



Combined ACSSQ &  
CaSPAQ Conference 2025

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

May 14-16, 2025  
Rydges Southbank, Brisbane



Association of  
Catholic Secondary Schools  
Queensland



**CaSPAQ**  
Catholic Secondary Principals  
Association of Queensland

# WELCOME

This exciting conference brings together two significant associations connecting Catholic Education across Queensland, the Catholic Secondary Principals Association of Queensland and the Association of Catholic Secondary Schools Queensland.

The conference program includes engaging keynote addresses and three streams of presentations:

- The theme of Stream 1 relates to wellness and leadership of staff
- Stream 2's theme centres upon the religious life of our colleges
- Stream 3 focusses on educational psychology and student wellbeing

We thank the ACSSQ Sub-associations Executive Teams for their contribution to the program:

- Deputy Principals/ Assistant Principals Association
- Association of Secondary Religious Education Assistant Principals
- The Association of Counsellors in Catholic Secondary Schools Queensland

We wish you great learning and positive connection throughout the conference.

Wayne Chapman (ACSSQ President) and Dan McMahon (CaSPAQ President)  
(Conference Co-convenors)



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Dr Tom Brunzell**



**Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO**



**Madonna King**



**Allan Blagaich**

Allan Blagaich was appointed as Executive Director, Queensland Catholic Education Commission in June 2023 and commenced in the role in September 2023. Prior to this appointment, Allan was the Executive Director of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia (WA) (2011–2023). In this role he worked closely with the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, Catholic Education Western Australia and the Department of Education Western Australia.

# CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS



## **Amy Green**

Amy is founder of The Wellness Strategy. As a published author, speaker, facilitator and coach, Amy is a leader in improving culture and wellbeing in schools and workplaces. With a background in teaching and leadership and having studied human behaviour and positive psychology, Amy brings to the wellbeing space a fresh approach to what can be a sensitive topic.

Amy guides workplaces to understand the difference between individual and collective wellbeing to ensure all employees feel safe, valued, and fulfilled, and to bring about a workplace culture in which all staff thrive and flourish.



## **Dr Maurice Ryan**

Dr Maurice Ryan is an author, presenter and publisher based in Brisbane. He has a Ph.D. in education from Boston College. He worked as a Senior Lecturer in Religious Education for over 20 years at ACU. He also taught a regular intensive Masters course at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle. He has written a number of books and articles on religious education. He is currently writing, *Cover Stories: Lay Teachers in Australian Colonial Catholic Schools* which explores the historical foundations of the Catholic identity of Catholic schools. He works with teachers in schools and presents the regular BCE Twilight program for religion teachers. His research interests include Jewish-Christian relations, Biblical Education, classroom religion curriculum, and Catholic education history. He works as the publisher of Lumino Press which produces religious education resources.

# CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS



## **Br Tony Leon FMS**

Having been trained as an educator in the areas of Visual Arts (BA Education Visual Arts) and Religious Education (MA Theological Studies), Tony has had the privilege of teaching in Primary, Secondary and Boarding schools in Canberra, Sydney and Newcastle from 1988 -2001. From 2002 - 2005, he looked after a special project to care for young men at risk of dropping out of school at Eastwood, NSW.

From 2007 – 2012 Tony directed Vocation and Youth Ministry for the Marist Province of Sydney. From 2014 – 2020, he worked in the Marist Brothers General House in Rome, as the director of the Secretariat of Brothers Today, where he animated Vocation and Formation of the brothers of the Marist Institute.

Currently, Tony works in the Marist Life Formation team (Staff formation of Marist schools) and occasionally with international brothers' formation. Tony's passion is for Creativity, especially in the Visual Arts and how it can engage and invite people to imagine beyond the finite realm.



## **Dr Justin Coulson**

Dr Justin Coulson is the co-host and parenting expert on Channel Nine's "Parental Guidance" and the founder of [happyfamilies.com.au](http://happyfamilies.com.au). He holds a PhD in Psychology and is one of Australia's most trusted parenting experts. Over the past decade he has helped innumerable families with his 9 books about raising children, his hundreds of media appearances (including all of Australia's major news outlets, and even the Washington Post and the New York Times), and two viral videos that have been viewed a combined 80 million times! Justin earned his PhD in Psychology from the University of Wollongong.

Justin is also a sought-after keynote speaker, helping organisations and schools boost wellbeing and improve relationships

# CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS



## **Aunty Nicole**

For more than ten years, Kuku Djungan woman Aunty Nicole Williams has been a constant presence, shaping the lives of young women at Carinity Education Southside in Meanjin (Brisbane). Beyond her role as a teacher, she holds a notable influence as an artist and cultural leader, having received special commissions. Aunty Nicole is "all about economic empowerment" and inspiring the youth to think about "financial freedom, to have a choice and have possibilities". Aunty Nicole's unwavering passion for art, the environment, and her culture make her a wonderful role model.



## **Dr. Anthony Young**

Dr. Anthony Young is Coordinator of Culture and Solidarity at St. Laurence's College South Brisbane where he runs the liturgical music program, widely known for the enthusiastic singing of the students, as well teaching Music and English and conducting choirs. He is Director of Music at St. Ignatius Parish Toowong and works for the Archdiocesan Commission of Liturgy. He has conducted several liturgies for the archdiocese, featuring massed choirs and orchestras. A recipient a Spirit of Catholic Education Award, he is a sessional lecturer in Musicianship at the University of Queensland and conducts the Queensland Conservatorium Chorus. His research has been published by ACER, Springer, and Oxford University Press, the International Journal of Choral Education, the journal of the Australian National Choral Association and the National Kodaly Journal. Having contributed to music ministry in the Catholic Church for over 40 years, he remains strongly committed to the evangelization of young people through formation as church musicians.

# CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS



## **Karen Young**

Karen began her career as a psychologist in private practice and is now recognised as a leading authority on child and adolescent anxiety. She has worked extensively with children, teens, and families, and in educational and organisational settings. She has lectured and has a Masters in Gestalt Therapy. It is through her work with children, teens, and families that she learned the power of solid information when it is placed in the solid, loving hands of parents or any important person in a child's world.

Karen created Hey Sigmund, an internationally popular online resource, to provide contemporary, research-driven information on the art of being human, and being with humans. The website has a particular emphasis on strengthening the mental wellness of children and adolescents. It attracts millions of readers each year worldwide. The articles have been translated into several languages and published on various international sites.

She is the author of five books, including the bestselling 'Hey Warrior' and 'Hey Awesome', which creatively assist children to understand and manage anxiety, and build the capacity for self-regulation. The books have been translated into a number of languages and have sold more than 200,000 copies worldwide.



## **Dr Tessa Opie**

Dr Tessa Opie, founder and director of *inyourskin*<sup>®</sup>, is dedicated to promoting healthy and consensual relationships. With extensive experience as an educator in government, not-for-profit, and private sectors, as well as being a guest lecturer at universities, Tessa brings a wealth of knowledge to her work. She has provided expert advice to Education Departments, including the South Australian Department for Education, the Western Australian Department of Education, and the Northern Territory Department of Education.

# CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS



## **Sandra Robinson**

Sandra brings to her current position as AISTL's Director, Teaching and School Leadership over 30 years in education as a leader and a teacher. Sandra has 10 years of experience in the NSW Department of Education's State Office, primarily Director responsible for the development of Leadership and Teacher Quality. During her 10-year tenure as Principal of a low-socio-economic status, multicultural Boys High School, Sandra worked with staff to achieve improvement in both instruction and school culture. Sandra has had 5 years of experience in the tertiary sector, working as a sessional lecturer in Literacy and Pedagogy at the University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney and the Australian Catholic University at Strathfield. Sandra has a deep interest in achieving excellence and equity of outcomes in education.





# DAY ONE

Wednesday 14 May

6:30pm Welcome Function (drinks and Canapes): Rydges Rooftop

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6:30pm Welcome and Blessing by Archbishop Mark Coleridge



Archbishop Mark Coleridge



# DAY TWO

Thursday 15 May



8:25am - 8:45am Acknowledgement of Country & Prayer

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8:45am - 9:15am Official Opening Allan Blagaich - QCEC Director

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9:15am – 10:45am

**Keynote: Dr Tom Brunzell**

*Strategies to support engagement with learning: Fortifying students to focus, connect and set higher expectations for themselves*



*Dr Tom Brunzell (MST, EdM, PhD) has experience as teacher, leader, researcher, and education advisor. He is Director of Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) and Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne Faculty of Education. Tom presents internationally on transforming school culture through pedagogies which integrate evidence of learning, student engagement, trauma-informed practice, student and staff wellbeing, and effective school leadership.*

10:45am-11:15am Morning Tea

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# DAY TWO (CONTINUED)

Thursday 15 May



## Stream 1 (Podium 2)



**Amy Green**  
Wellness and Leadership  
11:15am-12:15pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 2 (Podium 3)



**Dr Maurice Ryan**  
Curriculum, pedagogy and  
Scripture  
11:15am-12:15pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 3 (Podium 4)



**Dr Justin Coulson**  
"I'll never be good enough"  
How to combat toxic  
perfectionism in students  
11:15am-12:15pm  
(1 hour)

12:15pm-1:00pm

Lunch/Networking

# DAY TWO (CONTINUED)

Thursday 15 May



## Stream 1 (Podium 2)



**Amy Green**

1:00pm-2:00pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 2 (Podium 3)



**Br Tony Leon**  
Pilgrims of Hope

Presenter: 1:00pm -2:00pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 3 (Podium 4)



**The Sunlight Centre**  
Going from conflict to connection – Empowering staff and students to feel heard validated and professionally cared for  
1:00pm-2:00pm  
(1 hour)

2:00pm-2:15pm

Stretch Break

# DAY TWO (CONTINUED)

Thursday 15 May



2:15pm – 3:00pm

**Keynote: Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO**  
***Does Catholic Social Teaching Take Us Beyond ‘Equality as Sameness’?***



*Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO is a Jesuit priest and was Rector of Newman College at the University of Melbourne. He is a Distinguished Fellow of the PM Glynn Institute at Australian Catholic University, an Adjunct Professor at the Thomas More Law School at ACU and research professor at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.*

*He chaired the National Human Rights Consultation for the Rudd Government and was a member of the Turnbull Government’s expert panel which conducted the Religious Freedom Review. The Morrison Government has appointed him to the Voice Co-Design Senior Advisory Group to help guide the Co-Design process to develop options for an Indigenous voice to government.*

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3:10pm-4:00pm CaSPAQ Principals Meeting

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7:00pm Conference Dinner - Rydges Rooftop

# DAY THREE

Friday 16 May

8:55am - 9:15am Acknowledgement of Country & Prayer

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9:15am – 10:45am

## **Keynote: Madonna King** *YOUR VALUE AND PARENTAL ADVOCACY*



*Madonna King is an award-winning journalist, author, and media commentator with over 25 years of experience across newspapers, radio, and television. Known as the voice of current affairs in Queensland, she has hosted top-rating programs on ABC and won several national awards for her journalism. Madonna has authored nine books, including the acclaimed "Fathers and Daughters" and "Being 14," and has written biographies of notable figures such as former federal treasurer Joe Hockey and Australian of the Year Ian Frazer.*

*Madonna brings her expertise to a wide range of topics, including leadership, education, politics, business, and the environment. Her experience in the media and politics allows her to provide fascinating and entertaining commentary on behind-the-scenes decision-making processes.*

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10:45am-11:15am Morning Tea



# DAY THREE (CONTINUED)

Friday 16 May



## Stream 1 (Podium 2)



**AITSL**  
**Sandra Robinson**  
Empowering middle leaders  
11:30am-12:30pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 2 (Podium 3)



**Aunty Nicole “Creative Nations”**  
Cultural Conversations &  
ACARA Indigenous  
Perspectives  
11:30am-12:30pm  
(1 hour)

## Stream 3 (Podium 4)



**Karen Young**  
Unlocking Potential: A  
Neuroscience-Backed  
Approach to Big  
Behaviours, Emotions,  
Learning, and Regulation  
11:30am-12:30pm  
(1 hour)

12:30pm-1:15pm

Lunch/Networking

# DAY THREE (CONTINUED)

Friday 16 May



## Stream 1 (Podium 2)

AITSL  
**Sandra Robinson**  
Workshop  
1:15-2:15  
(1 Hour)



## Stream 2 (Podium 3)

**Student Voice & Advocacy Panel**  
(addressing the equity gap)  
Presenter: 1:15pm-2:15pm  
(1 hour)



## Stream 3 (Podium 4)

**Dr Tessa Opie**  
A Critique of Current Consent  
Education: Is it up to scratch  
Presenter: 1:15pm-2:15pm  
(1 hour)



ACSSQ DP/ APA Assoc  
AGM  
2:15pm-3:00pm



**Dr. Anthony Young**  
Workshop 2:15pm-3pm



ACCSSQ  
(Counsellors group)  
2:15-3:00pm



3:00pm Concludes



# MANY THANKS

- CaSPAQ Executive Officer Ann Rebgetz
- ACSSQ DP/APA Presidents Nathan Camilleri (2024) and Brendan Luxton (2025)
- The Association of Counsellors in Catholic Secondary Schools ACSSQ President Joshua Laidler
- The ASREAP President Paul Corfield

