

2026 AISWA First Nations Education Conference

Every Student. Every Dream.





Welcome Message

Join us for the inaugural 2026 AISWA
First Nations Education Conference.

We warmly invite educators, leaders and partners from across sectors to join us in Perth for this important national gathering, held on 7–8 September 2026 at the University Club of Western Australia, UWA. This two-day conference brings together voices from education, government and community to focus on strengthening outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, celebrating culture, and deepening understanding through shared learning and connection.

Across the program, participants will engage in powerful keynote sessions, practical workshops and cultural experiences, alongside opportunities to connect with colleagues in meaningful conversation and networking settings.

The conference also provides space to reflect on practice, share stories, and explore how education systems can better support First Nations learners and communities.

We value your interest in being part of this important conversation and look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be a rich, respectful and inspiring event.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chris Massey'.

Chris Massey
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | AISWA

Acknowledgement of Country

AISWA respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, the Wadjak people of the Noongar nation. We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past, present, and emerging, as the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia and acknowledge their continued connection to the land waters, and community.



Artwork *Juran* by Sara Riches

Conference Overview

Join educators, leaders, policymakers and changemakers from across Australia for the 2026 AISWA First Nations Education Conference, a dynamic cross-sector event celebrating and advancing First Nations education. The conference will feature inspiring keynote speakers, panel discussions, engaging workshops and interactive activities that highlight the achievements, strengths and aspirations of Aboriginal students. Participants will connect with colleagues from education, government and the not-for-profit sector, across conference sessions, a special cultural experiences at a significant Perth location and an evening networking dinner overlooking the Perth skyline. Be part of this memorable event strengthening shared understanding and collective action.

7 – 8 SEPTEMBER 2026



UWA CLUB, CRAWLEY



Watch this short video to learn more!



Learn more and register
\$1365 + GST



For any registration support or to create an account with AISWA, contact websupport@ais.wa.edu.au

Conference Schedule

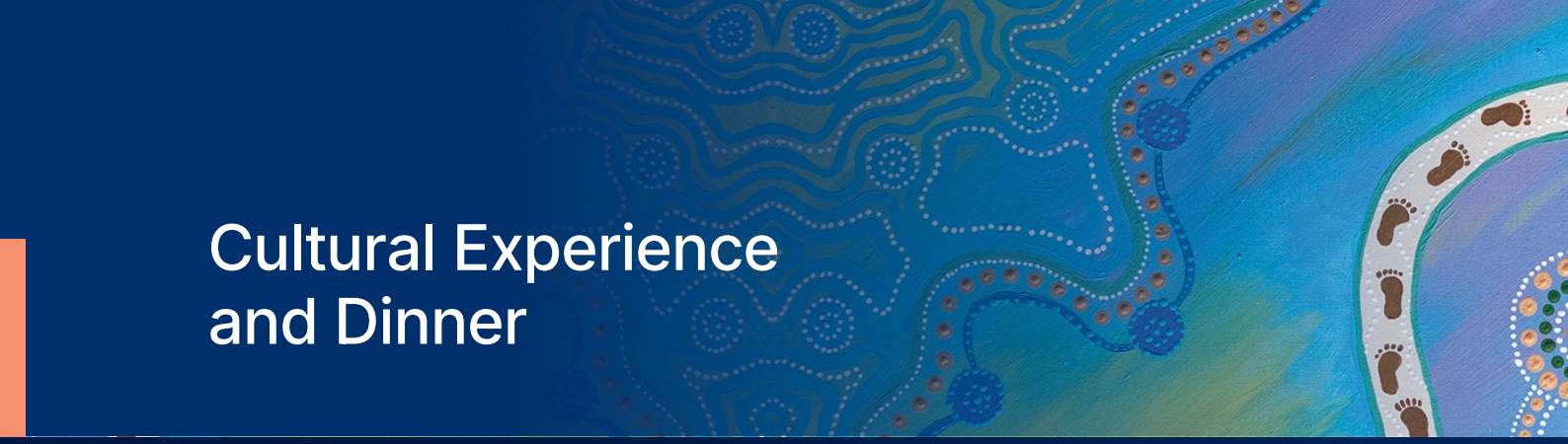
Day 1: Monday 7 September

8.30am	Conference Registration Partner and Community Showcase		
9.00am	Welcome to Country		
9.30am	AISWA Address: Chris Massey		
9.35am	Conference Opening: Professor Helen Milroy AM		
9.50am	Panel Discussion with Elders		
10.30am	Morning Tea Partner and Community Showcase		
11.00am	Keynote: Stan Grant		
12.15pm	Breakout Sessions		
	Mirliny Aboriginal Cultural Education	TBC	Moorditj Mob, Wesley College
1.00pm	Lunch Partner and Community Showcase		
1.45pm	Breakout Sessions		
	Brenton McKenna	Marlanie Haerewa, Young Yarnz	The Kids Research Institute Australia
2.45pm	Keynote: Braden Hill		
3.30pm	Event Concludes		



Day 2: Tuesday 8 September

8.30am	Conference Registration Partner and Community Showcase		
9.00am	Conference Commences		
9:10am	Keynote: National Commissioner Sue-Anne Hunter		
9:50am	Panel Discussion with Parents and Students		
10.30am	Morning Tea Partner and Community Showcase		
11.00am	Keynote: Tammy Baart		
12.15pm	Breakout Sessions		
	Roz Thomas, Bec Giles, Wendy Gerakios, ISNSW	The Kids Research Institute Australia	Brenton McKenna
1.00pm	Lunch Partner and Community Showcase		
1.45pm	Breakout Sessions		
	Two Way Science, Department of Education	Marlanie Haerewa, Young Yarnz	TBC
2.45pm	Keynote: Mechelle Turvey		
3.30pm	Event Concludes		



Cultural Experience and Dinner

Experience an authentic Aboriginal-led cultural learning journey with Mirliny Aboriginal Cultural Education at Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park), one of the most significant cultural landscapes on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja, this place has been a gathering place for Whadjuk Noongar people for thousands of years. It has long been a place of teaching, ceremony, hunting, camping and the passing of knowledge across generations.

Overlooking Derbarl Yerrigan (the Swan River), Kaarta Gar-up is deeply connected to Noongar Creation stories of the Waugal, whose journey through the landscape formed the river and shaped the surrounding hills. The bushland remains a living cultural landscape where traditional ecological knowledge, language and cultural practices continue to be shared today.

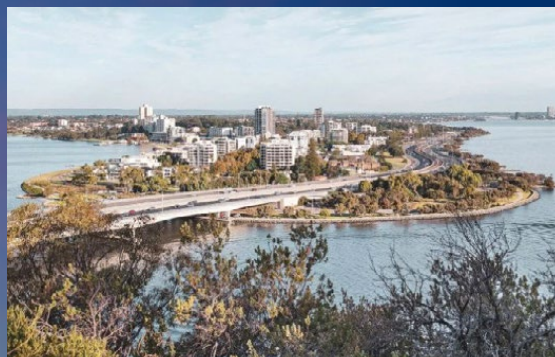
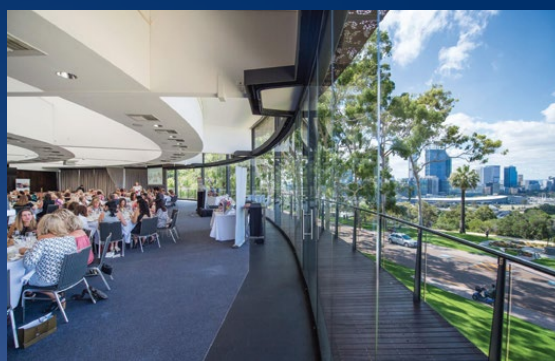
Participants will explore the cultural significance of Country through Noongar storytelling, language, bush foods and medicines, and an understanding of the Noongar six seasons. The session encourages a deeper appreciation of the





enduring relationship between Aboriginal people and Country, highlighting how Kaarta Gar-up continues to be a place of cultural identity, learning and connection for Whadjuk Noongar people.

Following the cultural session, delegates are invited to a special networking dinner at Fraser's Restaurant, offering an opportunity to connect with colleagues, continue conversations and celebrate the shared experience in the stunning surrounds of Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park).



Speakers



National Commissioner Sue-Anne Hunter

Sue-Anne Hunter is a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illim Wurrung woman and the inaugural National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People. Sue-Anne was instrumental in the passing of legislation through the Australian Parliament for the National Commissioner to be enshrined with powers to drive systemic change to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, in effect from 1 July 2026.

As a practised and qualified social worker, Sue-Anne is a recognised leader in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services sector.

Her previous roles include Deputy Chair and Commissioner in Victoria's Yoorrook Justice Commission; Co-Chair for the Family Matters campaign; Sector Development Manager for SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, and principal practitioner for Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA). Sue-Anne holds a Master of Social Work and is currently undertaking her PhD at Monash University with a focus on cultural safety in education.



Professor Helen Milroy AM

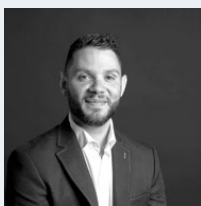
Professor Helen Milroy AM, a descendant of the Palyku people of Western Australia, is Australia's first Indigenous doctor and child psychiatrist. She is the Stan Perron Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Perth Children's Hospital and The University of Western Australia, and Co-Director of Embrace at The Kids Research Institute Australia. A respected leader in Indigenous mental health, Helen is also an award-winning author, illustrator, artist and advocate for children's wellbeing.



Stan Grant

Stan Grant is a Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi man, journalist, author, filmmaker, presenter and academic. He has reported from more than 80 countries and received major honours including Walkley, Logie, Asia TV and AACTA awards. The author of seven books, including the acclaimed Talking to My Country, Grant has held senior roles at the ABC and universities, served on the Referendum Council on Indigenous recognition, and is widely recognised for his contribution to public debate, Indigenous rights and social justice.





Professor Braden Hill

Professor Braden Hill is a Noongar (Wardandi) man from south-west Western Australia and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) at Edith Cowan University. A trained secondary teacher and advocate for accessible education, he brings professional expertise and personal insight as someone who entered university through a non-ATAR pathway. Professor Hill has held senior leadership roles across equity, Indigenous education and inclusion, and is nationally recognised for advancing Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ research, inclusion and student success.



Tammy Baart

Tammy Baart is a proud Dharug woman of the Boorooberongal clan, an award-winning educational leader, and the Founder of Blak Ignited — a purpose-driven consultancy igniting human potential through honouring culture, reclaiming identity, and transforming systems. With over two decades of executive experience across educational, corporate, and community sectors, Tammy brings a fierce commitment to disrupting inequity and reimagining how we lead, learn, and live.



Mechelle Turvey

Mechelle Turvey is a respected Noongar Yamatji community advocate whose son, Cassius Turvey, died following an assault in 2022. Since then, she has spoken nationally about compassion, non-violence and support for victims of crime. Mechelle also works with Western Australia Police Force recruits, drawing on lived experience to promote empathy, care and understanding in responses to victims and their families.

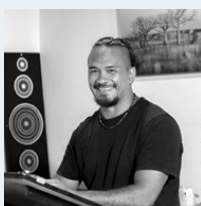


Speakers



Marlanie Haerewa

Marlanie is a proud Nyikina and Ngāti Porou woman from Derby, Western Australia, committed to strengthening First Nations education. Inspired by her own experiences, she founded Young Yarnz, an online platform delivering engaging video lessons on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, featuring Elders and knowledge holders.



Brenton McKenna

Brenton, also known as Eszra, is a Yawuru graphic novelist from Broome, WA, and Australia's first published Indigenous graphic novelist. Inspired by comic books and his grandmother's storytelling, he blends bold visual art with humour, culture and imagination. His debut graphic novel, *Ubby's Underdogs*, was published by Magabala Books in 2011. Eszra has toured internationally, delivered youth workshops, created *Ole Champ* for *The West Australian*, and continues his storytelling through *Hairy Holes*.





Two Way Science, Department of Education

Two-way Science supports schools to build partnerships with local Aboriginal communities to develop integrated culturally responsive learning programs that connect the Western Australian Curriculum Science to Aboriginal knowledges. They provide an opportunity for all students to learn about science from the world's oldest continuing cultures.



The Kids Research Institute Australia

Kulunga is the core Aboriginal Unit at The Kids Research Institute Australia, supporting research that improves the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and families. The team provides cultural guidance, community navigation, training and governance oversight to ensure research is respectful, responsive and aligned with Aboriginal Health Research standards. Kulunga also builds awareness of The Kids' research in Aboriginal communities and strengthens opportunities for Aboriginal people involved in research.



Independent Schools NSW

United by a shared commitment to excellence in education, ISNSW bring together diverse expertise and a collaborative spirit to support Independent schools. Through curiosity, professionalism, and care, we strive to create meaningful impact - empowering educators, enriching learning and shaping brighter futures for students.



Mirliny Aboriginal Cultural Education

Mirliny is a family-owned Aboriginal business located in Boorloo, Perth WA. The name Mirliny is the Noongar word for the balga firestick and it pays tribute to the oldest living culture in the world that is still present and thriving here on Noongar boodja in the Southwest of Western Australia. Mirliny are passionate about passing Noongar culture onto the next generation and creating meaningful opportunities to share this rich and beautiful culture with the wider community.

Thank you to our Event Partners

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