



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Focused Initiatives in Social Work and Education Conference 2026

Monday 22 & Tuesday 23 June 2026

Program | Monday 22 June 2026

8.30am	Registration and arrival tea and coffee
8.45 - 9.30am	<p>Conference Opening</p> <p>Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony Binowee Bayles and Raymond Weatherall</p> <p>Welcome - Professor Reuben Bolt, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services), The University of Sydney</p>
9.30 - 10.30am	<p>Keynote address</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention Patricia Dudgeon, Professor, School of Indigenous Studies, The University of Western Australia</p>
10.30 - 11.00am	Morning Tea
11.00 - 12.30pm	<p>Concurrent paper presentations</p> <p>Group 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible practice in social work education: Developing cultural capability - Alinta Andrews and Rachel Goff Reclaiming child protection decision making in Australia - Candice Butler Reframing social work education to build culturally safe social workers: A decolonising pedagogy - Jessica Leslie, Emma Truman and Ellie Moir Talking about life and work: Central Australian Aboriginal Lifeworlds and NGO workplace practices - Miriam Bevis <p>Group 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harnessing relationality and affect to move beyond passive learning in Aboriginal education - Cathie Burgess and Valerie Harwood What is the impact of Aboriginal community-led professional learning on teachers in an independent school? - Jade Sparks Counter-archives, curriculum and sovereign knowledge: A NSW study - Penny Robyn Vlies Indigenous youth and the architecture of justice in Victoria, Australia - Catherine Thompson
12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30 - 2.30pm	<p>Keynote address</p> <p>Ngulagambilnha Ngurambangu (Returning home to Country): Resisting Pan-Indigenous frameworks and centring Nations sovereignty in social work Jessica Russ-Smith, Associate Professor of Social Work, Faculty of Health Sciences, Australian Catholic University</p>
2.30 - 3.30pm	<p>Concurrent presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community voices: When we work together - Julie Welsh and colleagues (<i>Panel</i>) From surveillance to sustainability: Fish traps, kinship, and the future of justice - Barry McGrady, Aunty Deb Swan, Buddy Hipipi and James Beauflis (<i>Panel</i>)
3.30 - 4.30pm	<p>Concurrent presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ngala Kwop Bidi: Facilitating institutional change at Murdoch University - Jenna Woods, Chanelle van den Berg and Elisha Jacobs-Smith (<i>Panel</i>) Our Stories, Our Histories: Aboriginal incarceration in Australia - Lynette Riley AO (<i>Workshop</i>) From clinical to cultural: Making further steps toward positive change - Mellissa Johnson, Adam Cryer, Tuscany Brown and Savvina Tsougranis (<i>Yarning Circle</i>)
5.00 - 7.00pm	<p>Pre-dinner gathering from 5pm The Bank Hotel Garden Bar & Dining, 324 King Street, Newtown</p>
7.00pm	<p>Conference dinner (Pre registration not required) The Bank Hotel Garden Bar & Dining, 324 King Street, Newtown</p>



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8.45am	Registration and arrival tea and coffee
9.00 - 9.15am	Day 2 Conference Welcome Welcome from The Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney
9.15 - 10.15am	Keynote address Interrogations of identities and knowings Tracey Bunda, Professor of Indigenous Education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, The University of Queensland
10.15 - 10.45am	Morning Tea
10.45 - 11.45pm	Keynote Panel Focusing on the meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives across social work and education Facilitated by: Jioji Ravulo, Professor and Chair of Social Work and Policy Studies, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney. Panel members include Professor Lynette Riley, Lesli Kirwan, Tracey Cameron and Dr Lorraine Towers from the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney
11.45 - 12.45pm	Concurrent presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor-led healing pedagogies: Lessons from the KBHAC Practice Framework - Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation - Led by Julie Welsh (<i>Workshop</i>) Codex as counter-archive: Reclaiming the choice not to be schooled - Penny Robyn Vlies (<i>Workshop</i>) Decolonising the curriculum through the introduction of cultural teaching: Designing kangaroo cloaks using Wiradjuri symbols - Lynette Riley AO (<i>Workshop</i>)
12.45 - 1.45pm	Lunch
1.45 - 2.45pm	Concurrent presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decolonial initiatives in practice - Karen Menzies and Meaghan Katrak Harris (<i>Workshop</i>) Family preservation - Irene Wardle and Narang Bir-rong Corporation colleagues (<i>Workshop</i>)
2.45 - 4.15pm	Paper presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From racism to regeneration: Oysters, hope and other possibilities - K Dullat, J Gillies, D Rotumah, K Rybka, R Sawtell, L Seigel, and L Whitaker From singing on country to singing in town: story and song as truth-telling, therapy and pedagogy - Steve Bevis Aboriginal pedagogies at the truth-telling interface - Valerie Harwood and Cathie Burgess Imagination pedagogies and practices and how they function within educational settings - Zana Jabir
4.15 - 4.30pm	Conference reflections and closing Facilitated by the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney