

THE LEARNING CONFERENCE

Inspiring Growth, Empowering Educators

5 & 6 September 2025 | MELBOURNE

Welcome to an extraordinary gathering designed to spark meaningful conversations, ignite innovation and empower educators to transform their practices. The **Inaugural Learning Conference** is not just another professional development event – it's a celebration of learning, collaboration and the shared journey of educators dedicated to creating a brighter future for their students and communities.

At the heart of this conference is a commitment to **empowering educators**. Here, you'll explore how to deepen your understanding of learning – how it happens, how it evolves and how it can be transformed. Together, we'll delve into the core pillars of **leadership, collaboration, coaching and instruction**, offering you the tools and inspiration to amplify your impact.

More Than a Conference – A Movement

This is not just an event, it's a call to action for educators who believe in the transformative power of learning. Together, we'll embrace the challenges and opportunities of our profession, fostering a culture of reflection, growth and shared purpose.

Join us as we cultivate a community that values equity, innovation and a deeper understanding of learning. Together, we will explore the dynamic nature of education and its potential to empower both educators and learners, fostering meaningful growth for every context.

Proudly Hosted by



We are proud to co-host The Learning Conference 2025 with **Hester Hornbrook Academy**, an institution dedicated to providing equal access to quality education and wellbeing supports. At Hester Hornbrook, education goes beyond academics—it is a holistic journey that equips young people with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to create their own future.

Aligned with their vision of an inclusive and just community, this conference embodies their commitment to **engage, equip, empower** and **extend** all learners. Together, we celebrate the power of education to inspire growth, foster connection, and drive meaningful change.

What to Expect

This conference is about more than acquiring knowledge – it's about **building connections, reflecting on our practices and envisioning actionable change.**

Highlights include:

A Unique Approach to Professional Learning

- **Inquiry-Driven Exploration:** Dive into the dynamic, inquiry-based format that encourages reflection and curiosity.
- **Concept-Driven Thinking:** Engage with ideas that foster agility, imagination and resilience, essential qualities for navigating challenges in education.
- **Self-Efficacy as the Core:** Understand how cultivating self-efficacy empowers you to take ownership of your learning, influence your practice and create a meaningful impact.

Evidence-Informed Learning in Context

- Inspired by the wisdom of Dylan Wiliam – *'Nothing works everywhere, but everything works somewhere'* – you'll explore how evidence-based strategies can be adapted to meet the unique demands of your context.
- This is a conference grounded in authenticity, reflection and the acknowledgment that every educational journey is different.

Empowering Educator Agency

- Through shared stories and practical tools, we'll focus on equipping educators with the agency to transform their schools, classrooms and communities.
- Our sessions are designed to honour your professional identity, foster growth and spark purposeful action.

Why Attend?

- **Be Inspired by Experts and Practitioners:** Hear from thought leaders like Gavin Grift and Stuart MacAlpine and learn from experienced authors, practicing educators and world-class facilitators offering real-world strategies and insights.
- **Engage in Authentic Conversations:** Build meaningful connections with fellow educators through collaborative discussions and interactive activities.
- **Transform Your Practice:** Discover evidence-informed strategies that can be tailored to your unique context, fostering growth and impact in your professional life.
- **Celebrate Agency and Authenticity:** This conference honours your individuality as an educator, providing you with the tools and confidence to lead with purpose.

Audience

This conference is crafted for a diverse range of educators, each bringing unique perspectives to our shared commitment to learning and growth:

- **Teachers:** Dynamic professionals at all levels seeking to refine their craft, embrace innovative strategies and enhance student learning.
- **School Leaders:** Visionary principals, administrators and leadership teams dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation and equity in education.
- **Coaches:** Empowering mentors who support educators in developing their potential and advancing their impact in classrooms and beyond.
- **School Support Staff:** Essential contributors who enrich the educational experience and champion the success of every student.
- **Education Enthusiasts:** Lifelong learners and advocates passionate about the transformative power of education and its potential to shape a better future.

Whether your goal is to gain inspiration, acquire actionable tools or connect with like-minded professionals, this conference offers something for everyone. Join us as we build a community rooted in reflection, innovation and purposeful change.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

5 & 6 September 2025

'Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself.'

John Dewey

Education is an echo chamber of opinions, yet the best educators remain perpetual learners, unafraid to question their own assumptions. As we navigate the complexities of learning, one truth stands out: the most effective systems, schools, and classrooms are those that challenge the status quo. They make decisions grounded in a continuous commitment to understanding learning—and their role within it.

Educators recognise the complex nature of shifting outdated educational ideals and embrace commitment to revolutionising factory models of education, challenging the notion that education's primary role is to preserve traditions. By championing equity, innovation, collaboration, and self-awareness, we can drive meaningful change within our educational landscape.

This is not just about what we do in the classroom - it's about how we engage with learning in every aspect of our work and lives. Expect to be challenged, inspired, and provoked to rethink your role in shaping learning-centred cultures.

As we embark on this Learning Conference, let's begin by asking:

- Are we truly modelling the learning we want to see in others?
- What shifts must we make in our daily work to align with the principles of deep learning?
- How do we collectively build communities where learning is not just an event, but a way of being?

Join us as we redefine what it means to learn, lead, and grow - together.

Kickstart Your Conference Experience with Connection and Inspiration

Join us for an exciting evening of connection, inspiration and community as we launch the conference weekend! Hosted by renowned education leader Gavin Grift, this event sets the stage for a transformative journey into understanding learning.

Explore key themes of our conference including the role of equity, self-awareness, leadership, collaboration and innovation when learning is our core business.

Friday, September 5th

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

**Welcome Reception with Drinks,
Snacks & Opening Address**

MC: Linda Douglas

Attire: Smart Casual

Saturday, September 6th

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Registration & Coffee

Keynote Address

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Stuart MacAlpine & Gavin Grift

"If learning is our core business, what are the implications for my work, my colleagues, and my community?"

Learning is often spoken about as our core business, but do we truly understand what that means? More importantly, are we willing to lead, collaborate, and challenge ourselves in ways that honour its complexity?

In this compelling keynote, Stuart MacAlpine and Gavin Grift bring their expertise together to push us beyond surface-level discussions of learning and into its real implications for schools, teams, and leadership.

What to Expect:

- **Welcome Drinks:** Relax, network and connect with fellow educators over drinks and light refreshments.
- **Keynote Inspiration:** Gavin Grift will share his vision for the weekend, sparking reflection on the role of learning in our lives as educators.
- **Interactive Activities:** Engage in fun icebreakers and creative challenges designed to foster meaningful connections.
- **Collaborative Conversations:** Explore key themes like equity, leadership and innovation through small group discussions.

- What do we really mean by learning? Stuart will challenge us to confront our assumptions about learning—how it happens, what hinders it, and what it demands from educators in today's world.
- How do we create the conditions for deep learning? Gavin will explore the role of self-awareness, coaching, and collaborative cultures in making learning a lived reality, not just a philosophy.
- What does this mean for leadership? If learning is central, then leadership must evolve to embrace vulnerability, dialogue, and continuous growth—not just for students, but for every member of the school community.

This session will provoke, challenge, and inspire. It's not just about understanding learning—it's about building the cultures and leadership needed to make it thrive.

Are we ready to move beyond rhetoric and truly centre learning in our work? Let's explore what that means—together.

Morning Break

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Morning Breakout Sessions

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

■ Equity in Learning: How can we ensure learning is accessible and inclusive for all?

Education should empower every learner, yet systemic barriers persist. This session will explore practical strategies, resources, and mindsets needed to create learning environments where every student has an equal opportunity to thrive.

Facilitator: Derek Hayman

■ AI in Education: Friend or Foe?

Artificial Intelligence is revolutionising education—but how do we ensure it enhances, rather than replaces, deep learning? Join this session to unpack the opportunities and challenges of AI, gaining insights into how you can leverage it to empower both students and teachers.

Facilitators: Dr Jennifer Chang Wathall & Nicole Thorson

■ Engaging the Marginalised: What strategies can help reach those most often excluded from traditional education systems?

Education is not one-size-fits-all. Many learners are left out of mainstream schooling, disengaged, or unsupported. This session will examine real-world approaches to reconnecting these students, fostering meaningful participation, and designing learning experiences that truly meet their needs.

Facilitator: Hester Hornbrook Academy Staff

■ Self-Awareness and Growth: How does understanding ourselves enhance our ability to support others?

Great educators are not just experts in their subjects—they are also deeply self-aware. This session will explore how self-reflection shapes our ability to foster growth in others and how developing this awareness strengthens both teaching practice and leadership.

Facilitator: Juan Carlos Cairos

■ Collaboration as the Cornerstone: What can we learn from environments that make collaboration their foundation?

Some of the most successful schools and organisations place collaboration at the heart of everything they do. In this session, explore key lessons from those who have built strong, collaborative cultures and learn practical ways to embed these principles into your own context.

Facilitator: Colin Sloper

Lunch

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Refuel, connect, and reflect with colleagues over lunch.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

■ Leadership Under Pressure: How can we keep learning central to leadership amidst constant change?

In a fast-moving educational landscape, how do leaders remain grounded in learning while managing competing demands? This session will explore strategies to keep learning at the core of leadership—even in the midst of pressure, uncertainty, and change.

Facilitator: Sally Lasslet

■ Caring Critics: Who are the right people to support us in our professional growth, and what's our role in seeking feedback?

Growth requires feedback—but not all feedback is equal. This session will unpack how to cultivate professional relationships that challenge, support, and push us towards greater impact.

Facilitator: Lucie Lecocq-Otsing

Lessons from Learning-Centred Schools: What sets learning-centred schools apart from traditional models?

When schools truly prioritise learning, both students and educators thrive. Drawing from real-world examples, this session explores the tensions, challenges, and triumphs of a school that has committed to putting learning at the centre of their culture and practice.

Facilitator: Ian Hayne

Teaching for Self-Efficacy: Why does fostering self-efficacy matter, and how can we make it a reality?

Self-efficacy is at the heart of student success—but how do we build it intentionally? This session will explore key insights from research and practice, offering tangible ways to cultivate a learning environment where students believe in their ability to grow and achieve.

Facilitator: Dr. Janelle Wills

Educational Partnerships and Local Learning Ecosystems: How can innovative collaborations forge a sustainable future in education?

In this session, a Partnership Activation Model is unveiled to redefine current approaches, dismantle barriers, and build sustainable alliances that boost student learning and wellbeing in communities. Explore practical insights for a better partnering future.

Facilitator: Dr. Louisa Ellum

Afternoon Break 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Plenary Session 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

"What have we learned, why does it matter, and how will we take it forward?"

This dynamic closing session invites us to pause, reflect, and harness the key insights from the day. Whether we've explored learning in leadership, collaboration, or personal growth, this is our moment to distil what truly resonates.

Through thoughtful dialogue and shared reflection, we'll surface the most impactful ideas, clarify why they matter, and co-create actionable steps to carry them forward. To conclude, we'll engage in a powerful, unifying experience—one that captures our collective commitment to learning, growth, and meaningful change. You'll leave not just inspired but equipped to turn insights into action.

Closing Remarks & Farewell 5:00 PM

Meet Your Conference Speakers



Gavin Grift

Gavin Grift is an internationally recognised leader in coaching, collaborative cultures, and leadership that embraces self-awareness. With a career spanning over three decades, he

has worked across Australia, Europe, Southeast Asia, and North America, helping educators and leaders transcend cultural and contextual differences to create learning environments where collaboration and self-directed growth thrive.

Gavin is a sought-after educator in Cognitive CoachingSM, a widely respected methodology that empowers educators to reflect deeply and build self-directedness in themselves and others. His expertise in coaching has made him a sought-after consultant, delivering transformational learning experiences to schools and organisations worldwide. He has worked closely with some of the most influential thinkers in education, including Dr Robert Marzano and Richard and Rebecca DuFour, supporting schools in embedding Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that drive student success through high-impact collaboration.

As an author, consultant, and speaker, Gavin has played a pivotal role in shaping transformative professional learning. His books, including *Emerge: The Five Most Common Challenges Face by Middle Leaders* and *How to Overcome Them*, *Collaborative Teams That Work*, and *Five Ways of Being: What Learning Leaders Think, Do and Say Every day*, provide practical frameworks for creating cultures of learning and leadership that empower both educators and students.

Through Grift Education, which he founded in 2018, he continues to support schools and systems globally, equipping them with strategies to navigate the complexities of modern education while maintaining autonomy and a commitment to meaningful collaboration.

Gavin's work challenges traditional models of leadership and learning, urging educators to embrace vulnerability, dialogue, and the power of self-awareness. His passion lies in bridging the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that the principles of deep learning are not just discussed - but lived.

A compelling and engaging speaker, Gavin brings a wealth of experience, insight, and humour, ensuring that his audiences leave not just inspired, but ready to take action.



Stuart MacAlpine

Stuart MacAlpine is an internationally respected leader in learning and educational innovation, known for his deep expertise in understanding the true essence of learning and addressing the opportunities

and challenges it presents for contemporary schools.

With over two decades of experience across the UK, Singapore, New Zealand, and Denmark, Stuart has held pivotal roles in teaching, leadership, curriculum innovation, and global educational development. At United World College Southeast Asia (UWCSEA) in Singapore, he served as the Director of Teaching and Learning, where he was instrumental in enhancing educational programs and strategies.

Demonstrating his commitment to accessible education, Stuart co-founded Amala (formerly Sky School), the world's first high school diploma program for refugees, leading the development of its curriculum to provide transformative education for displaced youth.

In 2019, Stuart became the Founding Principal of Green School New Zealand, establishing the first affiliate of Green School Bali and developing the Green School Diploma, focusing on project and nature-based learning.

His tenure as Senior Director at the LEGO Foundation's Centre for Playful Learning involved leading initiatives that connected learning, play, and creativity, collaborating with esteemed institutions like Cambridge and Harvard universities, the OECD, and pioneering the Playful Schools Network.

Currently, Stuart serves as the Middle and High School Principal at the International School Aberdeen, where he continues to influence educational practices. He is also pursuing doctoral research at Cambridge University, focusing on the conceptualisation of learning goals.

His upcoming book, *The Hesscairn Guidebook to Learning: Homecoming*, delves into these themes, offering profound insights for schools aiming to redefine their approach to education.



Derek Hayman

Derek Heyman is a leading-edge educator, presenter, and specialist in equity-driven learning. With a master's degree in international community development, he brings a unique perspective that

bridges education, community engagement, and social impact.

Derek has extensive experience in primary health prevention and respectful relationships education, having worked across schools, early childhood settings, and the wider community sector. His expertise lies in supporting schools to improve student attendance, engagement, and wellbeing, particularly through the implementation of School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) and targeted interventions that foster inclusive learning environments.

His deep commitment to equity in education is reflected in his work delivering Frameworks for Understanding Poverty workshops, helping educators recognise and respond to the systemic challenges that impact student learning and participation. His ability to connect research with real-world practice makes him a sought-after voice in education reform, particularly in designing school strategies that create lasting, positive change for all students.

Currently working in the Victorian Government school system, Derek blends project management, stakeholder engagement, and community development expertise to empower educators with practical, evidence-based approaches. His passion for transforming schools into equitable, student-centred environments makes him a dynamic and impactful speaker, ensuring audiences leave with not just new knowledge, but the tools to make a tangible difference in their communities.



Hester Hornbrook Academy Staff

Hester Hornbrook Academy (HHA) is a unique educational institution dedicated to supporting young people aged 15 - 25 who have faced challenges in traditional schooling environments. With campuses across Melbourne, including a new facility in Werribee

and Melbourne city, open in 2025, HHA offers flexible, individualised learning programs that integrate education and wellbeing support. Each classroom is staffed by a teacher, a youth worker, and an education support officer, ensuring a holistic approach to student development.

In their upcoming joint presentation, HHA's team will share insights into their innovative educational model, which places equal emphasis on learning and wellbeing. They will discuss strategies for re-engaging students through applied learning principles, vocational education and training in schools (VETiS) courses, and the Healing Oriented Program of Education (HOPE). This approach fosters a supportive environment where students can develop literacy and numeracy skills, complete secondary school certificates, and pursue individual learning goals.

The presentation will also highlight the importance of community engagement and the role of multidisciplinary teams in creating inclusive, student-centred learning spaces. Attendees will gain practical knowledge on implementing flexible education models that address both the academic and personal development needs of young people, particularly those who have experienced significant barriers to education.



Juan Carlos
Cairos

Juan Carlos Cairos is an experienced international educator, speaker, and consultant with a deep passion for inquiry-based learning, student agency, and leadership development. Originally from the Canary Islands, he has

worked in diverse educational settings across Hong Kong, the Czech Republic, Vietnam, and Cambodia, bringing a global perspective to innovative teaching and learning practices.

Currently, Juan Carlos is a Grade 2 teacher at the International School of Phnom Penh (ISPP), a leading IB World School in Cambodia. His approach to education is deeply influenced by his own experiences as a student with special needs, driving his commitment to creating cultures of curiosity, self-awareness, and wonder where students take ownership of their learning.

As an Agency Trainer for Grift Education, Juan Carlos represents and embodies the work of Emerge, based on Emerge by Gavin Grift. In this role, he works with educators and school leaders to develop self-awareness, reflective practice, and collaborative leadership, ensuring that schools build strong, learning-focused teams that thrive on trust and authenticity.

Beyond his classroom work, Juan Carlos is a consultant for non-profit organisations and government education bodies, supporting schools and universities with personalised learning strategies and play-based approaches. As a multilingual workshop leader, he provides professional development that is practical, engaging, and deeply connected to real classroom experiences.

A dynamic speaker, Juan Carlos has presented at global conferences, including CIEC 2025, where he led a session on The Power of Storytelling. His unwavering commitment to fostering inquiry, student agency, and authentic leadership continues to inspire educators and students worldwide, making learning an empowering and transformative experience.



Colin Sloper

Colin Sloper is a distinguished leader in transforming education through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). With a career spanning over three decades, he has served as a

teacher, assistant principal, and principal in government schools since 1983. Throughout his career, Colin has been instrumental in establishing five new state government schools, including his tenure as principal of Pakenham Springs Primary School in Victoria, Australia. Under his leadership, Pakenham Springs became the first recognised Model PLC School in Australia, exemplifying his ability to reconceptualise schools into genuine PLCs.

Renowned for his expertise in fostering collaborative cultures, Colin collaborates with educational systems, schools, leaders, and educators to elevate them into high-performing PLCs. His guidance enables them to excel as members of exceptionally effective collaborative teams. As an esteemed Associate Director at Grift Education, Colin's commitment to advancing collaborative practices in education is evident through his close association with the organisation.

Colin is also a prolific author, co-authoring several influential books, including Collaborative Teams That Work: The Definitive Guide to Cycles of Learning in a PLC and Transformative Collaboration: Five Commitments for Leading a Professional Learning Community. His publications provide practical frameworks and actionable strategies for educators seeking to enhance their collaborative efforts and achieve outstanding outcomes.

His reputation as an educational leader, speaker, and coach has made him a sought-after resource for educational organisations across all sectors, aiming to enhance their collaborative practices and achieve exceptional results. Colin's profound impact on the educational landscape underscores his status as one of Australia's foremost experts on collaborative cultures.



Dr Jennifer
Chang Wathall

Dr Jennifer Chang Wathall is a globally recognised expert in learning science, conceptual understanding, and the integration of artificial intelligence in education. With over 25 years of experience, she

has worked in international schools across Hong Kong and New York, served as a university lecturer, and consulted for schools worldwide on future-focused education. Her expertise spans concept-based curriculum design, inquiry-driven learning, and innovative pedagogy that ensures deep understanding.

As a thought leader in AI-powered education, Jennifer is at the forefront of guiding educators on how to leverage artificial intelligence ethically and effectively in their teaching. Her latest book, *AI-Powered Pedagogy: Redefining Education*, published by Grift Education, offers practical frameworks and insights on transforming learning through AI while maintaining critical human elements in education.

Jennifer has also been a consultant for the International Baccalaureate, contributing to the design of concept-based mathematics for the Diploma Programme and co-authoring several IB Mathematics reference books. A certified performance coach and an expert in learning design, she helps schools' worldwide transition to concept-based, inquiry-led models that prepare students for an ever-evolving world.

An engaging and dynamic speaker, Jennifer challenges educators to rethink learning, embrace technology, and design classrooms where understanding, not just knowledge, is the goal.



Nicole Thorson

Nicole Thorson is a dedicated educator and certified trainer in Erickson and Lanning Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction. As an associate of Dr. Jennifer Chang Wathall Consulting, she collaborates closely to

advance innovative educational practices. Nicole completed The Art of Facilitation Institute in 2024, enhancing her skills in guiding educators through transformative learning experiences.

Passionate about concept-based and inquiry-based pedagogies, Nicole promotes a balanced approach to teaching factual knowledge, skills, and deep conceptual understanding. Her diverse experience includes roles in International Baccalaureate schools in China and independent schools in New South Wales. Currently, she leads Teaching and Learning at a new school in South West Sydney, where she fosters a collaborative environment through professional development, peer coaching, and reflective practice.

Nicole's commitment to education is evident in her efforts to help teachers and students develop a love of learning and personal growth. Her work continues to inspire and guide educators and learners toward reaching their full potential.



Sally Lasslett

Sally Lasslett is the Principal of Hester Hornbrook Academy (HHA), bringing over 25 years of experience as an educational leader across a range of school settings.

Throughout her career, she has been instrumental in leading school transformation initiatives, notably driving significant improvements in educational outcomes at a large outer metropolitan secondary school.

At HHA, Sally oversees a unique learning environment that seamlessly integrates education and wellbeing. Each classroom is supported by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a teacher, an educational intervention support staff member, and a youth worker, ensuring that students receive both academic and personal development support. Under her leadership, HHA continues to expand its reach, with the new Werribee campus set to open in 2025, providing flexible education options for disengaged youth in Melbourne's west.

Sally is a passionate advocate for flexible learning environments and the critical role wellbeing plays in student success. She has worked extensively with the Department of Education to enhance re-engagement opportunities and wellbeing resources, particularly in outer metropolitan areas. Her commitment to developing real-life skills in students is further demonstrated through her contributions as a textbook author and board member of Home Economics Victoria.

She describes HHA as "a school, only different," emphasising the academy's Healing Oriented Program of Education (HOPE), which reimagines education as human-centred, inclusive, and purpose-driven. Her leadership is driven by the belief that every young person deserves an education where they feel connected, valued, and empowered to embrace their future with optimism. Sally's work continues to shape alternative education pathways that ensure all students experience success in a supportive and dynamic learning environment.



Lucie Lecocq-Otsing

Lucie Lecocq-Otsing is a seasoned international educator with nearly two decades of experience across diverse educational settings in Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, and Cambodia. A native of France, she began her

career as a French teacher, driven by a passion for sharing knowledge and fostering mutual learning.

Lucie's commitment to collaborative leadership and professional growth led her to pursue a master's degree in educational leadership from Moreland University, complementing her Bachelor of Arts in English Linguistics.

She has held several middle leadership positions and is currently the Diploma Programme Coordinator at the International School of Phnom Penh (ISPP), where she oversees the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, ensuring students develop both subject expertise and international mindedness.

As an Agency Trainer for Grift Education, Lucie represents and lives the body of work *Emerge*, based on *Emerge: The Most Common Challenges Faced by Middle Leaders and How to Overcome Them* by Gavin Grift. She works with educators to cultivate self-awareness, strengthen leadership skills, and build collaborative, learning-focused teams, ensuring that school leaders develop the reflective practices necessary to drive meaningful change.

Her dedication to collective efficacy and professional learning communities has been demonstrated through her involvement in school-wide initiatives, including the Standards-Based Grading (SBGR) task force during the Middle States Association (MSA) re-accreditation process at the American Cooperative School of Tunis (ACST). She has also shared her expertise at global conferences, including CIEC 2025, where she presented *Decisions, Decisions... A Journey to Effective Team Results*.

Lucie's depth of experience, international perspective, and unwavering commitment to empowering educators make her a powerful advocate for leadership development and authentic collaboration in schools worldwide.



Ian Hayne

Ian Hayne is a seasoned educational leader with a distinguished career spanning over three decades in various teaching and leadership roles. He currently serves as the Principal of West Moreton Anglican

College (WestMAC) in Queensland, Australia, where he leads a thriving school community of over 1,500 students across three sub-schools. Under his leadership, WestMAC has embraced a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement, ensuring students and educators alike are equipped for success in an ever-changing educational landscape.

As a Certified Agency Trainer for Collaborative Teams That Work, Ian's expertise lies in embedding high-functioning collaborative practices that drive student learning and professional growth. His expertise helps educators move beyond superficial teamwork and into deep, structured collaboration, ensuring collective efficacy becomes a lived experience rather than an abstract ideal.

Ian's leadership philosophy is deeply rooted in adaptive leadership, evidence-based teaching, and strategic school improvement. He has been instrumental in implementing initiatives that strengthen professional learning communities, enhance instructional leadership, and create conditions where both students and staff can thrive. Ian is also a certified Cognitive CoachSM with Thinking Collaborative.

A respected voice in educational leadership and school transformation, Ian is committed to empowering educators, fostering meaningful collaboration, and ensuring schools develop sustainable, high-impact teaching practices that truly make a difference.



Dr Janelle Wills

Dr Janelle Wills is a distinguished educator, researcher, and author with over 40 years of teaching and leadership experience in Australian education. A specialist in learning science, self-efficacy, and evidence-based teaching, she has

worked extensively with schools, regions, and education systems to drive meaningful change and improve student outcomes.

Her deep expertise in linking theory with practice has led to significant sector-wide initiatives and school improvement frameworks. As the former Director of Teaching and Learning for Independent Schools Queensland, she collaborated closely with renowned education researcher Dr. Lyn Sharratt, implementing data-driven and research-informed strategies across diverse school settings. She has also worked alongside Dr. Robert Marzano for over a decade, helping to bring high-impact, evidence-based instructional practices into Australian classrooms.

Janelle is a prolific author, co-authoring widely respected works such as *Thinking Protocols for Learning* (2020) and *Transformative Collaboration: Five Commitments for Leading a PLC* (2016). Her latest book, *Ready, Set, Teach*, published by Grift Education, reflects her commitment to equipping educators with practical, research-driven strategies that ensure learning is both deep and lasting. Through this work, she reinforces the importance of teacher self-efficacy, reflective practice, and the integration of research into daily teaching.

A passionate advocate for teaching as a profession, Janelle fervently promotes action research and professional inquiry, ensuring that educators remain not only practitioners but continuous learners themselves. Her ability to bridge cutting-edge research with real-world practice makes her an invaluable leader in shaping the future of learning.



Dr Louisa
Ellum

Dr Louisa Ellum is an innovative educational leader, strategist, and passionate advocate committed to transforming learning environments through dynamic partnerships and collaborative practices. With over 30 years of

experience in Australia's education, tertiary, and social sectors, she has dedicated her career to ensuring that every young person gains access to quality, inclusive education.

Currently serving as the Director of Pathways and Engagement at Swinburne University of Technology, she leads efforts to drive change in the vocational education and training (VET) and higher education landscape. In this role, she bridges education systems with the evolving needs of today's learners and workforce by forging strategic collaborations among government, community, and industry stakeholders. A recent milestone in her career is the completion of her PhD from the University of Tasmania's Peter Underwood Centre, where her research examined the transformative power of partnerships among flexible learning providers.

Her diverse background includes roles as a secondary teacher, program developer, and community sector leader, which has provided her with a comprehensive perspective on learner needs and institutional challenges. Her work has been pivotal in developing models that integrate curriculum, vocational training, and support services, ensuring students become active, empowered participants in their own learning journeys.

A dynamic speaker and workshop leader, she has presented at national and international forums, sharing practical insights into collaborative leadership and effective educational strategies. Her unwavering commitment to equity, inquiry, and transformative learning continues to inspire educators and policymakers, making education an empowering and lifelong pursuit. Her recent research findings have provided valuable insights to both academic and policy arenas, cementing her role as a transformative leader in education.

Event Details

Dates: Friday, 5 September & Saturday, 6 September

Times: **Friday** 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
(Registration from 8:30 AM)

Venue: Hester Hornbrook Academy -
City Campus, Level 3, 333 Exhibition
Street, Melbourne

Individual Registration: \$499 ex GST per person

Team Registration*: \$450 ex GST per person

**Team is a 3 or more people from
one school/organisation*



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