

# The OSHC Conference 2026

High-quality guidance that will change the way you deliver OSHC



Join us to elevate your work and renew your sense of purpose, at Australia's leading OSHC-focused event.

Tuesday 26 May and Wednesday 27 May  
9.30am–2.30pm (outside of service hours!)  
**Online + *optional in-person* event**

[Register now](#)



**It takes  
a village**

Peak for early learning and OSHC since 1971



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

It Takes A Village acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of this nation and the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We recognise their continuing connection to culture, land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the strength of family connection and kinship within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their ongoing dedication to educating and caring for children. Sovereignty of these lands was never ceded. We support Treaty.



Artwork by Yorta Yorta and  
Gunnai artist Dixon Patten.

# Complimentary in-person event Monday 25 May



10.00am–12.00pm

Metropolitan Melbourne – check the website for more details

## Learning to embed Aboriginal perspectives through connections to Country

Come together with educators from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to learn about embedding Aboriginal perspectives in your practice. You'll have the opportunity to connect with Country, understand how to work with Indigenous families and engage in hands-on learning.



## What 2025 attendees had to say about The OSHC Conference

*'This is our second time attending and we have learnt lots.'*

Nichola, Yarm Gwanga (NSW)

*'It's fabulous, informative and so easy to navigate.'*

Janaya, CatholicCare Tasmania (TAS)

# Day one, Tuesday 26 May



9.30am

## Welcome to Country

### Wurundjeri Elder

We will begin with a Welcome to Country from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

### Introduction and welcome

#### Daniela Kavoukas

*Chief Executive Officer – It Takes A Village*



9.50am

## KEYNOTE: Risky, dodgy, dangerous play – how do we support the risky things children simply MUST be able to do?

### Marc Armitage

*Playworker, play consultant and researcher*

Contrary to popular opinion, children's play hasn't changed dramatically in recent years – adult attitudes have! We've become more worried about children getting injured. In this session, Marc argues that this 'risk aversion' is not a good thing. By trying to keep children safe at all costs we may be limiting their chances to learn how to manage risk and build confidence through play – ultimately putting them at greater risk in the future. Want to know more? You'll have an opportunity to ask Marc all your burning questions in our Q&A at the end of the session.



11.00am

## KEYNOTE: Beyond behaviour management: A regulation-first approach to supporting children

### Robyn Papworth

*Developmental educator and exercise physiologist*

Shifting from behaviour 'management' to a regulation-first approach can transform your interactions with children. In this session, you'll learn to recognise signs of dysregulation, understand the role of the nervous system in children's behaviour, and implement practical co-regulation strategies in your service. Robyn will explore how to create environments that support children's developing regulation skills, respond to challenging moments with empathy and effectiveness, and partner with families to provide consistent support.



## BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Choose one):

### Breakout 1: From 'uh-oh' to 'a-ha!': Rethinking our behaviour playbook\*

**Emily McKenna**

*Positive Behaviour Guidance Senior Practice Coach – Queensland Children's Activities Network*



Our analysis of behaviour is what guides our intervention. When we misinterpret the drivers, we risk choosing strategies that range from ineffective to actively harmful. This session offers an evidence-based lens for understanding and responding to behaviour by exploring the core elements that shape it. Emily will guide you to move away from approaches grounded in judgement, power, control, shame and tokenistic rewards, and towards problem-solving strategies that provide meaningful support for every child.

### Breakout 2: Strengthening your understanding of Assessment and Rating and unpacking Exceeding practice

**Karen Morley**

*Senior Manager, Consistent Practice and Support Unit – Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority*



How well do you understand Assessment and Rating? In this session, Karen will guide you through the process – plus, you'll learn about the importance of a Quality Improvement Plan, and what the Exceeding themes look like when put into practice in the OSHC sector.

### Breakout 3: Joining the generations with play and leisure – an introduction to intergenerational programs in OSHC

**Professor Jennifer Cartmel**

*Professor, Child, Youth and Family Practice – Griffith University*



For many of us, some of our most treasured childhood memories include time spent with elderly relatives. Jennifer believes these experiences are powerful drivers for learning to connect with people and developing empathy, confidence and wellbeing. In this session, she shares insights from her research about intergenerational practice and its benefits for children – including examples from Australian OSHC services.

### Breakout 4: Online Yarning Circle\*

**Wurundjeri Education Unit**

Join educators from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation for an online yarning circle. This open question session will focus on appropriate resources that support Indigenous communities, embedding Indigenous perspectives, and resource-building.



Hard to choose which breakout session? It Takes A Village members get exclusive access to session recordings (excluding sessions with an asterisk \*), as well as a member-only discount on their conference ticket.

[Become a member](#)

## Day one, continued

12.45pm

Lunch break

1.30pm

### PLENARY: A showcase of Australian OSHC research

**Dr Bruce Hurst**

*Lecturer, Faculty of Education – University of Melbourne*

**Professor Jennifer Cartmel**

*Professor, Child, Youth and Family Practice – Griffith University*

With a rapidly growing number of PhDs, research projects and international collaborations underway, it's an exciting time for OSHC research in Australia. In this session, Bruce and Jennifer will share findings and provocations from their current projects examining intergenerational practice (Jennifer), and rethinking the role of time in OSHC (Bruce). In light of the recent rise of action research, the team from MacGregor OSHC in Queensland will share their research on seeking and enacting children's voices on the topic of 'what a good educator looks like'.



2.20pm–2.30pm

### Wrap up and thank you

**Daniela Kavoukas**

*Chief Executive Officer – It Takes A Village*

*'There is so much practical information that can be applied to your practice. I loved the whole thing!'*

Kimberley, Adamstown OOSH (SA)



# Day two, Wednesday 27 May



9.30am

## Acknowledgement of Country and welcome back

**Daniela Kavoukas**

*Chief Executive Officer – It Takes A Village*

9.40am

## KEYNOTE: 9 is the magic number – relationship building with a twist!

**Glenn Manton**

*Speaker-educator, media personality and youth advocate*



Relationships aren't built through magic – though in a sector like OSHC, it can sometimes feel like they need to be! In this session, Glenn will take you on an energetic, entertaining, and thought-provoking journey through 9 relationship-building questions that have the power to change how you connect with teams, children and families. Packed with humour, insight, and some surprises, this session will challenge assumptions, spark curiosity, and give educators the confidence to build stronger, more authentic connections in their OSHC community. No magic wand required.

10.45am

## KEYNOTE: What is a child's rights approach to OSHC?

**Professor John Tobin**

*Associate Dean (Diversity and Inclusion) and Director, Human Rights Program – Melbourne Law School*



In systems that care for children there are increasing discussions about the idea of a rights-based approach. But what does this mean for policymakers, services and educators, and how is it different from what you're already doing? In this session, John will explore the meaning and potential practical application of a rights-based approach in the design and delivery of your OSHC program.

11.30am

## PANEL: Children talk – OSHC listens!

**Facilitated by Kathryn Marshall and Eaden Hardy-Munro**

*Merri Creek Primary School OSHC*



**Merri Creek  
Primary School**

We're hosting our first-ever 'Children's Ideas Panel' to hear directly from children about what makes OSHC fun and what could make it even better! Kathryn and Eaden will host the panel, discuss the children's responses, and showcase how an OSHC service can use children's voices to support program planning.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Choose one):

#### Breakout 1: Keeping children safe in OSHC settings

**Kate McGill**

*Education Manager – Bravehearts*

This session will support you to better understand your role in keeping children safe from sexual harm. You'll learn what to look for – including warning signs that may indicate a child is at risk – how to respond calmly and appropriately if a child shares a concern, and what steps to take to act on worries or disclosures. Kate will explore how everyday practices in OSHC can strengthen child safety and create environments where children feel safe, supported and listened to, and you'll leave feeling informed and empowered.

**Bravehearts**  
bravehearts.org.au

#### Breakout 2: Beyond self-care: Holistic approaches to strengthening educator wellbeing

**Nicole Lees**

*Be You Consultant – Early Childhood Australia*

Building educator wellbeing in OSHC really does take a village! In this session, Nicole will identify the factors influencing wellbeing and share strategies for a holistic, collaborative and inclusive approach, with a focus on building professional resilience. You'll learn wellbeing-building strategies that prioritise educator agency, autonomy and participation in service-level planning, and contribute to building a mentally healthy learning community in OSHC.



#### Breakout 3: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities in OSHC

**Lucy Harberts**

*Sector Development Consultant – It Takes A Village*

**Sharon Goodwin**

*Victorian Engagement Advisor – ECEC Worker Retention Payment Grant, It Takes A Village/NOSHSA*

This session will explore practical ways OSHC services can strengthen and better embed their relationships with families and the greater school and local communities. You'll get clarity on defining roles, setting boundaries and expectations, and building a shared sense of purpose in the unique context of OSHC.



#### Breakout 4: Empowering remote voices: How we can all support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literacy

**Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF)**

Learn about the ILF's literacy programs in remote communities and how your school can engage with and support them. You'll walk away with a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literacy and a renewed appreciation for community-led organisations. The session will also explain the Busking For Change program, where young people can learn a song in an Aboriginal language and raise funds for the ILF.

**INDIGENOUS  
LITERACY  
FOUNDATION™**

Hard to choose which breakout session? It Takes A Village members get exclusive access to session recordings (excluding sessions with an asterisk \*), as well as a member-only discount on their conference ticket.

**Become a member**

## Day two, continued

12.45pm

Lunch break

1.15pm

### **PLENARY: Co-designing, collaborating and connecting: The art of nurturing relationships in OSHC programs that maximise participation and contribution**



**Catharine Hydon**

*Director, Hydon Consulting*

We know collaborative relationships with children, families, and the community are a core priority reflected both in the values of *My Time, Our Place*, and in the requirements of the National Quality Standard. But while co-design and collaboration present exciting opportunities, the process can be complex. In this session, Catharine will equip you with practical strategies to make collaboration and co-design achievable at the local level. By nurturing relationships and working together OSHC programs can unlock new possibilities – maximising participation, fostering meaningful contributions, and enriching the experience for everyone involved.

2.15pm–2.30pm

Wrap up and close

*‘Everything was so valuable as I step into a new role! It is a great way of learning so many topics... Well-rounded and a big sense of community. Completely tailored to OSHC, which is hard to find and so many resources given.’*

2025 attendee (NSW)



# Keynote speakers



## Glenn Manton

*Speaker-educator, media personality and youth advocate*

From the grit and grind of inner-city Melbourne, to the red dust of Australia's Indigenous communities, to the leafy landscape of Bavarian Germany where he raced a bobsled for Australia, Glenn is much more than the public face of his AFL career and media exposure. He has developed a reputation as being 'the speaker' to engage for real connection, robust conversation and a laugh or two.



## Professor John Tobin (he/him)

*Associate Dean (Diversity and Inclusion) and Director (Human Rights Program) – Melbourne Law School*

John has nearly 40 years' experience working with children as a lawyer, academic, parent and community volunteer. His core interest is using the idea of a rights-based approach to create systems and practices that respect children's dignity, elevate their voice and allow them to thrive.



## Marc Armitage

*Playworker, play consultant and researcher*

Marc became a playworker in the 1980s and is still a playworker today. As an advocate, writer, researcher and speaker, his interests are in the reality of how children play, where, and with whom. He doesn't really care why they do it.



## Robyn Papworth (she/her)

*Developmental educator and exercise physiologist*

Robyn is an allied health professional and founder of Play Move Improve, bringing over 10 years' experience in the early childhood and disability sectors. She specialises in allied health programs for children and teens, working collaboratively with families and educators to build skills and capacity. Robyn is passionate about moving beyond traditional behaviour support approaches to support children's regulation and holistic development and wellbeing.

# Speaker bios



**Catharine Hydon**  
*Director, Hydon Consulting*

With over 30 years' experience leading and advocating for quality early childhood education and care, Catharine works alongside leaders and educators to connect theory and practice, with a focus on government, pedagogy and quality improvement. She is a second-tier reviewer for ACECQA.



**Daniela Kavoukas (she/her)**  
*Chief Executive Officer – It Takes A Village*

Daniela is a tenacious leader and passionate advocate. She brings a deep understanding of the sector to her role, drawing on her experience as a multi-award-winning educator and strategic leader in community-based early education and care services for over 20 years.



**Dr Bruce Hurst (he/him)**  
*Lecturer, Faculty of Education – University of Melbourne*

Bruce is a leading Australian researcher active in the investigation of OSHC and participatory research with children. With a focus on children's perspectives of OSHC, Bruce's innovative research seeks to engage children in research as informants, research designers and data analysers. He was a key contributor to the 2021 review of *My Time, Our Place* – the curriculum framework for OSHC – and is the Deputy Chair of the It Takes A Village Board.



**Emily McKenna**  
*Positive Behaviour Guidance Senior Practice Coach – Queensland Children's Activities Network*

Emily began working in OSHC while studying occupational therapy and loved the work so much, she never left. Since then she's held roles as an educator, educational leader and coordinator – and even did her PhD research on neurodivergent children's experiences of inclusion in OSHC! Now a trainer at QCAN, she works alongside educators to strengthen inclusion, nurture belonging and embed evidence-informed behaviour practice.



## **Indigenous Literacy Foundation**

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation supports remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through culturally relevant literacy initiatives – including the distribution of over 1 million books to remote communities, the delivery of early literacy resources, and mentorship programs aimed at supporting community members to write, illustrate and publish in diverse industries.



**Karen Morley (she/her)**  
*Senior Manager, Consistent Practice and Support Unit – Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority*

As a senior manager in the Victorian regulatory authority, Karen is responsible for the team that supports consistent practice and resourcing the authorised officer workforce, which includes coordinating the internal training program for the workforce. She is one of two lead assessors in Victoria.

## Speaker bios continued



### **Kate McGill (she/her)**

*Education Manager – Bravehearts*

Kate oversees Bravehearts teams across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, delivering child safety programs to children in early childhood and lower primary settings. She also leads Bravehearts' child protection training and resource development for educators.



### **Professor Jennifer Cartmel (she/her)**

*Professor, Child, Youth and Family Practice – Griffith University*

Jennifer is an internationally recognised researcher with expertise in OSHC. Her research focuses on children's social and emotional wellbeing, and the professionalisation of the workforce. The model of critical reflection she developed has been used to transform practice in the children's services sector.



### **Lucy Harberts (she/her)**

*Sector Development Consultant – It Takes A Village*

Lucy is a dedicated advocate for a thriving community-managed OSHC sector, bringing more than 30 years' experience across primary schools, local government services, tertiary education, and sector-wide advocacy. As a branch representative member of National Outside School Hours Services Association (NOSHSA), she represents, advocates and seeks to advance the voice of OSHC in Australia.



**Merri Creek Primary School**

### **Merri Creek Primary School OSHC**

Merri Creek Primary School OSHC is a not-for-profit service, operated by the school council. They have a strong focus on social and emotional learning in a relaxed, fun and safe environment and are currently rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard by the Department of Education.



### **Nicole Lees (she/her)**

*Be You Consultant – Early Childhood Australia*

Nicole has held roles as an educator, service leader, consultant and researcher, and holds qualifications in Business (People and Culture) and Early Childhood Education. Alongside her work with Be You, she volunteers on a management committee for a community kindergarten and long day care centre in Melbourne where she leads the wellbeing sub-committee, building educator wellbeing through a mentally healthy workplace culture.



### **Sharon Goodwin (she/her)**

*Victorian Engagement Advisor, ECEC Worker Retention Payment Grant – It Takes A Village and National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)*

For more than 15 years, Sharon was the coordinator of a large inner-suburban community-owned OSHC service that increased in 2023 to span 2 campuses. Today, she works with It Takes A Village and NOSHSA – the national peak for OSHC – supporting services to access the government-funded pay rise for educators.



**Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung**  
Cultural Heritage  
Aboriginal Corporation

### **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation**

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation are the Traditional Custodians of Melbourne and surrounding lands. The team offer services in cultural heritage, natural resource management, cultural practices for events, cultural consultations, language and naming, research, education, tours and cross-cultural awareness training.



# Secure your place at Australia's leading conference for OSHC

Two unforgettable days of deep learning, connection and inspiration, uniquely tailored to OSHC educators and leaders – and all at exceptional value. Book early to secure your place at the lowest possible price.

**PLUS members get access to recordings of conference sessions.**

*\*Please note: Sessions marked with an asterisk are not available as a recording.*

**Book now**

## Pricing details (all including GST):

**Early Bird** (available up until COB 31 March 2026):

- **Members:** \$179
- **Non-members:** \$239

**Standard Pricing** (as of 1 April):

- **Members:** \$239
- **Non-members:** \$299

## Did you know?

NOSHSA members are eligible for member-priced tickets!

A heads up! The optional in-person event detailed on page 3 is exclusively free for ticketholders. Spots are limited, so don't wait – secure your place now.

*Please note: The program could be subject to change.*



# About us

Established in 1971, It Takes A Village (formerly Community Child Care Association) is the national voice of community-based early childhood education and care services. As the Victorian peak body for OSHC and the state branch of the National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA), we've been at the forefront of advocating for and supporting the sector.

Building a strong sector is at the heart of what we do. We support and champion services, work with governments, and advocate for an Australia where every child has access to free, quality education and care. Nearly 800 member services rely on us for professional advice and practical support. Here to help services transform vision into practice, we provide expert training, coaching and consultancy across the sector.

Join It Takes A Village or find out more at [itav.org.au](http://itav.org.au)



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