



Children & Young People at Risk Summit 2026

by informa...

9 – 10 NOVEMBER 2026

NOVOTEL MELBOURNE ON COLLINS



SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



Sue-Anne Hunter, *National Commissioner, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People*



Jodie Griffiths-Cook, *Children and Young People Commissioner, ACT Human Rights Commission*



Tracy Beaton, *Principal Commissioner, Commission for Children and Young People Victoria*



Louise Edmonds, *Founder, Grooming Recognition*



Paul McDonald, *Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare Victoria*



Adriana Jones, *Award winning Cyber security expert & Founder, The Innocent Souls Foundation*



Adam Washbourne, *Trauma Counsellor and Founder, Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia*



Ron Prasad, *Co-Founder, Beat Bullying With Confidence Foundation*



Effeh Badu, *Founder, Daybreak Optimus*



Judith Atkinson, *Chief Executive Officer, Concern Australia*



Matt Tyler, *Adjunct Associate Professor (Research), Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University*



Kate Fitz-Gibbon, *Professor (Practice), Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University*



Jennette Evans, *Statewide Principal Practitioner, Child Protection, Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing*



Jenn Deighton, *Child Safety and Family Coordinator, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese*



Sarah MacLeish, *Co-Managing Director & Founder, Arches Accommodation Supports, The Arches Foundation*



Yusuf Kasap, *Practice Lead Counselling and Mental Health, Wyndham City Council*



Neda Erjaei, *Child Wellbeing and Safety Lead, Whitehorse City Council & Child Safety Compliance Officer, City of Stonnington*



Sam Barrett, *Head of Social Innovation Programs, Melbourne City Mission*



Dr Rumbi Mabambe, *Executive Director, Chain Reaction Foundation*



Sinead Storch, *Early Childhood Education specialist*

Children & Young People at Risk Summit

Monday 9 November 2026

DAY 1

8:15 Registration & Morning Coffee

8:55 **DAY ONE OPENING**

9:00 Welcome to Country

9:05 **Opening Remarks From the Chair**

Judith Atkinson, *Chief Executive Officer, Concern Australia*

9:10 **OPENING KEYNOTE**

9:40 **KEYNOTE**

First Nations children and cultural safety in child protection

Sue-Anne Hunter, *National Commissioner, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People*

10:00 **COMMISSIONERS PANEL**

State-by-State Perspectives

- Current challenges in each jurisdiction
- Policy differences and their impacts
- Opportunities for knowledge sharing
- Cross-border service delivery issues

Jodie Griffiths-Cook, *Children and Young People Commissioner, ACT Human Rights Commission*

Tracy Beaton, *Principal Commissioner, Commission for Children and Young People Victoria*

10:45 **SESSION SPOTLIGHT**

Technology as an Enabler: Improving Outcomes Without Increasing Pressure on Frontline Services

11:15 Networking Break & Morning Tea

12:15 **From Recognition to Action: Delivering for children and young people through Australia's Second Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children**

Matt Tyler, *Adjunct Associate Professor (Research), Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University*

Kate Fitz-Gibbon, *Professor (Practice), Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University*



12:45 **PANEL**

Belonging Before Crisis: Early Intervention for Multicultural Young People

Multicultural young people can face a range of challenges, including social exclusion, disengagement, discrimination, and barriers to accessing support. This panel will explore the role of belonging, cultural identity, mentorship, community connection and positive pathways in supporting multicultural young people before they reach crisis point. Bringing together community leaders, advocates and lived-experience voices, the discussion will focus on practical early intervention approaches that strengthen resilience, improve outcomes and help young people thrive.

Leela Gray

Zayd Safi, *Founder, Tapped In Melbourne, Project Lead, Youth Justice Mentoring, 16 Yards*

Igor Tomic, *Manager, Initiatives - North West, Violence Reduction Unit*

Moderator: Yasmin Poole, *Board Director, Multicultural Youth Group*

13:30 Networking Lunch

14:30 **The Anchor of Practice: Building a Resilient Professional Identity in Complex Risk Environments**

Jennette Evans, *Statewide Principal Practitioner, Child Protection, Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing*

15:00 **IN CONVERSATION**

The Workforce Challenge: Recruiting, Retaining and Supporting the People Working with Vulnerable Young People

15:30 Afternoon Tea & Networking Break

16:00 **When Safety Comes First: A Child-Centred Framework for Responding to Family Law and Safety Concerns in Schools**

Jenn Deighton, *Child Safety and Family Coordinator, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese*

16:30 **CLOSING PANEL**

Supporting positive care experience & outcomes for First Nations Young People

Sarah MacLeish, *Co-Managing Director & Founder, Arches Accommodation Supports, The Arches Foundation*

Tegan Lucas, *General Manager - Practice, Safeguarding and Quality, The Arches Foundation*

Kelly Raedler, *Operations Manager, Yalga Connect*

Tahlia Anderson, *Practice Improvement Manager, Yalga Connect*

17:15 Closing Remarks from Chair

17:20 Networking Drinks 🍷

Children & Young People at Risk Summit

Tuesday 10 November 2026

DAY 2

8:30 Registration & Morning Coffee

9:00 **DAY TWO OPENING**

9:05 **Opening Remarks From the Chair**

Louise Edmonds, *Founder, Grooming Recognition*

9:10 **OPENING KEYNOTE**

The campaign that reformed the nation and the future of Corporate Parenting

We've made significant progress in recognising that care should not end at 18. The next step is ensuring every young person leaving care has the same opportunities, support, and sense of belonging that any good parent would want for their own child. The presentation will cover the progress made so far for care leavers, and what we need to do next.

Paul McDonald, *Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare Victoria*

9:40 **KEYNOTE**

The Digital Blind Spot: Why technology designed to protect children, can also create new risks if misused

Adriana Jones, *Award winning Cyber security expert & Founder, The Innocent Souls Foundation*

10:10 **PANEL**

Before, During and After: The Critical Moments That Protect Children

This discussion would explore the journey of child abuse prevention from identifying grooming behaviours before abuse occurs, through responding when a child discloses, to supporting recovery after trauma. Together, the panel would provide attendees with practical tools they can immediately apply in childcare, education, community organisations and family settings.

Adam Washbourne, *Trauma Counsellor and Founder, Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia*

Sinead Storch, *Early Childhood Education specialist*

John Cardamone, *Disclosure specialist and survivor advocate*

Moderator: Louise Edmonds, *Founder, Grooming Recognition*

10:55 Networking Break & Morning Tea

11:30 **From fragmented practice to shared accountability: Enhancing systems for early school leavers in Victoria**

The Victorian Early Leaver Connection Initiative (VELCI), including a summary of the initiative and its outcomes, and reflections on work to move VELCI from discrete program delivery to a coordinated system for early school leavers.

Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Division, Victorian Department of Education

12:00 **PANEL**

Breaking Barriers, Building Trust: Culturally Sensitive Strategies for Tackling Bullying and Supporting Refugee Youth

— Addressing bullying in refugee communities

— Overcoming barriers to accessing support

— Strategies for engaging with families and children in culturally sensitive ways

Ron Prasad, *Co-Founder,*

Beat Bullying With Confidence Foundation

Yusuf Kasap, *Practice Lead Counselling and Mental Health, Wyndham City Council*

Neda Erjaei, *Child Wellbeing and Safety Lead, Whitehorse City Council & Child Safety Compliance Officer, City of Stonnington*

12:45 Networking Lunch

13:45 **Living Learning: Flexible Education, Stronger Futures**

Drawing on program outcomes, practice insights, and participant experiences, the session will highlight the critical role of integrated supports, relationship-based practice, and personalised learning pathways in improving outcomes for young people who have previously disengaged from traditional schooling. The presentation will also examine key learnings for service providers, educators, policymakers, and community organisations seeking to create more inclusive and responsive systems of support.

Sam Barrett, *Head of Social Innovation Programs, Melbourne City Mission*

14:15 **CLOSING PANEL**

Importance of Community

— What does an effective support ecosystem look like in practice?

— Can you share an example where community intervention changed a vulnerable young person's life trajectory?

— How do we ensure that the voices of young people themselves are centered in community-based solutions?

— In what ways has the digital age transformed community support structures for young people at risk – both positively and negatively?

Dr Rumbi Mabambe, *Executive Director,*

Chain Reaction Foundation

Effeh Badu, *Founder, Daybreak Optimus*

Neda Erjaei, *Child Wellbeing and Safety Lead, Whitehorse City Council & Child Safety Compliance Officer, City of Stonnington*

15:00 Closing Remarks from Chair

15:05 Conference Concludes

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