

2026 ECA National Conference

Holding
the Past,
Creating
the Future

VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Melbourne

30 September–3 October




**Early Childhood
Australia**
A voice for young children

VIRTUAL PROGRAM




Day One—Thursday 1 October 2026

START	END	PLENARY 2	
8.15 am	8.30 am	Welcome to Country 	
8.30 am	9.00 am	Opening Session 	
9.00 am	9.05 am	Welcome by ECA National President, Trevor Brown 	
9.05 am	9.15 am	Platinum Sponsor Address—Modern Teaching Aids 	
9.15 am	10.05 am	International Keynote Speaker—To be revealed 	
10.05 am	10.50 am	MORNING TEA	
10.50 am	11.35 am	PLENARY 2	MEETING ROOM 203 & 204
		INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE WORKSHOP	PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK From compliance to excellence: Reimagining safeguarding as a living system for children
		To be revealed 	Sally Cordina, Evan Hill, Damian Foley & Michele Rowse 
11.35 am	11.45 am	ROOM CHANGE	
11.45 am	12.30 pm	SUPPORTING SOCIAL COHESION IN DIVIDED TIMES	PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK
		The development of Australia's Inclusive Practice Framework for ECEC	What is the blueprint for effective safeguarding in early years settings?
		Professor Frances Press, Dr Marie White, Lisa McCoy & Professor Jennifer Cartmel 	Nicole Talarico 
12.30 pm	1.30 pm	LUNCH	
1.30 pm	2.15 pm	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW
		Holding children's truths, creating inclusive futures: Children's perspectives on disability and belonging	Championing children's voices: Lundy model in practice
		Associate Professor Kathy Cologon 	Kristy O'Toole & Carmen Cappello 
2.15 pm	2.25 pm	ROOM CHANGE	
2.25 pm	3.10 pm	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW
		Consultation as core curriculum practice: Children as active partners	Adapting embedded learning supports for inclusive practice in Australian early childhood settings
		Rod Soper 	Stephen Carberry & Dr Samantha Vlcek 
3.10 pm	3.55 pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
3.55 pm	5.05 pm	Ethics in Action: A conversation on the choices that shape our practice Catharine Hydon, Dr Simon Longstaff AO, Dr Anne Kennedy AM & Leanne Mits OAM	
5.05 pm	5.15 pm	Day One: Closing remarks	

NB: Program subject to change without notice  Presentations featuring this symbol will be Livestreamed.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM





Day Two—Friday 2 October 2026


START	END	PLENARY 2
8.30 am	8.40 am	Welcome back 
8.40 am	9.30 am	Australian Keynote Address Professor Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett 
9.30 am	9.40 am	ROOM CHANGE
9.40 am	10.25 am	PLENARY 2
		MEETING ROOM 203 & 204
		SUPPORTING SOCIAL COHESION IN DIVIDED TIMES
		AUSTRALIAN KEYNOTE WORKSHOP
		Preventing gender-based violence: Exploring a national approach with early childhood education and care
		Professor Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett  Samantha McGuffie 
10.25 am	11.10 am	MORNING TEA
11.10 am	11.55 am	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW
		CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW
		Continuity: From home visits to school visits
		Toni Christie & Bridget McBride  Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC) 
11.55 am	12.05 pm	ROOM CHANGE
12.05 pm	12.50 pm	SUPPORTING SOCIAL COHESION IN DIVIDED TIMES
		PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK
		More than words: Actioning the EYLF V2.0 principles for equity and inclusion
		Professor Lennie Barblett AM & Professor Susan Irvine  Dr Kerry Bull 
12.50 pm	1.50 pm	LUNCH
1.50 pm	1.55 pm	Welcome back
1.55 pm	2.55 pm	Exploring AI for the early years Professor Suzy Edwards, Professor Michael Henderson, Professor Jane Page & Pro Vice Chancellor, Indigenous Kelly Humphrey
2.55 pm	3.05 pm	ROOM CHANGE
3.05 pm	3.50 pm	EXPLORING AI FOR THE EARLY YEARS WORKSHOP
		PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK
		Detecting and reporting colleague misconduct: Learning from <i>In Plain Sight</i>
		Professor Suzy Edwards  Luke Twyford & Anne Edwards 
3.50 pm	4.35 pm	AFTERNOON TEA
4.35 pm	5.20 pm	SUPPORTING SOCIAL COHESION IN DIVIDED TIMES
		PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK
		Preserving core values and promoting democratic participation in early years education
		Dr Angie Zerella & Dr Anne Kennedy AM  Kate McGill 

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Day Three—Saturday 3 October 2026

START	END	PLENARY 2	
8.30 am	8.35 am	Welcome back 	
8.35 am	9.25 am	International Keynote Address Dr Claire Warden 	
9.25 am	9.35 am	Award Presentations ECA Doctoral Thesis Award, Barbara Creaser Awards 	
9.35 am	10.05 am	Barbara Creaser Memorial Lecture 	
10.05 am	10.50 am	MORNING TEA	
10.50 am	11.35 am	PLENARY 2	MEETING ROOM 203 & 204
		INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE WORKSHOP	PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK
		Thinking with and paying attention: Ecological pedagogical courage	
		Dr Claire Warden 	Kerrie O'Neill & Lynda Salvo 
11.35 am	11.45 am	ROOM CHANGE	
11.45 am	12.30 pm	CHAMPIONING CHILDREN HERE AND NOW	DOCTORAL THESIS AWARD PRESENTATION
		Play School at 60: Championing children here and now in children's media	
		Laura Stone, Associate Professor Kate Highfield & Bryson Hall 	
12.30 pm	1.30 pm	LUNCH	
1.30 pm	2.15 pm	PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY—HOLDING PURPOSE AND RISK	PROFESSIONAL BRAVERY
		Expanding the conversation about risk-taking and courage in ECEC	Reimagining documentation through a child safe lens for stronger programming and planning
		Dr Mandy Cooke 	Renae Karayannis & Rebecca Waingold 
2.15 pm	2.25 pm	ROOM CHANGE	
2.25 pm	3.15 pm	Australian Keynote Address Thomas Mayo 	
3.15 pm	3.35 pm	Closing remarks by ECA National President and launch of 2027 Conference 	

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