



Australia's Peak Body for Wellbeing Education

PESA National Wellbeing Education Conference 2025

8 - 9 September 2025
Adelaide, South Australia

**Collective Solutions with
Wellbeing and Trauma
Aware Pedagogies**

Collective Solutions, Real Change.



We acknowledge that this is the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, water and seas. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.



Collective Solutions with Wellbeing and Trauma Aware Pedagogies

Collective Solutions, Real Change.

This year's theme, *Collective Solutions with Wellbeing and Trauma-Aware Pedagogies* invites us to engage deeply with the evolving role of trauma-awareness in wellbeing education. Trauma, both 'Big T' and 'Small t', is an everyday reality in our schools, affecting not just students, but educators too. Yet, experiencing trauma does not always lead to lasting harm, many young people recover well, and some even grow through their experiences.

At PESA, our mission remains steadfast: To advocate, educate, and collaborate in growing and embedding wellbeing education across Australia. This conference is an expression of that mission, bringing us together to explore and strengthen integrated approaches to wellbeing and trauma-aware pedagogy. We are actively challenging the fragmentation of wellbeing philosophies, recognising that distinctions often feel arbitrary in practice. These domains are deeply interconnected, and when recognised as such, we can create environments where every student feels safe, supported and capable of learning and thriving, thus unlocking richer opportunities within school communities.

Over the next two days, this conference offers the opportunity to come together as a collective of professionals dedicated to real, sustainable change. Through collaborative workshops, thought-provoking keynotes and practical masterclasses, we will elevate the expertise of educators - the true changemakers - in wellbeing education. You will leave feeling challenged, inspired, empowered and supported to implement practical strategies that honour both wellbeing and trauma-aware education in your context.

Together, we're not just discussing best practice, we're building it, laying the groundwork for systemic change.

We warmly welcome you,

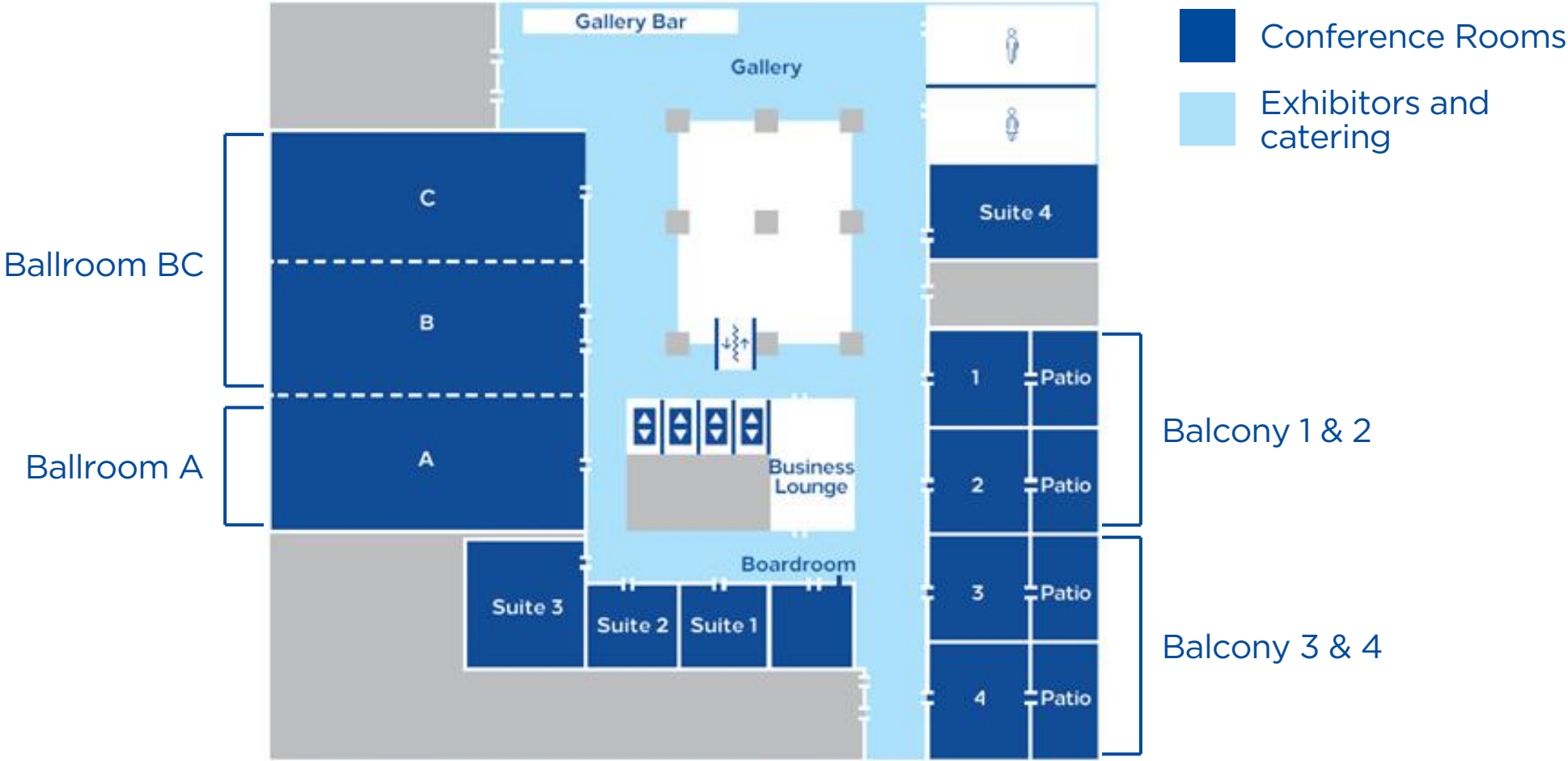
From the PESA Board and CEO

Leonie Abbott (Chair), Emma Grave (Deputy Chair), Simon Martin (Treasurer), Elizabeth Bate, Kayla Blakeney, David Bott, Deb Perich, Andy Skidmore and Lisa Davias (CEO)

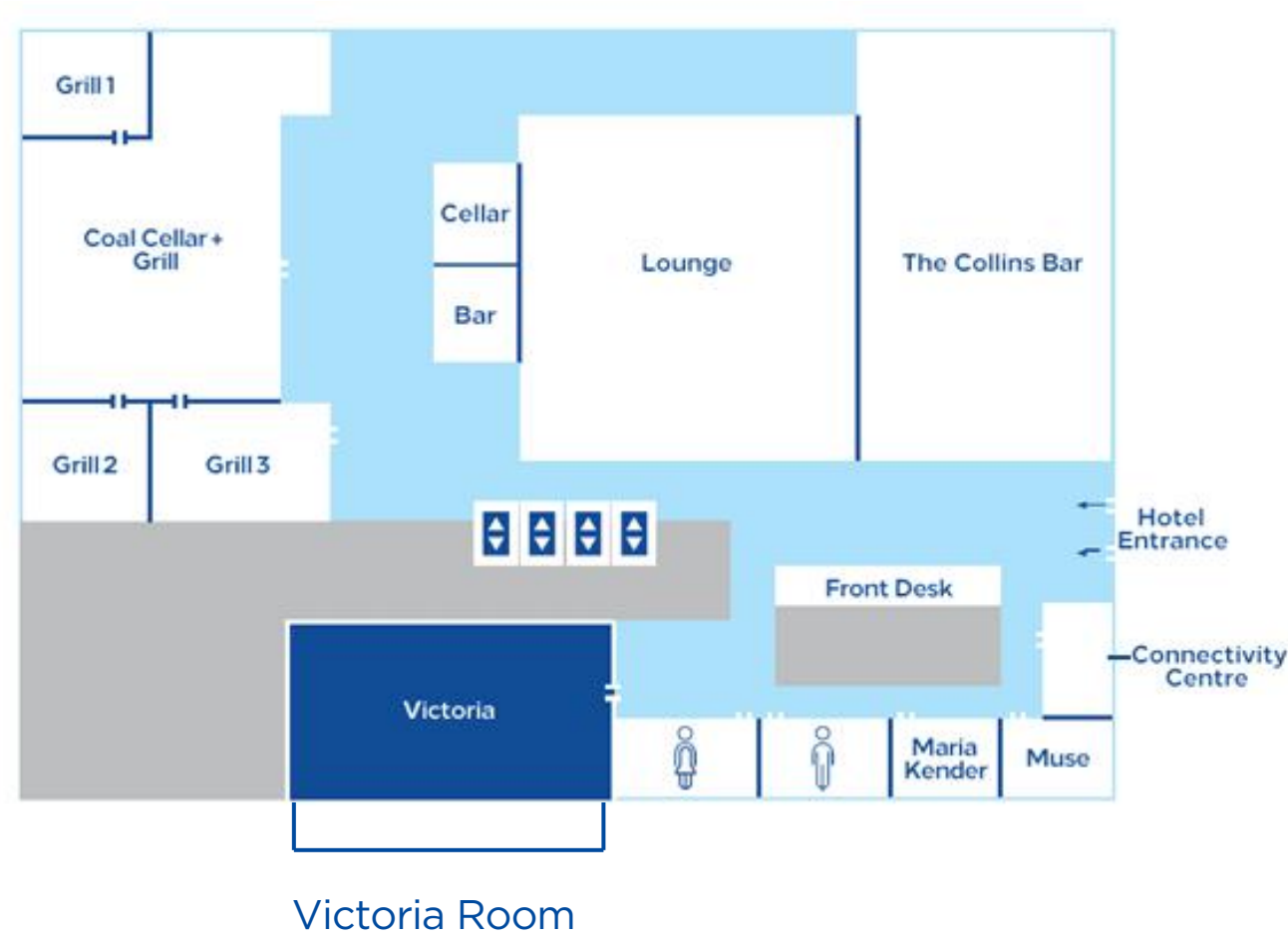
Venue Information

Welcome to the Hilton Adelaide. Please use the site maps below to help you find your way around the conference spaces.

Level 1



Ground Floor



Schedule - Monday 8th September

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
8:00am - 8:30am	Registration and Coffee	Level 1 Foyer
8:30am	Welcome to Country Jack Buckskin, Kuma Kaaru Cultural Services	Ballroom BC
8:45am	Official Conference Opening Hon Blair Boyer MP - Minster Minister for Education, Training and Skills, South Australia Leonie Abbott - PESA Chair	Ballroom BC
9:10am	Keynote: Associate Professor Judith Howard, QUT Trauma-Aware Education in Australia	Ballroom BC
10:05am	Keynote: Gina Chick Resilience in the Wilderness: Survival Lessons from Rewilding	Ballroom BC
10:50am	Morning Tea with Exhibitors	Level 1 Foyer
11:30am	Keynote: Associate Professor Kate Filia, Orygen Supporting Student Wellbeing: Understanding the Pressures Shaping Youth Mental Health	Ballroom BC
12:25pm	Provider Showcase. Choose from six wonderful providers of wellbeing services. Refer to page 9 for details.	
12:45pm	Lunch with Exhibitors	Level 1 Foyer
1:50pm	Masterclasses A choice of five masterclasses. Refer to page 7 for details.	
3:05pm	Afternoon Tea with Exhibitors	Level 1 Foyer
3:45pm	Masterclasses A choice of five masterclasses. Refer to page 7 for details.	
EVENING NETWORKING		
6:30pm - 8:30pm	Venue: National Wine Centre of Australia Address: Sunken Garden, Corner of Hackney Rd &, Botanic Rd, SA 5000 This event brings together educators and wine professionals to explore the shared passion, storytelling, and craft at the heart of both fields. We will connect through conversation and community, celebrating the parallels between teaching and winemaking.	



Schedule - Tuesday 9th September

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
8:15am	Registration and Coffee	Level 1 Foyer
8:45am	Acknowledgement of Country Delivered by Aylah Parker and Samirah Jenkinson, Scotch College Adeleide.	Ballroom BC
8:50am	Pulteney Grammar School Performance	Ballroom BC
8:55am	Welcome Address Lisa Davias, PESA CEO and Shawn Kasbergen, PESA SA Chapter Chair.	Ballroom BC
9:05am	Live Podcast Recording - Creating Connections: Where Trauma-Aware and Wellbeing Education Meet With Lea Waters AM, PhD, and Dr Tom Brunzell. Moderated by Emma Grave, PESA Deputy Chair.	Ballroom BC
10:00am	Masterclasses A choice of five masterclasses. Refer to page 8 for details.	
11:15am	Morning Tea with Exhibitors	Level 1 Foyer
11:35am	Solution Summit - Part 1 Be part of creating solutions to real problems faced by schools everyday. You will have two summits to choose from	Ballroom A & Victoria Room
12:35pm	Lunch with Exhibitors	Level 1 Foyer
1:35pm	Solution Summit - Part 2 Continuation of Solution Summits	Ballroom A & Victoria Room
2:50pm	Hackathon Six practical, proven hacks to enhance whole-school wellbeing.	Ballroom BC
3:55pm	Summary of Conference Takeaways	Ballroom BC
4:05pm	Conference Closing Address	Ballroom BC



Keynote Presentations



Associate Professor Judith Howard

Queensland University of Technology

Trauma-Aware Education in Australia

Trauma-Aware Education is increasingly being adopted throughout Australia, and internationally, as our schools and early childhood education services continue to support growing numbers of trauma-impacted young learners. This approach is providing a refreshed and informed way of supporting and educating young learners with lived experience of complex trauma who deserve our best efforts - whilst also recognising the importance of supporting and enhancing the personal and professional wellbeing of educators. During her keynote address, Dr Howard will introduce what a trauma-aware approach to education is - and why is it vital? She will draw from science and other research to examine the impact of complex trauma on the development, education experience, and behaviours of children and then will explain how educators, education sites, and education systems in Australia can respond to address this impact.



Gina Chick

Rewilding Facilitator, Adventurer and Writer

Resilience in the Wilderness: Survival Lessons from Rewilding

Gina Chick, an international rewilding facilitator, has mastered the art of survival and resilience through profound connections with nature. Drawing inspiration from her transformative 67-day solo survival in the subzero Tasmanian wilderness, Gina offers an enlightening perspective on human tenacity, adaptability, and the age-old wisdom of our ancestors. This presentation sheds light on the strength of the human spirit when faced with adversity and showcases how embracing our inherent wild nature can guide us through life's toughest challenges.



Associate Professor Kate Filia

Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Supporting student wellbeing: Understanding the pressures shaping youth mental health

Many young people today are facing challenges that impact their mental health and wellbeing. As these challenges continue to escalate, the role of schools in supporting student wellbeing has never been more important.

This presentation examines the social factors influencing youth mental health—such as housing, financial security, relationships, and engagement in education and community. Drawing on Mission Australia's Youth Survey and research from Orygen, it offers a snapshot of young people's experiences, highlighting widespread financial stress, isolation, and school disengagement.

The session will explore emerging strategies to address these challenges and emphasise the vital role schools can play in fostering connection, inclusion, and belonging—laying the groundwork for healthier, more hopeful futures.



Masterclasses

Round 1:
Monday 8th September, 1:50pm

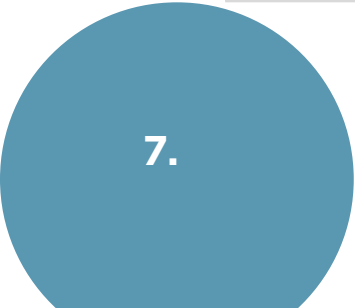
Detailed
abstracts



MASTERCLASS	LOCATION
Strategies to Intentionally Build a Trauma-Responsive School Community From the ‘System’ to the ‘Moment’: The Reynella East College (K-12) Case Study Warren Symonds , Principal, Reynella East College, and David Kelly , Education Lead, LBI Foundation	Ballroom A
The Future is Human: Overcoming adversity, our past challenges and ways of thinking to create something new Sue Langley , Academic Director of the Langley Group Institute (RTO #40655)	Ballroom BC
Co-designing a Student-led Wellbeing Conference in the Middle Years - From Learnings to Creating Your Own Conference Edward McInnes , Wellbeing Leader Year 7, Scotch College	Victoria
Teaching from the Head, Hand and Heart: Exploring Values-based Pedagogy Noah Cunningham , Wellbeing & Engagement Specialist, Corymbia State School, Education Queensland	Balcony 1 & 2
Beyond Survival Mode: Trauma-Informed Strategies for Educator Wellbeing and Sustainable School Cultures Megan Corcoran , Trauma-Informed Wellbeing Consultant and Director of Wagtail Institute	Balcony 3 & 4

Round 2:
Monday 8th September, 3:40pm

MASTERCLASS	LOCATION
Going Deeper with Strengths-based Approaches for Teaching and Learning Judy Hilton , State Lead SA and WA, Berry Street Education Model	Ballroom A
The Compassion Paradox: How might we integrate a sustainable approach to caring in our schools? Melinda Philips , Principal Psychologist, Compassionate Schools	Ballroom BC



Masterclasses

Round 2 continued

MASTERCLASS	LOCATION
Cultivating Positive Relationships: A Whole School Approach to Restorative Practices Michelle McKersey , Deputy Head of Secondary (Students), Moreton Bay College	Victoria
Balanced Classrooms: Supporting Students, Sustaining Teachers Micaela Rafferty , Founder and Lead Behavioural Wellness Educator, Behaviour Balance	Balcony 1 & 2
Cultivating Culture: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Shape Student Communities Tania Linnertson , Head of Science of Wellbeing K-12, and Sam White , Deputy Headmaster 7-12 - Students, Knox Grammar School	Balcony 3 & 4

Round 3: Tuesday 9th September, 10:00am

MASTERCLASS	LOCATION
Harnessing Collective Action to Sustain Wellbeing Initiatives in Learning Communities Dr Tan-Chyuan Chin , Senior Lecturer in Wellbeing Science at The University of Melbourne	Ballroom A
Collective Solutions: Building a Shared Responsibility for Teacher Wellbeing Justin Robinson , Director and Co-Founder of The Wellbeing Distillery	Ballroom BC
Younger for Longer: The Power of Play in Enhancing Wellbeing Julia McGibbon-Briggs , Deputy Principal - Student Experience, and Keralee Radi , Assistant Deputy Principal, Year 7 and 8, Guildford Grammar School	Victoria
Coaching for Post-Traumatic Growth: Fostering Resilience and Autonomy in Students Johanna Crichton , Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Thriving Schools	Balcony 1 & 2
Share the Love: Creating a Whole-School Professional Development Model Marnie Thomas , Head of Positive Education, Newcastle Grammar School	Balcony 3 & 4

Provider Showcase

Monday 8th September, 12:25pm

Empowering Wellbeing in Schools

Connect with leading organisations delivering evidence-informed wellbeing services and products. Explore how each provider can support and strengthen your work in schools to enhance student outcomes, staff wellbeing, and whole-school culture.



PROVIDER PRESENTATION	LOCATION
Wellio: Teach Wellbeing With Confidence Kane McChesney, Head of School Partnerships	Ballroom A
Grow Your Mind: Rolling Out Skills for Mental Fitness That Stick Julia DeLaney, Content & Curriculum Manager, and Nikki Colless, Grow Your Mind Teacher and Business Development Manager	Ballroom BC
Renaissance Learning: A Whole Student Approach Lisa Cobb, Education Consultant	Victoria
The Wellbeing Distillery: Discover The Wellbeing Compass – a diagnostic tool to give school leaders clarity, confidence and direction to strengthen wellbeing across their whole community Justin Robinson, Director	Balcony 1 & 2
URSTRONG: Whole School Friendship Strategy Tyson Greenwood, Director	Balcony 3 & 4
Kids Helpline @ School: Supporting Young Minds Through Connection, Consistency & Change Lisa Parsons, School Engagement Partner	Meeting Room B

Hackathon

Tuesday 9th September, 2:50pm

Practical Wellbeing ‘Hacks’ for school staff

This is a dynamic series of 7-minute presentations, each offering simple, effective wellbeing ‘hacks’ to apply in your daily practice. These concise sessions are designed to inspire and equip you with practical tools to enhance wellbeing across classrooms and school communities, without adding to your workload.



HACKATHON PRESENTATION
Prime the Day, the PERMAH Way Presented by Melissa Chamberlain , Head of Department - Positive Education, Centenary State High School.
The Peaceful Pause Presented by Nicola Unite , Stella Maris College NSW
From Correction to Connection: Driving Positive Behaviour Management Presented by Ione Norris , Head of Wellbeing Curriculum, Trinity Grammar School
Going Beyond the Brain Break: Integrating Physically Active Learning for Improved Student Eduaction, Wellbeing and Health Outcomes Presented by Dr Natalie Lander , Associate Professor and Jessica Orr , Education Leader at Deakin University.
Leading Together: Harnessing the Power of Homeroom Teachers Presented by Paige Zavaglia , Kambala School, NSW
Fiesta of Ideas: Elevating Student Voice to Shape Wellbeing Presented by Helen Worthington , Upper Primary Stage Coordinator, Scotch College Adelaide

Abstracts and bios here



Solution Summits

The Solution Summits are high-energy, hands-on workshops where lived experience meets creative problem-solving. In just two hours, we will collaborate through Design Thinking to tackle real challenges facing schools today, developing practical, ready-to-use solutions that can be implemented immediately.

These summits harness the collective wisdom of our conference community, celebrating educators as the true experts in their field. With guidance from skilled facilitators and insights from subject matter experts, you will make meaningful connections and leave equipped with strategies that support both student outcomes and educator wellbeing.



Choose which Summit to join

Summit 1

RefreshED: Staff Wellbeing

Balcony Rooms
11:35 AM and 1:35 PM

This workshop invites educators to co-create practical solutions for boosting wellbeing support through peer networks, leadership engagement, and systemic change, while also tackling burnout and reimagining what thriving can look like in the profession.

Topic 1: Fuelling Wellbeing

Getting support for a wellbeing future.

Topic 2: From Surviving to Thriving

Reimagining wellbeing for educators.

Summit 2

A Vibe That Thrives Student Wellbeing

Ballroom A
11:35 AM and 1:35 PM

This workshop invites educators to co-design strategies for tackling the pressing challenges students face today - from rising loneliness and depleting social skills to the complex impacts of mobile phones, social media, and AI. We will create and share ways to be a future-focused teacher in a rapidly changing world.

Topic 1: The Power of Belonging

Growing social and relational skills.



Topic 2: From Surviving to Thriving

Creating healthy relationships with technology, mobile phones and AI.

Solution Summit Takeaways

Topic 1:	Key takeaways:	Key Contacts:
	I commit to sharing....	
Topic 2:	Key takeaways:	
	I commit to sharing....	

Share resources



Sponsors

PESA extends heartfelt appreciation to our sponsors for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission.



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Exhibitors

Our exhibitors are selected carefully, each holding a wealth of knowledge, innovation, and expertise that could shape the future of your endeavours.



Thank you to our wonderful supporters

We are deeply grateful for the generous contributions of scholarships, gifts, and partnerships that have enriched opportunities and expanded access for our community.

Scholarships

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the generous donors whose support made it possible for educators from disadvantaged schools to attend the conference.

- The Blackwood Foundation
- Douglass Scott Foundation
- CHILL Foundation
- Burton Taylor Foundation



Experiences and Gifts

Thank you to the wonderful organisations who generously offered in-kind experiences and gifts.

- Hey Lemonade
- The Tonic
- Jurlique
- Accenture

Partnering Schools

We are deeply grateful to the staff and students from our partnering schools, whose contributions helped create a memorable conference experience.

- Scotch College Adelaide
- Christian Brothers College
- Pulteney Grammar School

Volunteers

We sincerely thank the dedicated volunteers whose time, energy, and enthusiasm helped bring this conference to life. Your support was invaluable in creating a welcoming and seamless experience for all.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| • Anisa Ahmed | • Shawn Kasbergen | • Rebecca North |
| • George Bryant | • David Kolpak | • Tony Ritson |
| • Emily Cicconi | • Sarah Mangelsdorf | • Kerrin Smith |
| • Jenni Cook | • Nikolas McDonald | • Ben Storer |
| • Emily Gard | • Edward McInnes | • Mark Tenny |
| • Jacky Hateley | • Caryn Moseley | |



When Schools Thrive, Communities Thrive.

A wellbeing focused school nurtures students who feel seen, supported, and ready to step into the world with confidence. It builds educators who are resilient, energised, and connected. And it creates communities that believe in the strength of kindness, belonging, and emotional intelligence.



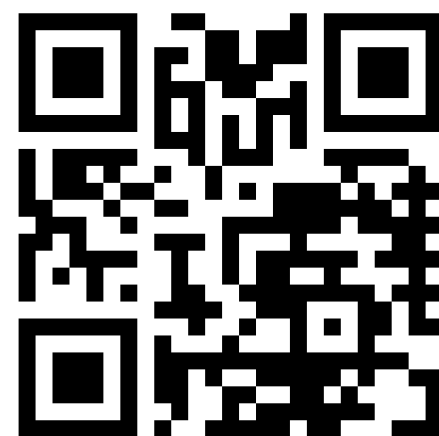
Imagine....

a classroom where students flourish, not just academically, but emotionally, socially, and mentally. That's PESA's aim. Our mission is *"to advocate, educate and collaborate to grow and embed wellbeing education throughout Australia"*.



Grow Wellbeing. Grow your Network.

PESA is a non profit organisation. By joining or donating to PESA, you're choosing to be part of a movement that *redefines education* - and gives everyone the chance to flourish.



[www.pesa.edu.au/
membership](http://www.pesa.edu.au/membership)