



Lead the Way Conference 2025



Program

11–12 August | Melbourne | Rydges

Strengthening Wellbeing and Safety
through Collaboration



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



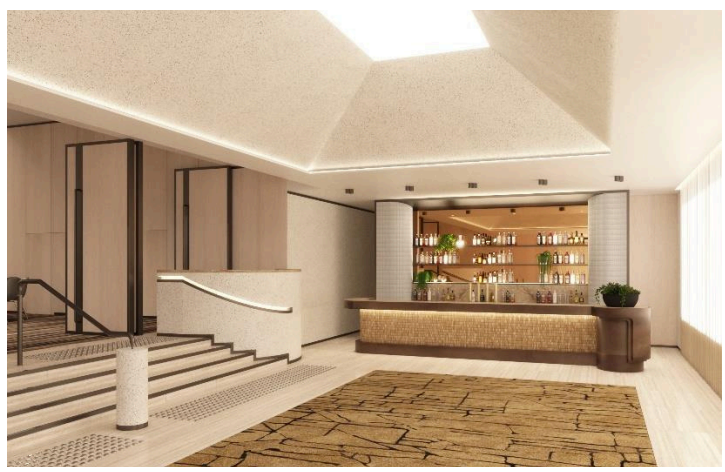
Venue

Located in the heart of Melbourne's CBD, the newly refurbished Rydges Melbourne sets the stage for an unforgettable Lead the Way Conference experience. Featuring state-of-the-art event spaces—including the impressive Centre Stage function room and a Rooftop Terrace with city views—Rydges combines modern design, premium technology, and local charm to create the ideal conference setting.





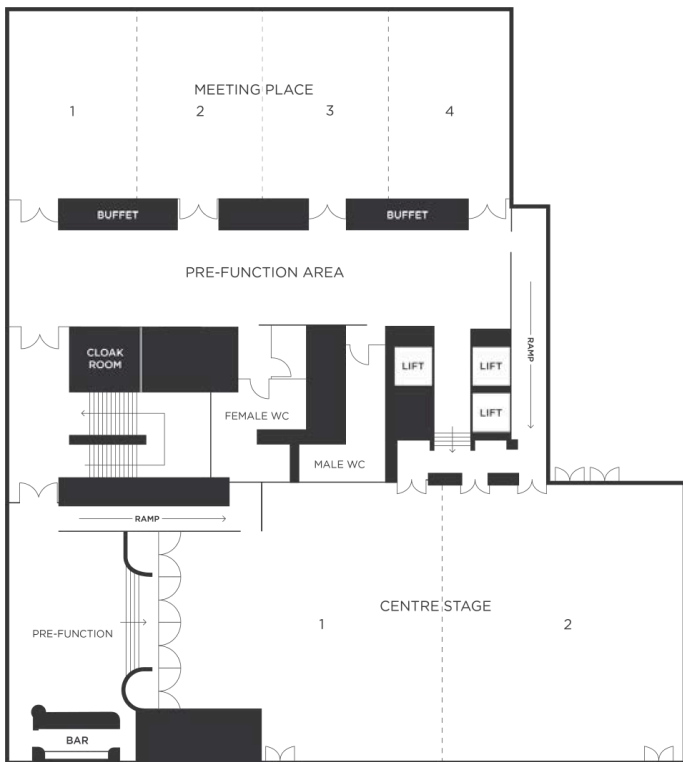
Venue



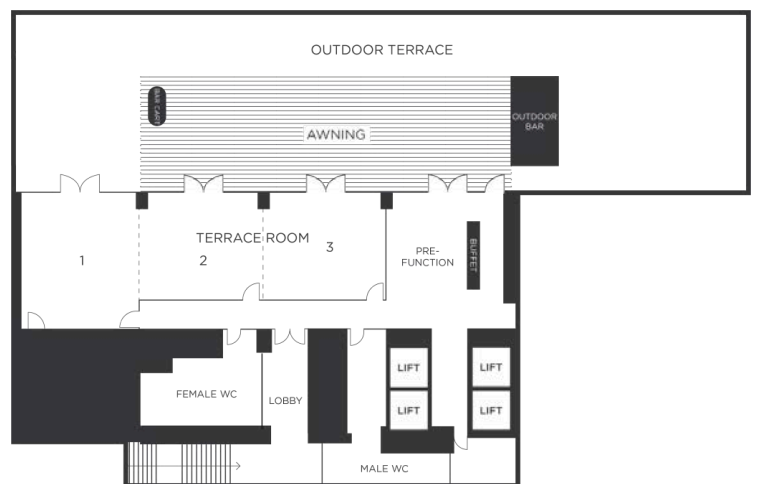


Floor Plan

The Lead the Way Conference will take place across eight event rooms at Rydges Melbourne, spread over two easy-to-navigate levels. The flexible floorplan supports a smooth flow between keynotes, workshops, and breakouts. To end the day, the Rooftop Terrace will host the networking event, with great city views and a relaxed atmosphere.



Level 1



Level 2

Keynote Speakers



Commissioner Meena Singh

Acting Principal
Commissioner and
Commissioner for Aboriginal
Children and Young People



Commissioner Joe Ball

Commissioner for LGBTQIA+
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 AO

Director
Centre for Children &
Young People
Southern Cross University



Prof. Pat Dudgeon

Professor, School of
Indigenous Studies
The University of Western
Australia



Dr Robyn Miller AM

Chief Executive Officer
MacKillop Family Services

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



Esmail 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

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

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 Garna

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

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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

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

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

8.00 AM - 9.00 AM	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION LEVEL 1, RYDGES HOTEL							
9.00 AM - 10.30 AM	OPENING PLENARY						CENTRE STAGE	
<p>Welcome Ceremony Welcome to Country Opening Address - Commissioner 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 Sahlgren, Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Melbourne - Lead the way toward the future we need Dr Robyn Miller AM, CEO, MacKillop Family Services</p>								
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 1	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	<p>Rabbi Zalman Kastel AM Together for Humanity</p> <p><i>Grappling with Diverse Beliefs, Identities and Cultures.</i></p> <p>Session: 30 minutes 11.10 am-11.40 am</p>	<p>David Burroughs Australian Psychological Services</p> <p><i>Psychological Safety in Practice.</i></p> <p>Session: 60 minutes 11.10pm - 12.10pm</p>	<p>Associate Professor Lisa McKay-Brown University of Melbourne</p> <p><i>Recalibrating school attendance: Global perspectives to inform local solutions</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am</p>	<p>Genevieve Bloxson & Dr Gemma McKibbin University of Melbourne</p> <p><i>Financially Coerced "self-produced" Child Sexual Exploitation Material: How Do We Intervene?</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am</p>	<p>Cleo Westhorpe Pivot Professional Learning & Robert Boucher Swifts Creek P-12</p> <p><i>Taming the Seahorse Curve: Understanding and Improving Student Connectedness P-12.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am</p>	<p>Skye Staudé MacKillop Education</p> <p><i>Leading Well in Complex Environments.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am</p>	<p>Deb Tsobaris Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare</p> <p><i>'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.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11.45 am</p>	<p>Advanced Life Photography</p> <p>Have a professional photo taken by our Gold Sponsor: AdvancedLife Photography</p> <p>Session: 11.10 am-12.25 pm 75 mins</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2	<p>Panel Discussion: Chair: Annette Schneider</p> <p>Panelists: Dr Beau Hu, Simangalis Nyon, Selba-Gondoza Luka OAM, Anish Varghese Frazer Bekele</p> <p><i>Cultivating Cultural Responsiveness - Supporting Identity and Belonging for Young People.</i></p> <p>Session: 40 minutes 11.45 am-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Alex Dalton Peer Researcher, Orygen Foundation</p> <p><i>Whole of Self-Affirming Care: What is it and Why is it Important?</i></p> <p>Session: 15 minutes 12.10 pm-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Dr John Molineux Deakin University</p> <p><i>Secondary Trauma and Educators' Pathways to Mitigating its Impacts.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Douglas Russell Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University</p> <p><i>It takes a village community to keep a child safe!</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Dr Trixie James CQ University</p> <p><i>Let's Be Positive Together: Empowering Equity Students Through Positive Psychology.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Alison Wainwright Family Life</p> <p><i>Family Life - Safe, Connected and Thriving: Trauma Capable Models of Community and Systems Healing.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm</p>	<p>Louise Hall MacKillop Seasons & Lee Bromley & Trish Quig Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre</p> <p><i>Seasons for Growth: Supporting the Loss and Grief Experiences of Young People in The Juvenile Justice Setting.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12.25 pm</p>	
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	
SPEAKERS ONLY NETWORKING - CENTRE STAGE 1								
MACKILLOP SEASONS NETWORKING - CENTRE STAGE 2								
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3	<p>Panel Discussion: Chair: Esmal Manahan</p> <p>Panelists: Graham Briggs, Daphne Yarram, Ian Hamm</p> <p><i>Culturally Humble Collaborations.</i></p> <p>Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes</p>	<p>Panel Discussion: Chair: Cameron Burgess</p> <p>Panelists: Matt Spicer, Tammy Wallace, Kate Martin, Tenille Abell</p> <p><i>How Organisations Change: Beyond Change Theory to Change Practice.</i></p> <p>Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes</p>	<p>Smeeta Singh The MacKillop Institute</p> <p><i>Challenging Ourselves to Have Challenging Conversations with Children and Young People About Sexual Safety.</i></p> <p>Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes</p>	<p>Fiona McCallum MacKillop Seasons & Karen Evans Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools & Gaye Titcombe, Larissa Polak, South Lismore Public Schools</p> <p><i>Improving Wellbeing and Building Hope - Supporting Students with the Stormbirds, Natural Disaster Education Program.</i></p> <p>Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes</p>	<p>Jahin Tanvir Australian School of Entrepreneurship</p> <p><i>Equipping Young People for the Future: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Opportunity through Entrepreneurial Education.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm</p>	<p>Josh Darby Fire and Emergency New Zealand</p> <p><i>The Whanaungatanga Programme: A New Approach to Mental Ill Health Prevention Across Workforces.</i></p> <p>Session: 1:25 pm-2:40 pm 75 minutes</p>	<p>Emma Esposito & Kathleen McInnes Coburn Primary School</p> <p><i>We Belong: The Practical Implementation of Collaborative Practice in Schools.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm</p>	<p>Dr Justine Grogan Australian Institute for Teaching & School Leadership (AITSL)</p> <p><i>Shifting Across the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Continuum in Teacher Education: Insights from Research and Practice.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 1:25 pm-2:00 pm</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 4				<p>Phil Slade Switch4Schools</p> <p><i>Switching on Emotional Intelligence: The Neuroscience of Leadership and Student Success.</i></p> <p>Session: 40 minutes 2:00 pm-2:40pm</p>		<p>Alison Parolo Baldvins Secondary College</p> <p><i>Collaboration to Build a Sense of Belonging and Identity in School.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 2:05 pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Margaret Hepworth The Gandhi Experiment</p> <p><i>A Call to Hope: Empowering Young People for a Better World.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 2:05 pm-2:40 pm</p>	
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	<p>Closing Ceremony Keynotes - Professor Anne Graham AO, Director of the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University - Implementing the evidence: young people's views about practices that support wellbeing, recognition and safety Professor Pat Dudgeon, School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia - Indigenous Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing</p>						CENTRE STAGE	
5.00 PM - 6.30 PM (DAY 1 ONLY)	NETWORKING DRINKS AND CANAPES - TERRACE							

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
	<p>Welcome Ceremony Keynotes - Meena Singh, & Members of Youth Council, Commission for Children and Young People - Genuine Collaboration with Children and Young People Dr Ross Greene, Founder, Collaborative, Proactive Solutions - Live Virtual Keynote</p>	
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 1	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	<p>Panel Discussion: The National Postvention Leadership Group</p> <p>Chair: Fiona McCallum</p> <p>Panelists: Tanja Hirvonen Kristen Douglas Amanda Glenwright</p> <p><i>Leading the Way - Strengthening school and community support through national collaboration.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Dr Tracy Castolino ShantiWorks</p> <p><i>Reflexive Leadership in Unprecedented Times.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am</p>	<p>Justin Roberts The MacKillop Institute & Tegan McDonald, Principal, St Patrick's Primary School & Shona Loudon, Assistant Principal, St Patrick's Primary School</p> <p><i>Improving Educator Wellbeing in Student Centred Schools.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Daphne Yarram & Nina Levin Yoowinna Wurnaling Aboriginal Health Service</p> <p><i>Cultural Humility, Responsiveness and Belonging.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am</p>	<p>Associate Professor Tim Moore Austalian Catholic University</p> <p><i>Empowering Young Survivors: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Sexual Health and Relationship Education.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am</p>	<p>Dr Nikki Jamieson Moral Injury Australia</p> <p><i>Understanding moral injury in the workplace and its impact on the helping professions.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 11.10 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Camille Schloeffel & Dr Gemma McKibbin University of Melbourne</p> <p><i>What victim-survivors of children's harmful sexual behaviour need from the service system: Learning from Lived Experience.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am</p>	<p>Simangaliso Nyoni MacKillop Family Services</p> <p><i>What if you didn't know who you are, where you come from?. Multicultural Cultural Support Plan</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 6	<p>Dr Phil Lambert PSM University of Sydney & Nanjing Normal University</p> <p><i>Contemporary Leadership for the Human Services/Professions: Safe Harbours or Turbulent Seas?</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravajji Third Culture Australia & Youth Victorian Multicultural Commission</p> <p><i>Belonging, Cultural Identity & Mental Wellbeing: A Roadmap for Young People.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Peta Simpson & Kathy Warwick Alanah & Madeline Foundation</p> <p><i>Embedding a Trauma Informed Lens to Online Safety Education.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Jocelyn Bignold McAuley Community Services for Women</p> <p><i>Safe at Home: Intervening early to support the safety and wellbeing of people experiencing family violence.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.50 am-12:25 pm</p>	<p>Hayley Wainwright Monash University</p> <p><i>Improving the Implementation of Transition Planning in Out-of-Home Care.</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 11.10 am-11:45 am</p>			

12.25 PM - 1.25 PM	LUNCH - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2		<p>NETWORKING SESSION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - CENTRE STAGE 1</p> <p>SPEAKERS ONLY NETWORKING - CENTRE STAGE 2</p> <p>LUNCH AND LEARN WORKSHOP DR TRIXIE JAMES LECTURER, SCHOOL OF ACCESS EDUCATION - CQUINIVERSITY - MEETING ROOM 2</p>
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CONCURRENT SESSIONS 7	<p>Louise Hall MacKillop Seasons & Ja Perry MacKillop Family Services</p> <p><i>Building Capacity to Support the Grief Experiences of Children & Young People Living in Out-Of-Home Care.</i></p> <p>Session: 30 minutes 1.25 pm-1.55 pm</p>	<p>Youth Council Members Commission for Children and Young People</p> <p><i>Meaningful engagement with children and young people to create safety and wellbeing</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1.25pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Brona Walsh MacKillop Education</p> <p><i>Best Practices for Therapy Dogs in School Settings</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1:25 pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Jose De La Gama MacKillop Family Service</p> <p><i>Intentional Use of Self: Leading the Way in the Face of Crisis</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes 1.25pm-2:00 pm</p>	<p>Keeva Mostyn, Renae Pettit, Hannah Jamieson & Taryn Hopper MacKillop Seasons & Xavier Catholic College & Nicole Lempriere Druin Secondary College</p> <p><i>Building Emotional and Grief Literacy: Supporting Whole-of-School Communities Following a Suicide or Other Loss Event.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1.25pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Matthew Spicer The Centre for Positive Behaviour Support (CPBS)</p> <p><i>Values-Based Leadership</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>KA Mc Kercher Beyond Sticky Notes</p> <p><i>Co-Designing with Care: Centering care, dignity and choice in our engagement with families and each other.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Kathy Karatasas University of Western Sydney</p> <p><i>Using Intentional Questions to Design Culturally Inclusive Services with the SELF Framework.</i></p> <p>Session: 75 minutes 1.25 pm-2:40 pm</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 8	<p>Zoë Robinson Advocate for Children and Young People Office of Youth</p> <p>TBA</p> <p>Session: 25 minutes 2.00 pm-2:25 pm</p>	<p>Kris Bardon MacKillop Education</p> <p><i>Empowering Students to re-engage in education.</i></p> <p>Session: 30 minutes 2.10 pm-2:40 pm</p>	<p>Chris Procter-Abraham Stand Tu Maia & Fiona McCallum, MacKillop Seasons</p> <p><i>Change Education and Growth: Celebrating 30 Years of Global Relationships</i></p> <p>Session: 35 minutes</p>					

2.40 PM - 3.20 PM	AFTERNOON TEA - PRE FUNCTION AREAS LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2	
3.20 PM - 4.50 PM	<p>Closing Ceremony Keynotes - Commissioner Joe Ball, Commissioner for LGBTQIA+ Communities Professor Leah Bromfield, Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia - Reimagining Our Response to Abuse and Neglect</p>	CENTRE STAGE

Keynote Sessions:



Professor Pasi Salsberg

Educational Leadership - University of Melbourne

Lead the way toward the future we need

In a time of rapid change, deep uncertainty, and growing inequality, education systems around the world are being called to evolve urgently and meaningfully. The real question is: How can we ensure our schools remain relevant, resilient, and just in the face of these challenges? Blending personal insights from around the world with global research, this keynote offers a brief but honest look at the current state of education both in Australia and internationally. While recognising the pressures and setbacks facing our systems, it focuses on the real opportunities we have to shift direction to strengthen equity, deepen engagement, and lift learning for all. The keynote concludes with a provocation to spark deeper conversation among participants: What kind of future do we need and how can we lead the way together?



Professor Leah Bromfield

Director Australian Centre for Child Protection - University of South Australia

Reimagining Our Response to Abuse and Neglect

COMING SOON



Dr Ross Greene (live virtual keynote)

Clinical Psychologist New York Times Bestselling Author

Collaborative and Proactive Solutions

COMING SOON



Professor Pat Dudgeon

Professor, Indigenous Studies - University of Western Australia

Reimagining Our Response to Abuse and Neglect

This presentation will provide a brief overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing. The mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has become a critical issue, and the evidence suggests a worsening mental health crisis. This is seen in reported high rates of psychological distress, hospitalisation for mental health conditions and most critically, increasing suicide rates. Mainstream western approaches to mental health have an ongoing history of failing to consider and include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' needs. This includes the failure to acknowledge historical and cultural contexts within conceptualisations of mental health and wellbeing. The wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot be understood without appropriate recognition of these important contexts.

Social and emotional health and wellbeing (SEWB) has emerged as an important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of mental health and wellbeing. Although the term is often used to refer to issues related to 'mental health' and 'mental illness', SEWB has a broader scope. It recognises the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community, and how these affect the individual, family and community. SEWB issues cover a broad range of problems that can result from unresolved grief and loss, trauma and abuse, domestic violence, removal from family, substance misuse, family breakdown, cultural dislocation, racism and discrimination, and social disadvantage. The holistic nature of wellbeing, the historical impacts resulting in social determinants that adversely influence wellbeing are discussed. In recent times, innovative approaches are emerging in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing that confirm a promising way forward.

Keynote Sessions:



Commissioner Meena Singh

Acting Principal Commissioner and Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People

Genuine Collaboration with Children and Young People

COMING SOON



Commissioner Ball

Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities

COMING SOON

COMING SOON



Prof. Anne Graham AO

Director Centre for Children & Young People – Southern Cross University

Implementing the evidence: young people's views about practices that support wellbeing, recognition and safety

COMING SOON

Concurrent Sessions 1 and 2



Rabbi Zalman Kastel AM

Founder – Together for Humanity

Grappling with Diverse Beliefs, Identities and Cultures.

Some adolescents and adults are guarded. Vulnerability about status is part of the human condition, but is heightened due to the influence of digital technology and broader concerns. Prejudice and causal racism toward indigenous people and others persists. Interfaith relations have deteriorated in Australia since late 2023. The percentage of those with negative attitudes towards Jews, Muslims and others has increased since the escalation of harm and tensions in Gaza and Israel. People with diverse faiths, loyalties and identities invariably misrepresent and mistrust each other. Empathy, critical for countering prejudice, is naturally geared toward people “like us”. This talk will explore what helps or hinders authentic positive relationships between groups. How can a reflective practice of listening from a place “of not knowing” facilitate Intercultural communication, while assumed knowledge and power imbalances prevent real understanding. What can we learn about ourselves to prepare us to create cultural safety for others?

Panel:

Cultivating Cultural Responsiveness: Supporting Identity and Belonging for Young People.

Chair:

Panellists:



Annette Schneider
CEO
Together for Humanity



Dr Beau Hu
National School Partnerships Manager
Together for Humanity



Simangaliso Nyoni
Multicultural Practice Lead
MacKillop Family Services



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



Anish Varghese
Project Manager
Afri-Aus Care Inc.



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



David Burroughs

Founder – Australian Psychological Services

Psychosocial Safety in Practice.

Psychosocial Safety is a hot topic, but it's not new. It has been around for decades, it has just become the centre of attention as organizations strive to meet their regulatory responsibilities, prevent mental health harm, and improve people's overall experience of work. Dave has been working for nearly 20 years in this domain and his practical session will cover:

- The evolution of psychosocial safety – where the evidence lies and what's been missing
- Strategic integration across people functions to mitigate risk and improve productivity and performance – taking an employee life cycle approach
- Understanding and addressing key risks – and exploration of Work Overload and Vicarious Trauma
- How not to stuff it up! Critical considerations and success factors in organisational psychosocial safety maturity



Alex Dalton

Peer Researcher and Consumer Coordinator – Orygen Foundation

Whole of Self-Affirming Care: What is it and Why is it Important?

This presentation outlines the Whole of Self Affirming Care research project. The project's focus is on trans and gender diverse young people with multiply marginalised identities and how they can experience care that affirms all aspects of their identity. The project's aim is to create a patient-reported experience measure and fidelity checklist for services to know how well they're providing care that affirms all aspects of a young person's identity.

A key component of this project is how we collaborate and continuously engage with lived experience knowledge at all project stages, including from conceptualisation before the grant was funded. There are people drawing on lived experience at various levels of our project, from our Lived Experience Advisory Group to our project staff and chief and associate investigators. These experiences come together to form the basis on which the project operates and is guided by.



Associate Professor Lisa McKay-Brown

Associate Dean Diversity and Inclusion – University of Melbourne

Recalibrating school attendance: Global perspectives to inform local solutions

School attendance and school attendance difficulties (SADs) are a national concern for the education sector however they are not new phenomena. While the post pandemic period has increased the visibility of school attendance and absence, data shows that the percentage of students who are chronically absent have been steadily declining since 2018. The factors impacting school attendance are complex and multifactorial and require systems level and local responses.

This presentation will explore what's working to improve school attendance and how engaging with global perspectives can help us to create local solutions that can make a difference. I will discuss the importance of reframing how we understand attendance, and the need to recalibrate the purposes of schooling and education to create sites of safety and engagement. Key takeaways include: thinking broadly about the meaning of attendance; implementing change using multi-tiered frameworks and developing shared alliances to support children and youth engage with education.



Dr John Molineux

Senior Lecturer, Deakin University

Secondary trauma and educators' pathways to mitigating its impacts.

Secondary trauma and educators' pathways to mitigating its impacts

A mixed methods study of 2285 educators undertaken across Australia in Term 3 of 2024, including 107 interviews, revealed significant impacts of secondary trauma on teachers and leaders in schools, both in mainstream and special education settings. In this session, findings on factors contributing to and mitigating secondary traumatic stress (STS) in educators will be displayed, as well as findings on the relationship of STS to mental health risk, burnout, turnover risk, and rumination. This includes the influence of compassion satisfaction. In addition, factors mitigating STS and its impacts will be discussed, including stories relating examples of the experiences of educators in reducing the impact of trauma through techniques such as recovery, support and coping. The session will conclude with an outline of proposed pilot intervention projects aimed at converting the findings into positive action for individual educators, schools, and at department/system levels.

Key takeaways:

- Understanding the impact of secondary trauma on educators
- Understanding how educators and schools can help minimize the impact of secondary trauma
- Invitation for future involvement in pilot intervention projects



Douglas Russell

Senior Research Officer, Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University.

It takes a village community, to keep a child safe!

This session explores how children and young people seek support when they feel unsafe – and what this means for organisations working to prevent child sexual abuse. Drawing on original research with over 3,000 young people across a range of organisational settings (primarily schools), as well as findings from two recent systematic reviews on the role of parents in prevention, the session highlights who children turn to, who they don't, and how we can better support the networks around them.

Participants will gain insight into the often-overlooked role of families and peers in safeguarding, and the importance of building broader cultures of safety and responsiveness. The session will also examine the implications of these findings for practice, including staff training, parent engagement, and community partnerships.

This session will appeal to professionals across education, community, child and family services. Key takeaways include: understanding real-world disclosure patterns, strengthening the role of parents and carers, and embedding shared responsibility into child-safe practice.



Dr Gemma McKibbin

Senior Research Fellow - University of Melbourne



Genevieve Bloxsom

Researcher - University of Melbourne

Financially coerced "self-produced" child sexual exploitation material: How do we intervene?

In this presentation, we present new findings about perpetrator strategies and how children experience being financially coerced into providing "nudes" to perpetrators. A model for disrupting child sexual exploitation for children and young people living in residential care is showcased. Participants will be invited to share their own ideas and insights into emerging forms of child sexual exploitation, and opportunities for regulation and legislative change will be brainstormed to galvanise action to address this appalling form of sexual abuse.



Cleo Westhorpe

Founder, Pivot Professional Learning



Robert Boucher

Principal, Swifts Creek P-12 School

Taming the Seahorse Curve: Understanding and Improving Student Connectedness P-12.

Being data-driven is the climate we find ourselves in - but when leaders approach this data with curiosity, real change becomes possible. Frameworks and practice guides support great thinking, but it is change within classrooms and across schools that enables all students to thrive. The Far East (geographic) Network has used the Pivot Wellbeing Survey over the past three years to gather meaningful data and inform practice. This presentation explores how such data can be used to develop shared beliefs, guide targeted change, and unlock the power of simple refinements to achieve significant gains in student connectedness.



Dr Trixie James

Senior Lecturer, CQ University

Let's Be Positive Together: Empowering Equity Students Through Positive Psychology.

Let's Be Positive Together showcases a series of Positive Psychology-based programs designed to help equity students build confidence, resilience, and a belief in their academic potential. This session highlights current initiatives and new developments for schools and discipline-specific challenges like maths anxiety.

This presentation, Let's Be Positive Together, introduces a suite of research-informed programs using Positive Psychology to support equity students in reframing their mindset and building confidence in their academic journey. Originally designed for enabling students at CQUniversity, the program has evolved into a scalable, multimedia resource now embedded across multiple sectors. The session will showcase the current programs available - including a 2-part positive psychology Micro Credential, Be Positive about Study - and share exciting developments in progress, such as adaptations for a secondary schools program Be Positive (Middle Schools) and targeted interventions for addressing maths anxiety through Be Positive about Maths. Join this presentation to explore how positivity, purpose, and practical strategies can help students not just survive, but thrive.



Skye Staude

Co-Principal - MacKillop Education

Leading Well in Complex Environments.

Schools are fast-paced, ever-evolving environments where leadership is increasingly complex and demanding. With little formal preparation and high expectations, today's leaders must balance authenticity, communication, wellbeing, planning, and relational challenges- often all at once.

Drawing on over a decade of experience leading in high-pressure school settings across the independent, government, and Catholic sectors, Skye shares a leadership approach shaped by working with vulnerable and at-risk student populations. Her work is grounded in relational trust and the development of strategic, evidence-informed practices that build resilience across individuals, teams, and systems.

This presentation explores the vital connection between leader wellbeing and sustainable school culture. Attendees will be introduced to trauma-informed leadership practices that support self-regulation, emotional agility, and team connection in the face of challenge and change.

Participants will leave with:

- Simple routines that embed regulation and reflection into daily and weekly structures
- Tools to build relational trust, emotional awareness, and team capacity
- Frameworks for leading through "the muck" with clarity and compassion
- Strategies for creating sustainable, wellbeing-focused leadership networks

Designed for professionals across education, care, and community sectors, this session offers practical, research-aligned strategies to lead with intention, connection, and courage.



Alison Wainwright

CEO – Family Life

Safe, connected and thriving: Trauma capable models of community and systems healing.

Communities seem beset by wicked problems – family violence, child neglect and maltreatment, young people in conflict with the law, substance abuse. The mental models that we have relied on to respond to these are proving to be increasingly ineffective and we are all left wondering what can be done?

In this presentation, Allison invites us to reimagine the work we do with individuals, families, communities, and systems. All of these are made up of people and the opportunities for change lie in the relationships between people. We now understand what relational trauma does to wellbeing, safety and connection and need to build the toolkits that allow us to work in a capable way with individuals, groups and the larger system to support change. By reimagining the “collective brain” and identifying opportunities to “fire and wire” together, through rhythm, storytelling, deep listening and empathy, we can re-create our mental models in a way that unburdens the system and allows community to risk share with us.

Arguing that we have transplanted many of the limitations of institutional care into our community care settings, Allison will make the case for power sharing, risk sharing, building capacity and creating the opportunities for sustainable, authentic care relationships to flourish.



Deb Tsobaris

CEO at 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

Foster and kinship carers are the foundation of Australia's care system, providing love, safety, and support to children when their families are in crisis. Yet, despite their critical role, carers are often undervalued and overlooked.

This presentation, based on a chapter authored by Deb Tsobaris, draws on the voices and experiences of carers to explore how systems can do better to support those who care for the nation's most vulnerable children.

The address examines how care systems depend on carers' unpaid labour, compassion, and resilience, and the toll this can take without the right support. Drawing on Australian and international examples, Deb will outline practical, evidence-informed strategies to better recognise, support, and retain foster and kinship carers.

In a system under increasing pressure, we must reframe how we value care, shifting from reliance on goodwill to a model that invests in children and those who care for them.



Louise Hall

Lead Partnerships
MacKillop Seasons



Lee Bromley

Chaplain -
Reiby Youth Justice Centre



Trish Quig

Reiby Youth Justice Centre

Seasons for Growth – supporting the loss and grief experiences of young people in the Juvenile Justice Setting.

Research indicates that 63% of young people entering detention have experienced the loss of a significant individual in their lives. Many face change and uncertainty before entering the justice system, with adverse childhood experiences and complex trauma being central to their existence.

Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre, catering to individuals aged 10-18, has successfully run the Seasons for Growth program for over 15 years. This presentation will highlight the effectiveness of small group psychoeducational programs in addressing the changes and losses these young people face within a complex system.

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Concurrent Sessions 3 and 4

Panel:

Culturally Humble Collaborations

Chair:



Esmal Manahan
National Director, Nanyubak Unit: First Nations Practice and Partnerships
MacKillop Family Services

Panellists:



Graham Briggs
CEO
Krip Aboriginal Cooperative



Daphne Yarram
CEO – Yoowinna Wurnalung
Aboriginal Healing Service



Ian Hamm
Chairperson
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation

Panel:

How organisations change: Beyond change theory to change practice.

Chair:



Cameron Burgess
National Program Director,
Sanctuary
The MacKillop Institute

Panellists:



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



Tammy Wallace
Strategic Manager
Engagement and Inclusion
– Churches of Christ



Kate Martin
Head of Practice Quality
and Impact
Endeavour Foundation



Tenille Abell
Sanctuary Faculty
Consultant

Join Cameron Burgess as he opens a conversation with Matthew Spicer, Kate Martin, Tenille Abell and Tammy Wallace to share what they've learnt about organisational change. Drawing on a decade's experience supporting Community Service and Government Departments to integrate a whole of organisational change model, this workshop will explore the inhibitors of change, and simple actions that help individuals, teams and organizations get unstuck and embrace new behaviours and practice. The team will also share a tool from the Sanctuary model that has the power to help you, and your teams move forward.



Smeeta Singh

National Program Director, Power to Kids – The MacKillop Institute

Challenging ourselves to have challenging conversations with children and young people about sexual safety.

1 in 4 children in Australia experience child sexual abuse (ACMS 2023). Prevention and early intervention is critical, however the community needs support. 28% of Australians were 'not at all confident' to start a conversation with a child they suspected had been sexually abused (NCACSA 2024).

Power to Kids and Power to Kids in Schools foster a whole-of-community approach to strengthen prevention and responses to child sexual abuse. Co-facilitated with a young person, this interactive workshop will offer a unique perspective into the enablers and barriers of taking action, embedding sustainable practice, and the importance of authorising environments. Participants will have an opportunity to engage in some of the key program tools to support bringing the core concepts to life.



Fiona McCallum

Director – MacKillop Seasons



Karen Evans

Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools



Larissa Polak & Gaye Titcombe

South Lismore Public School

Improving Wellbeing and Building Hope – Supporting Students with the Stormbirds, natural disaster education program.

Stormbirds is a small group evidence-based education program that supports the recovery of children and young people in response to change and loss that often results from natural disasters.

The Diocese of Lismore has an almost 30 year history of working with MacKillop Seasons (formerly God Grief) in implementing evidence-based education interventions to support primary and secondary school children respond well to experiences of grief and loss. The Diocese has strategically continued to train staff in the MacKillop Seasons programs to continue to build the knowledge and capacity of key school staff to prioritise the wellbeing of children and young people, with the understanding that the programs help children and young people to learn knowledge and skills to support them to navigate both current and future experiences of loss and grief. This session provides valuable insight into a system-led initiative that supported schools in implementing the Stormbirds intervention following the catastrophic floods of 2022.



Jahin Tanvir

CEO – Australian School of Entrepreneurship (ASE)

Equipping Young People for the Future: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Opportunity through Entrepreneurial Education.

Entrepreneurial education is the key to unlocking the full potential of young people. It's not just about launching businesses, it's about building confidence, purpose and real-world skills that young people can apply to every area of their lives. The future belongs to those who are empowered, resilient and ready to lead.

This presentation will showcase the work of the Australian School of Entrepreneurship – Australia's largest youth-led social enterprise, having engaged over 250,000 young Australians across the country. Through this case study, we'll explore how entrepreneurial education is transforming lives, creating opportunities, and how you can be part of the movement through your own work.



Phil Slade

Psychologist, Author, and Founder – Switch4Schools

Switching on Emotional Intelligence: The neuro-science of leadership and student success.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of effective leadership and student success. In this dynamic session, behavioural economist and psychologist Phil Slade—co-founder of Switch4Schools—will bridge cutting-edge neuroscience with practical tools that can transform the way school leaders work.

Drawing on research from behavioural economics, neuroscience, and psychology—including the works of Kahneman, Tversky, Damasio, and Ekman—Phil will unpack the science behind emotional regulation, empathy, and decision-making. During the session we will explore how emotional intelligence impacts cognitive load, resilience, and school culture, and learn how to apply these insights to enhance leadership and student outcomes.

The session will introduce practical frameworks and tools which utilise proven psychological methods to support emotional health and wellbeing in students and teachers – tools have been shown to reduce teacher workload and improve student engagement and performance. Join Phil to discover how integrating emotional intelligence into your leadership practice can lead to more resilient, empathetic, and high-performing educational environments.



Josh Darby

Fire and Emergency New Zealand

The Whanaungatanga Programme: A new approach to Mental Ill Health Prevention across Workforces.

The Whanaungatanga Programme is a groundbreaking workplace mental health initiative developed within Fire and Emergency New Zealand that focuses on prevention through systemic change rather than individual treatment. Grounded in principles of connection, trust, and co-design the programme addresses organisational drivers of mental ill-health by creating environments that support voice, belonging and value. This presentation shares key insights, early outcomes, and practical tools from the first responder context that are relevant to any sector grappling with burnout, workplace culture challenges, or worker exposure to difficult events. Rather than asking workers to be more resilient, Whanaungatanga focuses on work redesign – offering a replicable model for those looking to create mentally healthier, more connected workplaces.



Emma Esposito

School Social Worker
Coburn Primary School



Kathleen McInnes

Student Wellbeing Case Manager
Coburn Primary School

'We Belong' – The Practical Implementation of Collaborative Practice.

'We Belong' showcases the practical implementation of collaborative practice as a preventative approach within a school setting. 'We Belong' is co designed and culturally informed with community voice to promote wellbeing, safety, mental health, and diversity. 'We Belong' is a whole school approach to strengthening students' sense of engagement, wellbeing, and ability to form respectful relationships.



Alison Parolo

Principal – Baldivis Secondary College

Collaboration to Build a Sense of Belonging and Identity in School

Collaboration to Build a Sense of Belonging and Identity in School explores the intercultural challenges identified at Baldivis Secondary College and the targeted initiatives implemented in response. The presentation outlines how school-level collaboration, culturally responsive practice, and community partnerships were harnessed to reduce barriers for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students and strengthen their sense of belonging and identity. By centring student voice and embedding inclusive, strengths-based approaches, the initiatives enhanced student engagement, wellbeing, and educational outcomes. The session will share the most significant changes observed, alongside practical strategies that can be adapted to other school contexts. Contributing to the national conversation on equity and inclusion, this presentation demonstrates how collaborative, community-connected practice builds a school's capacity to respond to diversity in meaningful and sustainable ways. It highlights the power of intentional collaboration in shaping inclusive school cultures where all students feel seen, heard, valued, and supported to succeed.



Dr Justine Grogan

Senior Advisor for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

Shifting Across the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Continuum in Teacher Education: Insights from Research and Practice

Over the past five years, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2022) has worked on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Education to advance cultural responsiveness in the Australian teaching workforce. This initiative included extensive consultations to reflect the diversity of First Nations education experts and stakeholders within the teaching sector. It became evident that teachers must go beyond simply delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content. To support this shift, AITSL uses a mixed method approach and data collection methods, such as surveys and focus groups, to capture insights from both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous educators. Upholding principles of The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) ethics application and Indigenous data sovereignty, the project prioritises ethical management of Indigenous data. AITSL's (2022) Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness toolkit, recently released, serves as a self-reflection resource to help teachers foster culturally safe learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and indeed all students. An ongoing trial across 77 schools gathers data on the toolkit's use, assessing changes in teachers' biases, beliefs, and practices, while identifying any barriers to implementation. These insights will inform updates to the toolkit and additional resources, such as professional learning to enhance culturally safe learning environments in all Australian schools. AITSL is dedicated to sharing these findings widely with researchers, educators and stakeholders across all disciplines and sectors, both nationally and internationally.



Margaret Hepworth

Founder – The Gandhi Experiment

Victorian Education Coordinator – Together for Humanity

A Call to Hope: Empowering Young People for a Better World

How can we help shift young people's attitudes from overwhelm to hope, to build a better world?

This inspiring session explores how hope can become a catalyst for wellbeing, action, and social change. Using the transformative 'Positive Reality' methodology, we'll explore ways to shift negative thinking and feelings of doom, to purposeful, mindful action.

Participants will leave with practical tools to nurture hope, creativity and critical thinking in young people, alongside strategies to help them find purpose as global citizens and contribute to stronger, safer communities. In today's world, Hope is a key for change.

Concurrent Sessions 5 and 6

Panel:

Leading the Way – Strengthening school and community support through national collaboration – The National Postvention Leadership Group

Chair:



Fiona McCallum
Director, MacKillop Seasons

Panellists:



Tanja Hirvonen
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Thrill



Kristen Douglas
Head Headspace & Schools



Amanda Glenwright
General Manager Health
Services
Youturn



Keeva Mostyn
National Lead
Seasons for Life

The panel will explore the vision for the National Postvention Leadership Group (NPLG) which brings together organisations who deliver national suicide postvention services and activities for individuals and communities bereaved or impacted by a death by suicide. Through collaboration, the NPLG aims to build on the strengths of each organisation to improve suicide postvention support in Australia and ensure that no person or community is without the support they need.



Dr Tracy Castelino

Founder – ShantiWorks

Reflexive Leadership in Unprecedented Times.

This presentation will offer a space to explore leadership practices in deeply unsettled and unprecedented times – globally and locally. Some of what this presentation will cover:

- Reviewing our thinkings and practices.
- Make sense of our vision and role as a leader
- Develop or extend your complex understandings of organisational-team and worker care.
- Explore your personal, political and professional understandings of supervision and leadership.
- Join with colleagues in order to nourish each other.



Dr Phil Lambert PSM

Adjunct Professor – University of Sydney & Nanjing Normal University

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

This session addresses the VUCA (volatile, unpredictable, complex and ambiguous) world in which human services leaders operate. Now and as never before, transformational leadership qualities and dispositions are required to strengthen the safety and wellbeing of their staff, clients or students. Drawing on his recent article published in the USA to a readership of over 100,000, Dr Lambert will outline the approach to leadership genuine leaders exhibit and develop in others, how they provide guidance and support and recognise, like boats, there might be security in a safe harbour but that's not what boats are for.



Justin Roberts

National Program Director,
ReLATE – The MacKillop Institute



Tegan McDonald

Principal,
St Patrick's Primary School



Shona Loudon

Assistant Principal
St Patrick's Primary School

Improving Educator Wellbeing in Student-Centred Schools

Drawing on insights from over 3,000 educators implementing the ReLATE Education Model, this practical workshop unpacks evidence-informed strategies to reduce educator burnout and secondary traumatic stress while strengthening professional growth and student-centred practice.

Participants will explore key elements of ReLATE's Educator Wellbeing Framework and discover how one Victorian school has embedded robust recovery practices to help staff navigate challenging incidents and design effective supports for students to recover and reengage.



Daphne Yarram

Chief Executive Officer
Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Health Service.



Nina Levin

Specialist Clinical Advisor
Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Health Service.

Cultural Humility, Responsiveness and Belonging

Strengthening Young people and their Families through cultural connections, Transforming Futures: The Family Centred Approach Initiative

Family Centred Approaches (FCA) program is a comprehensive and culturally responsive initiative aimed at supporting young people and reducing their involvement with the justice system.

Key Aspects of FCA:

- **Culturally Responsive:** The program is Aboriginal-led and emphasises self-determination, cultural responsiveness, and trauma-informed care.
- **Family-Centred Focus:** It involves the support of an adult, family member, or mentor to help young people through holistic healing, strengthening family relationships, and fostering social and cultural connections.
- **Supportive Activities:** The program includes mentoring, recreational activities, and events that promote cultural connection, healing, and personal development.

Young Person's Journey:

- **Goal Setting:** Goals are shaped by the young person, with guidance and support from adults and mentors.
- **Cultural Connection:** Activities such as weaving, burning, crafting, making music, and poetry help maintain cultural ties.
- **Educational Support:** Assistance with re-engagement in school, TAFE, or university, and support for pursuing trades, courses, sports, and music.
- **Life Skills and Mindfulness:** Clinicians support life skills development and mindfulness strategies, fostering healthy and respectful relationships.

This approach is holistic and supportive, focusing on the overall well-being and development of young people grounded in culture



Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji

CEO, Third Culture Australia
Youth Commissioner, Victorian Multicultural Commission

Belonging, Cultural Identity & Mental Wellbeing: A Roadmap for Young People

For children and young people, identity is not just about self-expression, it's tied to their mental health, sense of safety, and belonging. In environments where cultural, racial, and personal identities are constantly shifting, many young people, especially those from migrant and refugee backgrounds often feel unseen or pressured to conform. The experience of navigating multiple cultures, expectations and communities can be both isolating and confusing.

This presentation explores the vital link between identity, wellbeing, and culturally safe environments. It highlights the importance of creating space for young people to explore who they are, develop the language to share their lived experiences, and feel validated in their identities. By addressing the impacts of racism, bias and cultural disconnection, we can better support young people in understanding that their identity is not a challenge to overcome—but a strength to celebrate.

Through lived experience, practice-based insights and practical strategies, this session will challenge professionals to reimagine how they support young people. It will centre the importance of cultural safety, belonging and representation in building mentally healthy schools, services and communities that allow all young people to thrive.



Associate Professor Tim Moore

Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University

Empowering Young Survivors: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Sexual Health and Relationship Education.

Many young Australians will experience maltreatment before turning 18 which, in turn, places them at greater risk of further harm. In previous research young survivors have told us that sexual health and relationship education is a site where they might not get the information they need and be supported to find assistance they require but that most is unhelpful if not harmful. In this session on trauma-informed, survivor-aware sexual health and relationship education (SHRE), Tim Moore will draw on findings from a three-year research project, funded by the National Centre on Action Against Child Sexual Abuse, conducted with young survivors and practitioners. The research aimed to understand what young survivors want and need from SHRE and how to adopt a more survivor-aware approach in delivering this education. Key insights from the study emphasise the importance of creating safe, inclusive learning environments where young people feel heard and supported. This includes addressing the impact of past trauma, providing content that is sensitive to triggers, and ensuring facilitators are trained in trauma-informed practices. Young survivors shared their experiences of what works for them in sexual health education, highlighting the need for education that is both responsive and practical, helping them build healthy relationships and manage challenging emotions. The findings also underscore the need for education that empowers young people while prioritising their emotional and psychological safety, ensuring that they feel respected and capable of engaging with the material in a way that is meaningful to them.



Peta Simpson

Alannah & Madeline Foundation



Kathy Warwick

Alannah & Madeline Foundation

Embedding a Trauma Informed Lens to Online Safety Education Alanah Madeline Foundation.

This 30-minute presentation shares three heartfelt stories showing how a whole-of-community approach can unlock hidden potential, benefiting individuals, society, and the country.

Mel, a primary school Principal, shares Jono's journey—struggling with reading until Grade 4, his needs were acknowledged by his family thanks to his brother Mikey's own struggles until Grade 10, leading to a turnaround. Now school captain in 2025, Jono's story includes video interviews with Mikey, their mother Cathy, and Jono, revealing stigma's impact and self-advocacy's power.

Next, Charli, identified with unique needs in Year 9, shares her struggles without support from a dysfunctional family, moving towns to escape hardship. Overwhelmed, she skipped VCE exams, taking a gap year in 2025 to rebuild while awaiting mental health support, hoping to unlock her potential.

Finally, Gufran, an accountant raised in India, recounts feeling trapped in a loop until his needs were identified at 35. After personal challenges, he found purpose in psychology, co-founding Timestone Consulting with Mel to deliver education programs fostering a future where everyone thrives.

Each story follows a past-present-future arc, using research-backed tools—contact and education—to reduce stigma, creating safe, culturally responsive spaces (UNICEF, 2021).

Takeaways urge educators to ensure equity for every child per the DDA, workplaces to foster understanding through human connection, and everyone to see each person's potential. Interactive elements—video, reflection prompts, and Q&A—ensure engagement, while a trauma-informed approach prioritises safety and empowerment, offering practical ways to build communities where every person flourishes as their whole self.



Dr Nikki Jamieson

Strategic Advisor – Suicide Prevention, Lived Experience and Moral Injury
Department of Defence & Founder of Moral Injury Australia

Understanding Moral Injury in the Workplace and its Impact in the Helping Professions.

Individuals can be exposed to events that violate their moral beliefs and values such as acts or decisions that cause intentional or unintentional harm. The response to such violations can lead to what is called moral injury and can create deep, unresolved feelings of anger, betrayal, guilt, and shame and heighten the risk of suicidality. Moral injury has often been linked to military veterans and first responders, and more recently social work, aged care, teaching, law and media professions particularly during COVID-19. Moral injury is rapidly becoming recognised as a psychosocial risk for some workplaces. The presentation explores the multi-dimensionality of moral injury and how we as a helping profession can increase our knowledge and understanding, in turn supporting our own self-care, organisational wellbeing, and care of our clients.



Dr Gemma McKibbin

Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne



Camille Schloeffel

Founder – The STOP Campaign

What victim-survivors of children's harmful sexual behaviour need from the service system: Learning from Lived Experience.

This presentation adopts a conversational style to explore the insights of 25 Survivors of children's harmful sexual behaviour (child-on-child sexual abuse). Opportunities for service system enhancement across multiple sectors, including the media, primary and mental health, education, justice and specialist sexual assault, are discussed. Participants will hear directly from a Survivor about her abuse experience and will have the opportunity to reflect on the power of Lived Experience when advocating for improved service provision.



Jocelyn Bignold AM

CEO – McAuley Community Services for Women.

Safe at Home: Intervening early to support the safety and wellbeing of people experiencing family violence.

This session explores an innovative approach to supporting the safety and wellbeing of people affected by family violence – the three-year 'Safe at Home' trial in the Geelong and Barwon region. Funded by the Victorian Government and co-designed by victim-survivors, men who had used violence and sector experts, Safe at Home provides early, tailored interventions for the whole household, with women, children, young people and the person using violence provided with individualised, flexible support for up to two years. This session will outline the research, codesign and systems mapping work that informed the model and the community engagement work being done to embed it. Family violence is the biggest driver of homelessness among women, children and young people across Australia. Safe at Home aims to keep them safe and connected to their communities while preventing homelessness, through a new model that will be evaluated and potentially replicated across Australia.



Hayley Wainwright

Researcher – Monash University

Improving the Implementation of Transition Planning in Out-of-Home Care.

Abstract Transition planning is a core practice designed to support young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) to prepare for adulthood. However, evidence indicates that it is often inconsistently applied and is not achieving its intended outcomes. Why this is the case remains unclear. This presentation draws on findings from mixed-methods studies which applied an implementation science lens to examine how transition planning is understood, delivered, and experienced across MacKillop's residential care settings. Data from transition plan content analysis, surveys, and interviews were analysed to assess the fidelity, acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of transition planning, and to identify barriers and enablers to implementation. Findings show that despite strong policy intent, transition planning is inconsistently enacted in practice. Barriers span system-level ambiguity, organisational constraints, individual beliefs, and the design of the transition planning process. Enablers include placement stability and young people's readiness. Implementation strategies to enhance uptake and consistency have been identified. These findings offer insight into why transition planning is not working as intended and provide strategies for improving its delivery so that young people receive timely, meaningful, and developmentally responsive support as they leave care.



Simangaliso Nyoni

National Multicultural Practice Lead, MacKillop Family Services

What if you didn't know who you are , where you come from?. Multicultural Cultural Support Plan

Multicultural Cultural Support Plans are an important part of telling the story of a young person and who they are , it is an important part of cultivating their identity and their sense of belonging . The Charter of Rights recognises that children need to feel safe , secure and have a strengthened sense of cultural connection , identity and know their background. The multicultural cultural support plan is a resource for everyone who plays a critical role in young people who are in Out of Home Care , this includes educators , practitioners , clinical and disability services. A Cultural Support Plan is an individualised plan that aims to develop or maintain children and young people's cultural identity through connection to family, community, and culture while they are in care. Cultural Support Plans help to document and assist culturally responsive planning and decision making, centering the best interests of the child and young person.

What will be covered in the session: This session will walk you through the development of what a high quality and authentic cultural support plan looks like. How a cultural support plan can be utilised as a resource in the care, connection, and relationship with young people. It is a resource that can give great insight into the needs and strengths of a young person. It highlights the importance of embedding and considering culture in all aspects of a young person's life , including and especially education . We know that the education environment plays a huge part in the development of a young person's sense of belonging.

Concurrent Sessions 7 and 8



Louise Hall

Lead Partnerships- MacKillop Seasons & Jas Perry, National Leader Foster Care Development - MacKillop Family Services.



Jas Perry

National Leader Foster Care Development - MacKillop Family Services.

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

Grief is a natural reaction to significant changes and losses, often overlooked beyond bereavement. For children and young people in out of home care, grief is a constant companion due to ongoing changes and losses. This grief affects them physically, emotionally, cognitively, behaviourally, and spiritually, yet they often struggle to understand these connections. Recognizing the link between trauma and grief, it's crucial to support both children and their caregivers. The presentation aims to reframe these experiences using grief theory, helping professionals and carers better understand and support children and young people. The presentation will further share knowledge and new approaches to support the loss and grief experiences of foster carers.

Key learnings include understanding grief in out of home care, building professional knowledge, and providing practical support for children.



Dr Trixie James

Lecturer, School of Access Education - CQUniversity

"How Can We Help Students Be Positive... When We're Not?!" A Reboot for the Resilient Educator

You can't pour from an empty cup! When we nurture our own optimism and resilience, we create space for others to do the same. This uplifting workshop offers simple, science-backed strategies to recharge your mindset and help others thrive too.

In the busyness of our professional lives, it's easy to forget that our mindset matters just as much as the students and the people we work with. This fun and empowering workshop builds on the Let's Be Positive Together session and flips the focus inward: how can we, as educators, mentors, and professionals, cultivate optimism, resilience, and a more constructive internal dialogue – for ourselves and those around us? Using simple, research-informed strategies from Positive Psychology, this interactive session invites you to pause, reflect, and reframe. Through storytelling, group activities, and laughter, we'll explore practical tools to energise your outlook, language, and emotional wellbeing. Come ready to reconnect with the power of positive thinking – and leave with a few new strategies (and smiles) to share.



Zoë Robinson

Advocate for Children and Young People, Office of Youth

COMING SOON



Brona Walsh

Director Education Engagement Programs – MacKillop Education

Best Practices for Therapy Dogs in School Settings

Animal-assisted education is an emerging approach that leverages the unique benefits of the human-animal bond to support student wellbeing and engagement. This session will explore best practices for integrating therapy dogs into school environments, with a focus on fostering self-regulation, building emotional resilience, enhancing social interactions, boosting confidence, and cultivating empathy among students.

Participants will gain practical knowledge on developing safe, effective, and goal-focused animal-assisted education programs. The session will provide essential guidelines for risk management, outline protocols to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both students and therapy dogs, and share strategies to create supportive environments where learning and connection can thrive.

Drawing on real-world examples and evidence-informed practice, this session will demonstrate how therapy dogs can enrich educational experiences and contribute to improved mental health and academic outcomes for students.



Kris Bardon

Principal – MacKillop Education

Empowering Students to re-engage in education.

MacKillop Education operates five specialist school campuses designed to support students whose learning needs and social or emotional challenges cannot be adequately met in a mainstream education setting. To cater for a student's learning and wellbeing needs, MacKillop provide an environment that empowers students to re-engage in education and supports them academically and socially so they can experience success in learning.

MacKillop recognises the importance of student voice in shaping a supportive and inclusive learning environment. By actively listening to and valuing students' perspectives, we foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and agency that enhances engagement and personal growth.

Join this workshop to hear directly from our students as they share their personal stories and reflect on their experiences at MacKillop Education.



Jose De La Garma

Learning and Development Manager – MacKillop Family Services

Intentional Use of Self: Leading the Way in the Face of Crisis

In our crisis-laden, high-stress environments, great leadership isn't just about making the right decisions. It's about becoming someone others trust in chaos. This session explores the 4 Foundations of Intentional Use of Self: Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Relationship Skills and Attunement, and Self-Care, and how they translate into powerful leadership practice across every level of an organisation.

Whether you're supporting a distressed young person, navigating burnout in your team, or managing high-stakes conversations, this session will equip you with a practical framework to lead with clarity, connection, and calm. You'll gain insight into how others perceive you, learn how to regulate yourself under pressure, and understand why sustainable leadership begins with how we care for ourselves. If you're looking to elevate your leadership with real presence, emotional precision, and lasting impact, then this session is for you.



Keeva Mostyn

Seasons for Life Lead,
MacKillop Seasons



Taryn Hopper
Social Worker



Nicole Lempriere
Secondary School Nurse



Renae Pettit
Secondary School Educator



Hannah Jamieson
Seasons for Life Coordinator,
Vic and Tas

Building emotional and grief literacy for whole of school communities following a suicide or other loss event

Seasons for Life provides grief literacy education and built the capacity of young people, and the adults in their lives, in over 600 schools communities across Australia. The initiative is funded under the National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program by the Department of Health and Aged Care and is built from the long-standing evidence-based loss and grief education program, Seasons for Growth supports schools to respond to loss by suicide. Many schools have recognised the value of the initiative to support students following the many changes and losses that occur, and as a suicide prevention strategy. The initiative has been delivered in urban, regional and remote areas across the country, and to all types of schools.

Join this workshop to gain insight into supporting students and school communities following a loss event, including loss by suicide. The workshop will be presented with two experienced Seasons for Growth Companions (facilitator) who have implemented the program in high school settings. The Companions will provide a firsthand account of implementing small group grief and loss education to secondary students.



Matthew Spicer

Director – Clinical Training Services, The Centre for Positive Behaviour Support (CPBS)

Values-Based Leadership

The alignment of leaders' actions with organisational values is crucial for fostering and maintaining a culture of trust, integrity, and effectiveness.

The presentation examines the implications of values in leadership, emphasising how actions reflect values and have genuine organisational impact. Values alignment and Leaders' actions can dynamically impact staff behaviour leading to positive or negative consequences for organisations. Actions are always congruent with some values, the important question is, "Which values are they congruent with"?

We will look at examples that illustrate issues of questionable leadership practices, and their associated impacts. Finally, the presentation will offer constructive alternatives for leaders to embody their values in everyday decisions and interactions, aiming to inspire a shift toward authentic and constructive leadership, cultivating a positive organisational culture that benefits both employees and the communities they serve.



KA McKercher

Founder – Beyond Sticky Notes

Co-designing with care: centering care, dignity and choice in our engagement with families and each other .

Can co-design support safety and wellbeing? Yes, but it depends on how it's done. Co-design done poorly can cause harm, feel extractive, and damage trust. Done well, it can build connections, support healing, and lead to meaningful solutions. The process matters just as much as the outcome.

This session explores how to co-design with care, from start to finish. We'll focus on trauma-informed approaches that centre choice, dignity, and shared power. We'll also ask tough questions about what "safety" really means in an unjust world, especially for people in bodies made and kept vulnerable. Simply saying "this is a safe space" isn't enough.

You'll take away:

- a clearer understanding of co-design and co-production
- insight into the roles of leaders, staff, young people, and families
- how to tell co-design apart from other engagement approaches
- practical strategies to plan, run, and close co-design processes with care
- real-world examples of co-design in action

Note: This session won't teach you how to run workshops or facilitate co-design. Like any skill, it takes time, practice, and support to get good at it.



Kathy Karatasas

Researcher University of Western Sydney

Using Intentional Questions to Design Culturally Inclusive Services with the SELF Framework

The presentation provides an overview on the S.E.L.F cultural framework, which explores cultures through the lens of settlement journey, ethnicity, language and faith and reflections on learnings from Churchill Fellowship international research with child and family organisations working with culturally diverse backgrounds.

Key messages include: the importance of cultural connectedness; creating opportunities to be language warriors; valuing and collecting cultural data; exploring cultural thinking, attitudes through safe reflective communities of practice forums for practitioners, carers and multi-disciplinary; and the role organisations have to advocate for better monitoring practices that strengthen safeguards and for developing collaborative partnerships with cultural and community leaders.



Have Questions? Contact Us

For sponsorship enquiries, please contact:

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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.