Lismore  
Catholic Schools



**Amanda Glenwright**  
General Manager Health  
Services,  
YourTurn/Standby Support



**Chris Proctor-Abraham**  
National Training Manager,  
Stand Tu Maia



**Gaye Titcombe**  
Assistant Principal,  
South Lismore Public School



**Skye Staude**  
Co-Principal  
MacKillop Education



**Kristen Douglas**  
Head Headspace & Schools  
Headspace



**Tanja Hirvonen**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Thirrilli



**Trish Quig**  
Family Support  
Reiby Youth Justice Centre



**Larissa Polak**  
Principal  
South Lismore Public School



**Kris Bardon**  
Principal  
MacKillop Education



**Brona Walsh**  
Director - Education Engagement  
Programs  
MacKillop Education



**Jose de la Garma**  
Learning & Development Manager  
MacKillop Family Services



**Daphne Yarram**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal  
Healing Service



**Nina Levin**  
Specialist Clinical Advisor  
Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal  
Healing Service



**Graham Briggs**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kirrip Aboriginal Healing Service

# Previous Presenting Organisations



# 2025 Sponsors

Gold Sponsor

**advancedlife**  
school photography & print specialists



# 2025 Exhibitors



# 2025 Donors



# 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

### Grappling with Diverse Beliefs, Identities and Cultures

#### 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

#### Best Practices for Therapy Dogs in Schools

#### Secondary Trauma and Educators' Pathways to Mitigating its Impacts

#### 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

### 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

### Culturally Humble Collaborations

### Cultural Humility, Responsiveness and Belonging

### It takes a Village Community to Keep a Child Safe

### Financially Coerced "self-produced" Child Sexual Exploitation Material: How Do We Intervene?

**Safe-at-Home:** Intervening Early to Support the Safety and Wellbeing of People Experiencing Family Violence

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

### Psychosocial Safety in Practice

#### The Whanaungatanga Program

A New Approach to Mental Ill Health Prevention Across Workforces

#### Family Life - Safe, Connected and Thriving: Trauma Capable Models of Community and Systems Healing

#### Contemporary Leadership for the Human Services/Professions: Safe Harbours or Turbulent Seas?

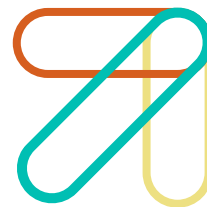
#### How Organisations Change: Beyond Change Theory to Change Practice

#### Reflective Leadership in Unprecedented Times

#### Whole-of-Self Affirming Care

#### Understanding Moral Injury in the Workplace and its Impacts on the Helping Professions

# Sponsorship



## Sponsorship Packages Overview

### OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PARTNER

Our highest-level partnership. Gain premier visibility as our exclusive Conference Partner, with unmatched brand exposure, high-level speaking and engagement opportunities, and a platform to demonstrate your leadership in supporting school and community wellbeing.

**\$20,000**

### GOLD SPONSOR

Position your organisation as a leader in safety and wellbeing by becoming a Gold Sponsor, with prime branding opportunities, speaking engagements, and direct engagement with key decision-makers across sectors.

**\$10,000**

### SILVER SPONSOR

Showcase your commitment to fostering safe and supportive environments as a Silver Sponsor, with strong branding, networking opportunities, and the chance to exhibit your services to influential professionals.

**\$5,000**

### NETWORKING FUNCTION SPONSOR

Host the exclusive Networking Drinks & Canapés event, gaining high-profile exposure and direct interaction with industry leaders in an informal and engaging setting.

**\$7,000**

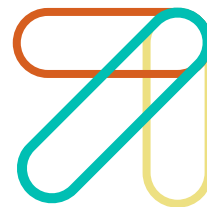
### EXHIBITION SPACE/TRADE STALL

Engage with conference attendees and showcase your products, services, and expertise through a dedicated exhibition space, strategically positioned for maximum visibility and engagement.

**\$3,000**

# Sponsorship

## Additional Opportunities



### COFFEE CART SPONSOR

Banner at coffee cart, logo in the program and conference materials, flyers/merchandise next to coffee cart

**\$2,000**

### SPEAKER/WORKSHOP SPONSOR

Logo on session slides and in the program, acknowledgement at beginning and end of session, flyer/merchandise in session.

**\$500**

### MORNING/AFTERNOON TEA SPONSOR

Banner at food stations, logo in the program and conference materials, acknowledgement by MC before tea break, flyer/merchandise next to food stations.

**\$5,000**

### LUNCH SPONSOR

Banner at food stations, logo in the program and conference materials, acknowledgement by MC before lunch, flyer/merchandise next to food stations.

**\$7,000**

### DONATIONS AND VALUE-IN KIND

We welcome in-kind contributions to support the Lead the Way Conference 2025. VIK sponsorships allow businesses to provide products or services that enhance the event, while gaining brand visibility. In return, sponsors receive benefits like logo placement, program acknowledgment, and promotional opportunities. Contact us to learn more.



# Inclusions

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## Official Partner Sponsor

- 2 x Speaking opportunities during plenaries and networking session
- Exclusive branding/banner on stage & registration desk
- Recognition (logo and official partner) on all conference materials
- Full-page ad in conference program
- Complimentary registration for two representatives
- EDM to conference delegates
- Prime Exhibition space in pre-function area of main plenary room for both days
- Promotional materials of your choice and merchandise distribution in delegate bags
- Availability to present 1 x concurrent session (35 minute presentation or 75 minute workshop)

**1**  
Available

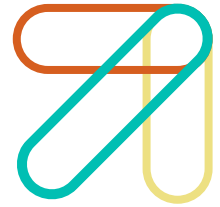
**\$20,000**

## Gold Sponsor

- Full page advertisement in the conference program
- Logo/about information and recognition in all conference materials
- Complimentary registration for two representatives
- Premier exhibition space for both conference days
- Promotional flyer and merchandise distribution in delegate bags
- Availability to present 1 x concurrent session (35 minute presentation or 75 minute workshop)

**3**  
Available

**\$10,000**



## Silver Sponsor

- Quarter-page ad in the conference program
- Logo/about information and recognition in all conference materials
- Complimentary registration for two representatives
- Exhibition space to showcase services/products on both days
- Promotional flyer and merchandise distribution in delegate bags

**3**

**Available**

**\$5,000**

## Networking Function Sponsor

- Branding and banners at Networking Drinks & Canapés
- Recognition and logo/about information in conference program
- 5-minute speaking opportunity at networking drinks
- Complimentary registration for two representatives
- Exhibition space for both conference days
- Promotional flyer and merchandise distribution in delegate bags

**1**

**Available**

**\$7,000**

## Exhibition Space/Trade Stall

- Dedicated exhibition space for engagement
- Two exhibitor passes for both days
- Logo placement in the conference program
- Flyer/branded merchandise in delegate bag

**10**

**Available**

**\$3,000**



# Audience

Our delegates represent a cross-section of professionals committed to improving safety and wellbeing across education, community sectors, child and family sectors, mental health and those working to support children, young people, community members and staff.

## School Principals & Leadership Teams

Primary and secondary school leaders from across Australia.

## Community Service Leaders

CEOs, Directors, and Program Managers in child, youth, and family services.

## Government & Policy Professionals

Decision-makers influencing education, social services, and child protection policy.

## Academics & Researchers

Experts studying trauma-informed practice, education, and wellbeing.

## Mental Health & Wellbeing Practitioners

Psychologists, counsellors, and therapists working with children and families.





# Audience

## LEAD THE WAY 2025 AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS BY PERSONA

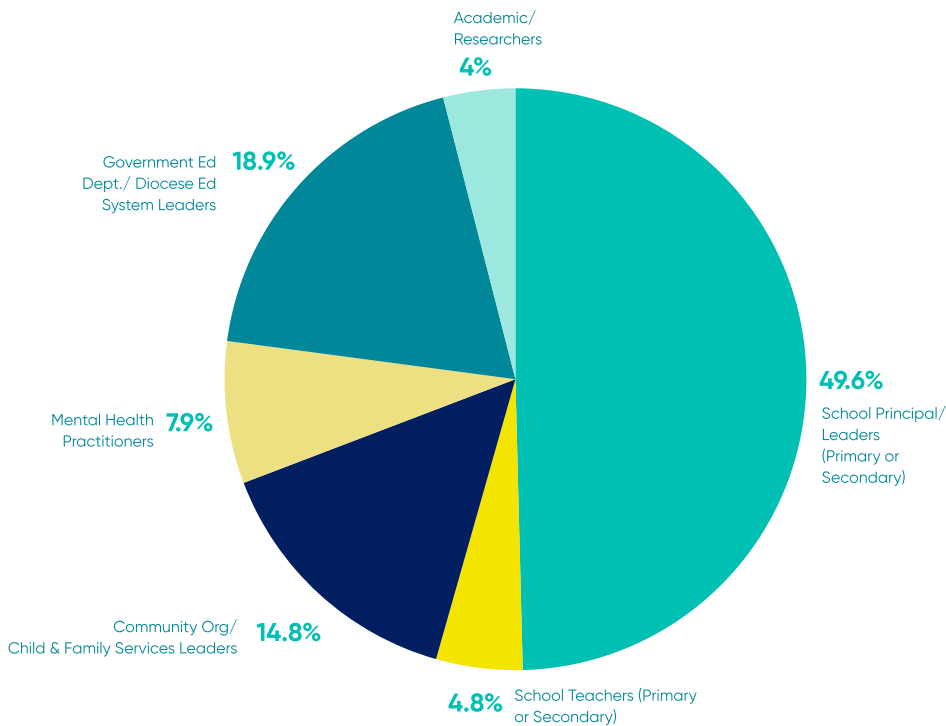
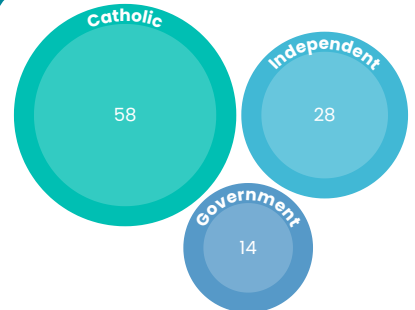


Figure 1. % Attendee Personas to date for 2025 Lead the Way

# 46.6%

## ATTENDEES

School Principal/  
Leaders  
(Primary or Secondary)



2025 SCHOOL LEADER REGISTRATIONS TO DATE BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR

## REACH & ENGAGEMENT FY 24-25:

17,799

31,395

3,896

Email Subscribers: 31,395

16,623

EDM Open Rate: 70.80%

EDM Click-Through Rate: 3.86%

# 40,376

## TOTAL FOLLOWERS



# Audience

## REACH & ENGAGEMENT FY 24–25:

Table provides an overview of the percentage of attendee locations in ticket sales to date for 2025 August 11 and 12th Lead the Way.

Category	VIC	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	ACT	WA
School Principal/ Leader	72.1%	7.2%	4.7%	10%	2%	2%	2%
School Teacher	40.2%	41.5%	4.7%	0	4.5%	9.1%	0
Community Organisation, Child and Family Services	16.7%	18.6%	6.3%	16.7%	25%	16.7%	0
Mental Health Practitioner	78.5%	7.2%	0%	0	7.1%	7.2%	0
Government/ System Leaders	78%	11%	4%	6%	1%	0	0
Researcher or Academic	40%	20%	20%	10%	0	8%	2%



# Venue

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The Lead the Way Conference 2025 will take place at the recently renovated **Rydges Hotel Melbourne**, a premium event space in the heart of the city, offering state-of-the-art facilities and a vibrant networking environment.

Lead the Way will have exclusive use of two dedicated conference floors in a prime location and professional setting.

Attendees gain exclusive access to discounted accommodation rates and parking.

**Location:** 186 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

**Accessibility:** Public transport, on-site parking, step-free access

**Networking Spaces:** Rooftop terrace, exhibitor lounge, and dedicated breakout areas





# Sponsor

## How to Become a Sponsor

Sponsorship opportunities are limited and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. To secure your sponsorship package:



1

### Select Your Package

Choose from the available sponsorship levels.

2

### Chat with our team

One of our team members will reach out to you to discuss your expression of interest.

**For all sponsorship enquiries, please contact:**

**Email: [Christopher.higgins@mackillop.org.au](mailto:Christopher.higgins@mackillop.org.au)**

**Phone: 0499 521 461**



# Who we are

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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.





# Have Questions? Contact Us

**For sponsorship enquiries, please contact:**

**Christopher Higgins**

**Director**

**The MacKillop Institute**

M 0499 521 461

[christopher.higgins@mackillop.org.au](mailto:christopher.higgins@mackillop.org.au)

 [mackillopinstitute.org.au](http://mackillopinstitute.org.au)

 [linkedin.com/company/themackillopinstitute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/themackillopinstitute)

**Sponsorship terms and conditions available at -**

**<https://www.mackillopinstitute.org.au/sponsorship-ts-cs/>**



*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.*