Building Bridges
Conference 2015

A Regional Early Years Conference

Resilience, Risk-Taking, and Responsibilities

Thursday 30th April – Friday 1st May 2015
Huon Hill Conference Centre, Wodonga
About the Conference

Charles Sturt University, Wodonga TAFE, Wodonga City Council, AlburyCity, and Gateway Health are pleased to present the 5th Building Bridges Regional Early Years Conference. “Building Bridges” is an analogy for strengthening partnerships between our early years’ services across the border and between regions, with the hope that a mutual understanding will be created and networks will be strengthened.

Conference Theme

This year’s conference focuses on the theme of Resilience, Risk-Taking, and Responsibilities: The shared responsibilities in supporting calculated, thoughtful risk-taking to foster resilience. In the current era of “cotton-wool kids” it is important for early years professionals to consider their role in fostering children’s abilities to take risks so as to build their resilience. This year’s conference will explore a range of topics, including:
- The Australian policy context;
- Outdoor education: Risk-taking and responsibilities;
- Building the resilience of vulnerable children and families;
- Building children’s resilience through risk-taking;
- Risk-taking and resilience: Our responsibilities; and
- Building the resilience of educators.

Who Should Attend?

- Primary school educators;
- Child care educators;
- Preschool educators;
- Support services;
- Family day care educators and support team;
- Playgroups;
- Outside school hours care educators;
- Allied health service providers; and
- Preservice teachers (early childhood and primary).

Conference Website

The conference website will be updated as it gets closer to the conference, so make sure you regularly check it out at buildingbridgesconference.com.au

Conference Venue

The 2015 conference will be held at the Huon Hill Conference Centre in Wodonga, Victoria. Please visit their website huonhill.com.au for more information about the venue.

Registration Information

How to Register

Please visit the conference website buildingbridgesconference.com.au and complete the online form to register.

Registration Fees

Full registration is $200 and includes:
- Thursday sessions, including lunch and afternoon tea;
- Thursday evening cocktail reception; and
- Friday sessions, including morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Day registration is also available for $120.

Cancellations

If you cancel your registration before 5pm on Friday 3rd April 2015 you are entitled to a full refund of all monies paid, minus a $55 administration fee. No refunds are available if you cancel after this date; however, substitute delegates may be sent. All cancellations must be made in writing to the conference organiser.

Accommodation

Accommodation is available at Quest Wodonga which is located at the conference venue. Please visit questapartments.com.au/Accommodation/456/Australia/Victoria_Regional/Quest_Wodonga/Welcome.aspx for more information. For additional accommodation information or advice please visit visitalburywodonga.com or phone the conference organiser on (02) 6023 6300.

Organising Committee

Amy MacDonald (Chair) Charles Sturt University
- Rebecca Bates (Secretary) AlburyCity
- Annie Pryse Wodonga TAFE
- Shelli Hardwick Wodonga City Council
- Michelle Muller Community Representative
- Donna Mlejnek Gateway Health
- Nicky Spalding Community Representative

Conference Organiser

Bradley Hayden
Countrywide Conference and Event Management
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Dr Andrew Fuller  
Clinical psychologist  
Fellow, University of Melbourne  
Proudly sponsored by AlburyCity

Andrew has recently been described as an “interesting mixture of Billy Connolly, Tim Winton and Frasier Crane” and as someone who “puts the heart back into psychology”. As a clinical psychologist, Andrew Fuller works with many schools and communities in Australia and internationally, specialising in the wellbeing of young people and their families. He is a Fellow of the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Learning and Educational Development at the University of Melbourne. Andrew has been a principal consultant to the national drug prevention strategy REDI, the ABC on children’s television shows, is an Ambassador for Mind Matters and is a member of the National Coalition Against Bullying.

Megan Mitchell  
National Children’s Commissioner

Megan Mitchell is Australia’s first National Children’s Commissioner. Megan has had extensive experience in issues facing children and young people, having worked with children from all types of backgrounds, including undertaking significant work with vulnerable children. She has practical expertise in child protection, foster and kinship care, juvenile justice, children’s services, child care, disabilities, and early intervention and prevention services. Megan’s previous roles include NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People, Executive Director of the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, Executive Director for Out-of-Home Care in the NSW Department of Community Services and CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service.

The Hon. Sussan Ley  
Assistant Minister for Education  
Member for Farrer

The Hon. Sussan Ley, MP, is the Member for Farrer and the Assistant Minister for Education. Ms Ley’s portfolio includes working with the childcare sector and developing early childhood education. Ms Ley is a strong advocate for many rural and regional issues especially those which assist in bridging the ‘city v country divide’.

Megan Mitchell  
National Children’s Commissioner

Bullying, conflict and serious injuries are down, while creativity, problem solving and concentration are up.

Bruce McLachlan  
Principal, Swanson Primary School, Auckland

Bruce is the principal of Swanson Primary School, a school of 500 in Auckland, New Zealand. This year, Mr McLachlan has made international headlines for the approach his school is taking to rules governing children’s play. The school provides an environment where children have ample opportunities to learn from their mistakes, to manage risk within reason and to figure out what works by trial and error. Children ride bikes, build huts, climb trees and play-fight. The international media attention has been overwhelmingly positive. The idea of allowing ‘kids to be kids’ has resonated with people all over the world. Bullying, conflict and serious injuries are down, while creativity, problem solving and concentration are up.

Annette Sax  
Yarn Strong Sista

Annette Sax is a Taungurung woman and has been operating Yarn Strong Sista Aboriginal education consultancy for 14 years. Yarn Strong Sista Consultants provide support and information for educators (Pre-School to Post-Secondary) who aim to deliver an Indigenous inclusive curriculum. These programs include training, storytelling, and educational resources. Yarn Strong Sista promotes both traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture, people and values. Annette has 25 years of experience working in Aboriginal Early Childhood Education. She is an Aboriginal Early Childhood Professional, Storyteller, Artist and Illustrator of 3 new Aboriginal children’s books written by Yorta Yorta woman, Sue Atkinson.

Colin Slattery  
Director, Semann & Slattery  
Proudly sponsored by Wodonga TAFE

Colin Slattery is a Director and founder of Semann & Slattery. He has held a range of senior executive positions with government agencies, the private sector and non-government organisations for 15 years. For the last 13 years Colin has been highly sought after as a change facilitator and coach for individuals and organisations. His unique leadership coaching and mentoring style encourages participants to embrace change on a personal level enabling positive change to occur on a professional business level.
Program

Thursday 30th April 2015

12.00 – 1.00  Lunch and registration

1.00 – 1.30  Welcome and overview
            Donna Mlejnek, Gateway Health (MC)

1.30 – 2.00  The Australian policy context
            The Hon. Sussan Ley, Assistant Minister for Education

2.00 – 3.00  Keynote 1: Taking away the rules around play: Children managing their own risk-taking
            Bruce McLachlan, Swanson Primary School, Auckland

3.00 – 3.30  Afternoon tea

3.30 – 4.30  Keynote 2: Reflections of Aboriginal children connecting to Country
            Annette Sax, Yarn Strong Sista

4.30 – 4.45  Close of formal program and welcome to cocktail reception

5.00 – 6.00  Cocktail reception

Friday 1st May 2015

8.30 – 8.45  Registration

8.45 – 9.00  Welcome and overview
            Donna Mlejnek, Gateway Health (MC)

9.00 – 10.30 Keynote 3: Building children’s resilience through risk-taking
            Dr Andrew Fuller, clinical psychologist

10.30 – 11.00 Morning tea

11.00 – 11.30 Keynote 4: Risk-taking and resilience: Our responsibilities
            Megan Mitchell, National Children’s Commissioner

11.30 – 12.30 Perspectives from the field
            Fiona Pattinson, Wodonga TAFE and Janelle Haskew, Annette’s Place

12.30 – 1.30 Lunch

1.30 – 3.00  Keynote 5: Building the resilience of educators
            Colin Slattery, Semann & Slattery

3.00 – 3.30  Afternoon tea

3.30 – 4.30  Panel discussion
            Bruce McLachlan, Annette Sax, Andrew Fuller and Colin Slattery

4.30  Close

Links to Professional Standards

For early childhood educators:
The 2015 program is strongly aligned to NQS Quality Area 1: “Educational program and practice”, Quality Area 2: “Children’s health and safety”, and Quality Area 3: “Physical environment”. It is also relevant to EYLF Outcome 1: “Children have a strong sense of identity”, Outcome 2: “Children are connected with and contribute to their world”, and Outcome 3: “Children have a strong sense of wellbeing”.

For primary school educators:
Attendance at the 2015 conference can be used as supporting evidence in relation to AITSL Standard 6: “Engage in professional learning” and Standard 7: “Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community”.

Certificates of attendance are available for all participants.