



The National Play, Playing and Playwork Conference Australia 2024

location, timetable
and session choices

Melbourne, Victoria
8/9/10 March 2024

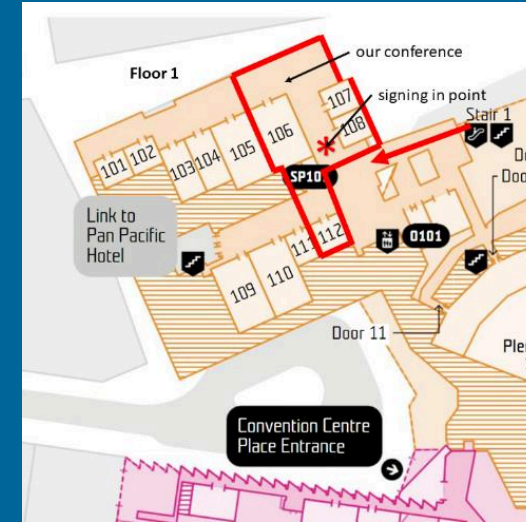
V2 revised 7/3/2024



Welcome

Our venue is the **Melbourne Convention Centre** on the city's South Bank, in between the **Crown Casino** and the **Polly Woodside** (which is a sailing ship moored just off the River Yarra – you can't miss it (see maps). We are on the 1st floor.

It is about 1km from Southern Cross Railway Station, an easy walk, and is served by tram routes 12, 96 and 109 which stop opposite the casino.



Each of the three days of conference begins at 9:30am sharp! Refreshments and registrations will be open from 8am.

The three days begin and end with a keynote session, followed by eight breakout sessions (three on Friday and Saturday, and two on Sunday) giving you a total of 32 choices. You will be able to choose your breakout session each morning from 8am, and note some of the breakout session will be repeated. Numbers in principal and breakout sessions is strictly limited.

Please note that there is no conference dinner this year, but we are slap bang in the middle of the South Bank entertainment area which is full of bars, restaurants, cafes and shops. Check out <https://www.visitvictoria.com/regions/melbourne/destinations/southbank-and-south-wharf>.



venue, location and registrations



Merch

The Merch Table will be open from midday on Friday until just before close on Sunday.

This year we have a table groaning under the weight of Merch for you to choose from, including a limited edition 'I ❤️ Play' T shirt in this year's conference colour, and more books than you can shake a stick at. (Just 292 days to Christmas)



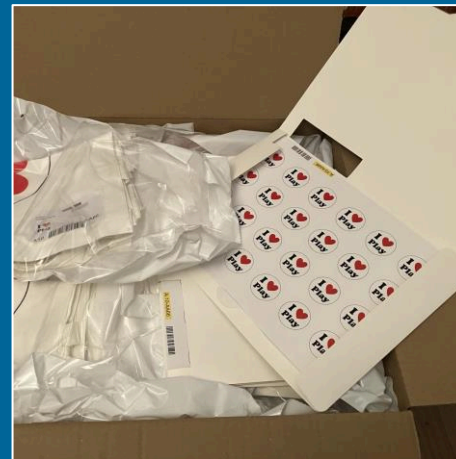
Bags



Badges



Books



Stickers



Mugs



Limited edition tees

merch



Day 1: Friday 8th March 2024

- 9:30am Welcome and an introduction from **Marc** followed official opening of conference by **Meena Singh**, Commissioner for Indigenous Children, Victoria
- 10:15am Opening keynote presentation by **Gever Tulley** (online)
- 11:00am **Breakout Session 1** and Principal Speakers **Mike Barclay** and **Ben Tawil** (online)
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 1:00pm **Breakout Session 2** and Principal Speaker **Rusty Keeler** (online)
- 2:00pm Break
- 2:15pm **Breakout Session 3** and Principal Speaker **Judy McKinty**
- 3:30pm Keynote presentation by **Prof. Kate Highfield**
- 4:20pm Closing remarks for Day 1 by **Marc** and day ends.

Day 2: Saturday 9th March 2024

- 9:30am Conference begins with **Marc**
- 10:00am Opening keynote presentation by **Prof. Michelle Langley**
- 11:00am **Breakout Session 4** and Principal Speaker **Angus Gorrie**
- 12:00pm Lunch.
- 1:00pm **Breakout Session 5** and Principal Speakers **Sarah Louise Gandolfo** and **Alistair Gibbs**
- 2:00pm Break.
- 2:15pm **Breakout Session 6** and Principal Speakers **Trudi Bennett** and **Daniel Burton**
- 3:25pm Closing keynote presentation by **Joe Brumm – creator of Bluey**
- 4:20pm Closing Remarks for Day 2 with **Marc** and day ends.

Day 3: Sunday 10th March 2024

- 9:30am Conference begins with **Marc**
- 10:00am Opening keynote presentation by **Marc Armitage**
- 11:00am **Breakout Session 7** and Principal Speaker **Kylie Keane**
- 12:00pm Lunch.
- 1:00pm **Breakout Session 8** and Principal Speaker **Jill Wood**
- 2:00pm Break
- 2:15pm Closing Keynote Speaker **Robyn Monro Miller AM**
- 3:15pm Closing remarks for Day 3 & announcements by **Marc** and Conference ends.



timetable

please make every effort to stay right to the last minute or you won't know what you're missing!



OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

all in Rm106

Gever Tully

Author, Founder of The Tinkering School & Brightworks USA



The Path to Resilience is Paved with Risk

When Gever delivered a talk at the TED2007 conference entitled "50 Dangerous Things You Should Let Your Kids Do" it had a mixed reaction here in Australia with media outlets questioning the very idea. Yet parents and professionals in the field accepted his ideas with open arms, seeing in them a backlash against the 'safety first' culture. Gever suggests that a growing trend towards over-protection of children is harming their ability to learn and think, and he advocates for children to do supervised activities that might be considered dangerous.



CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Prof. Kate Highfield

University of Canberra ACT

The Digital Experience of Play

So often we think of children's experiences of play and think separately of their experiences of digital – we conceive of these as two things: play OR digital play, play OR screentime, However, current research suggests this separation is an adult construct, with children's experiences of play being multimodal and interwoven. This session explores these ideas and asks the question – what do we add or remove when children have a digital experience of play?



Opening & Closing Keynotes
Friday 8th March 2024

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#conference24





Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS

1:1 Mike Barclay & Ben Tawil
Ludicology UK

Take a risk on play – children seek out risky play, scary fun, and playing with uncertainty. Let's explore the theoretical, philosophical, policy and practice issues behind this with examples that can enable good playwork or play-working and ensure children can benefit from optimum play experiences.



Rm108

1:3 Angie Casella & Kaycee Larney
Curious Me QLD (repeated)

Play is a journey – when Curious Me started, we did not have a clear idea of what we wanted to be, but rather what we didn't. We wanted to remove structure and formal learning in the early years, providing a place for "free play" for the duration of the session. We realised this was unheard of. But why?

1:2 Nicole Talarico
Talarico Consulting VIC

Play as a Powerful Model for Community

Consultation - when children are regarded as our youngest citizens, they are recognised as key stakeholders of their community and a rights-based lens will be utilised to hear their thinking. It's not just adults who need to listen, we need to invest more time in fostering peer to peer friendships and the democracy in the exchange of ideas.



Rm107

1:4 Team FOOSHC
Forrest Out of Hours School Care ACT

Permission to Play: Creating the right physical and psychological conditions for play in an OSHC service on a school site - the physical and psychological environment that children are subjected to throughout the school day is vastly different from a space that provides the possibilities for play. As a child's play is at the center of our work in an OSHC setting there is a necessity for significant thought as to how we can create the permission to play within a space that they associate with schooling six hours a day.



Rm112

Breakout Session 1
Friday 8th March 2024 – choose one

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Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

2:1 Rusty Keeler
Natural Playscape Designer USA

Three big ways to boost outdoor play – Rusty is an excellent designer of natural playscapes who in this presentations will be sharing his fun combining nature play, risky play and loose parts all into one thing. He calls it, **the big three ways to boost outdoor play or your yard, your stuff, your yes.**



Rm108

2:3 Kara Spence
Nature. Be in it TAS

Educators role in risky play outdoors - risky play outdoors is vital to whole childhood development. We know the research, we understand its importance, how do we allow more of it in school settings and what is our role in it? Risk benefit assessments and policies are key to allowing more freedom, let's get those in place first.

2:2 Dr Sarah Aiono
Longworth Education NZ

Bridging the Knowledge to Practice Gap: How to Translate Play Research into the Reality of a Busy Primary-School Classroom Setting – let's elucidate findings from a comprehensive mixed methods study conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand, exploring the use of play as a pedagogical approach in the classroom. The study reveals that, when equipped with professional development support to embed specific teaching practices associated with play pedagogy, teachers can navigate the bridge between formal learning and child-centered play, while still meeting curricular demands, including literacy and numeracy.

2:4 Scott Gibson
AOHTAS TAS (repeated)

Moving beyond the No Zone: rewiring the responses to adventurous play - have you ever wondered why we tend to default to the word 'no', especially in situations we see as risky? Is it due to our concern for a child's safety, or is it rooted in our fear of facing consequences? Let's unpack the implications of using "no" excessively in our interactions with children, challenges our instinctive responses, revealing the triggers and biases that often underlie them. Explore the unforeseen effects of a constant "no".



Rm107



Rm112

Breakout Session 2
Friday 8th March 2024 – choose one

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Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

3:1 Judy McKinty
The Pandemic Play Project VIC

Playing around in the pandemic – the Pandemic Play project came about because of a moment in history: COVID. It set out to explore the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on the play lives of Australian children. The results have provided us with a rich understanding of how traditional forms of play were adapted to accommodate and incorporate the social changes, fears and personal experiences associated with the pandemic.



Rm108

3:3 Cate Jordinson
Australian Playworker QLD

How playwork theories create, support, and enhance a space and place for PLAY in Outside School Hours Care - this presentation will focus on four playwork theories; affordance, compound flexibility, liminality, and psychogeography, and how they can be understood in a practical sense. When combined, these four playwork theories can be used to create a space, support, and enhance a place for play to occur.

3:2 Maria Taylor
Outside the box learning WA

Play States – Play States is a program that explores the neuroscience of play, play personalities and the role of play to support focus, attention and concentration. Knowing and understanding your play personality can help you rekindle ways to find 'a state of play' in daily life. Are you The Joker, Kinesthete, Explorer, Competitor, Director, Collector, Artist, or Storyteller?



Rm107

3:4 Tania Moloney
Nurture in Nature VIC (repeated)

Clay and Storylines - in this fun and interactive session, participants will be introduced to a number of nature-inspired, story-making ideas and strategies that they can use and further develop with children. Participants will switch on their imaginations to create clay characters using natural materials. Then working together in small groups, they will become 'Story Makers', taking their character/s on a hands-on, nature-inspired storytelling journey.



Rm112

Breakout Session 3
Friday 8th March 2024 – choose one



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OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

all in Rm106

Ass. Prof. Michelle Langley

Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution & Archaeology, Griffith University QLD



Children and Play in Human Evolution: What do we know and where to from here?

Children were a significant part of Palaeolithic societies, perhaps constituting as much as 40% of a population. Yet despite this fact, archaeologists have only recently begun to focus on exploring the role of children — and play — in the development of human cognitive, cultural, and technological evolution. This presentation summarises what we know about the lives of children over the past 3 million years and how the youngest members of our community may have driven our species to where we are today.



CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Joe Brumm

Creator of 'Bluey' QLD

Play Research and 'Bluey'

There can be few people that have not heard of the phenomenally popular animated series 'Bluey'. As piece of media provided for children it has joined a very select group of programmes that speaks to children in a way they clearly understand. Joe is going to tell us about how play and the research around it has shaped the majority Bluey episodes.



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Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

4:1 Angus Gorrie
The Outsiders Play Advocates QLD

Benevolent Hierarchies in play – Hierarchies can get a bad wrap. Patriarchal or dictating pyramids are the reason for this as human's have great capacity to exploit hierarchy. However, in nature, and in play, we often see benevolent hierarchies within which exists give and take, compromise, problem creation, conflict and conflict resolution, all intrinsically fueled for the sake of continuation. Let's reframe hierarchy and what they may look like in a play space and how they could be supported.



Rm108

4:3 Rhi Sugars
The Atypical Educator NSW

Let them play: challenging the deficit paradigm of autistic play - the way Autistic children play has always been a hot topic in the ECE and early intervention arenas. Historically, Autism has existed under a deficit paradigm impacting Autistic ways of being and doing, play included. As the Neurodiversity movement gains momentum and Autistic voices are being heard for the first time, the power and potential of Autistic play is coming to light.

4:2 Hyahno Moser (repeated)
Australian Institute of Play QLD

Can children play where they live? Every day?: child-led solutions to decline in neighbourhood play – For children, securing an amazing childhood is fraught with so many adults-made obstacles and restrictive modern day social-norms. However, in this breakout session we will explore a solution that is achieving strong Play-Value and Intrinsic Motivation from children who attend. We call it 'Joomunjie Land' - a 'Community Backyard' for neighbourhood children.



Rm107

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Rm112

Breakout Session 4
Saturday 9th March 2024 – choose one



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Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS

5:1 Sarah Louise Gandolfo & Alistair Gibbs

Learning to Lead in Early Childhood/Gowrie Victoria VIC

Sex and Sexuality in children’s play: – in this panel we will present thinking on the ways in which sex and sexuality exist within children's play exploring the ways in which sex and sexuality are inextricably linked to identity and how these concepts manifest through words, actions and engagement.



Rm108

5:3 Jessica Grimes & Judd Walsh
Victoria University VIC

Playspaces in public spaces: ethical & social challenges of a pop up urban playspace - this presentation explores a partnership between the Early Childhood Education team at VU, Public Realm Lab (architects) and Maribyrnong City Council with the aim of reactivating a public space in Footscray and the subsequent ongoing Playwork projects that are weaved into several units that student’s study.

5:2 Scott Gibson
AOHTAS TAS (repeated)

Moving beyond the No Zone: rewiring the responses to adventurous play - have you ever wondered why we tend to default to the word 'no', especially in situations we see as risky? Is it due to our concern for a child's safety, or is it rooted in our fear of facing consequences? Let’s unpack the implications of using "no" excessively in our interactions with children, challenges our instinctive responses, revealing the triggers and biases that often underlie them. Explore the unforeseen effects of a constant "no".



Rm107

5:4 Team Camp Hill
Camp Hill OSHC QLD

A Camp Hill Story: documentary and discussing - a journey to playwork practice – join Todd, Lucy, Isaih and Emma to talk about the messy side of Playwork. We want to address the issues that inevitably come up in playwork/loose parts that is staffed by adults. Issues such as conflict, injuries and other behaviours that inflame our adult perspective of what 'good' play looks like. Are these challenges based around our own adult bias and prejudices? Can we broaden our perspective to incorporate these inevitable behaviours into our understanding of play?



Rm112

Breakout Session 5
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PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS

6:1 Trudi Bennett & Daniel Burton
Educated by Nature WA

Embodying joy in outdoor play & learning – there is much to celebrate and for which to be grateful about childhood surrounded by nature! Educators are invited to embrace this joy and learn ways to engage outdoors playfully with children to help build community and relationships discussing adult energy and intention.

6:2 Tyler Inglis & Sue Inglis
Pelican Waters Bush & Beach Kindy QLD

The story of the formation and evolution of our bike track - from what was, for a long time, a simple and rigid cement circle, now an ever-changing dirt jump riding oasis. Daily, the children set up worksites and, with real shovels, build jumps or manipulate the space however they please, encouraged and trusted to try whatever they want. The challenge fulfilling an appetite for mischief.



Rm107

6:3 Katy Meeuwissen & Keira Minchin
University of Canberra ACT

Reshaping how educators think about play: a journey of discovery in initial teacher education through an international study tour on play and playwork - play, often hailed as the cornerstone of children’s learning and development, has a pivotal role in shaping educational practices. Let’s explore what we discovered about this from a study tour to the UK.

6:4 Nic Russell (repeated)
South East Yoga and Wellbeing VIC

Yoga Play: Connection through mindful play - this is an interactive workshop with Nic (an early childhood educator of 30+ years and a yogi of 20+ years), and Bhala the Koala (a gum leaf loving, singing bowl meditation enthusiast), that will fill your heart with fun and gift you with strategies that you can use immediately with the children in your care.



Rm112

Breakout Session 6
Saturday 9th March 2024



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OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

all in Rm106

Marc Armitage

Playworker, Founder Malarkey Playwork
Yorkshire



*Once the children that we work
with leave for the day, what
happens to their play?*

In our rush to provide children with fantastic playspaces, which is something we are getting increasingly better at, is there something we may have forgotten? Using photographs of children at play in the past let's remind ourselves of a key element in the history of play that we, as adults involved in the day to day play lives of children, have an important role in - one that I'm to challenge you to get more involved with.

CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Robyn Monro Miller AM

CEO Play Australia & President
International Play Association



What next for Play?

Robyn will be shadowing the whole conference from beginning to end, listening in on conversations, noting the buzz, recording the questions people ask, in order to sum up Conference 24. Yet there is more: Robyn will also be asking 'what next', where do we go from here? What do we need from our politicians and policy makers: Where should we be in two years' time?



Opening & Closing Keynotes
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Rm106

PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

7:1 Kylie Keane
Keen About ACT

Playwork as pedagogy – whilst Playwork has been in Australia for quite sometime, it is only recently that it has been viewed as a quality approach to Early Childhood Education and Care. The links between our National Quality Framework and Playwork have been there, hiding all along however with our revised learning frameworks they are now clear and undeniable! To play or not to play? It is no longer a question.



Rm108

7:3 Sandi Phoenix
Phoenix Support for Educators QLD

Finding flow: How Positive Psychology can inform planning and programming for play in early years settings – let's discuss how early 20th century psychology still heavily influences education contexts, and how 21st century psychology can move us from managing behavior 'problems', at the detriment of play.

7:2 Cate Jordinson
Australian Playworker QLD

Therapeutic playwork with children and youth: exploring this application across different contexts - this presentation is an Australian playwork practitioner's experience of using playwork to support inclusive practices, and how this has worked across many different sectors, and with children and young people in many different contexts. It will cover inclusion basics, playwork theories, and how these could be practically applied to your setting. Facilitated discussions will give people an opportunity to explore this practical application.



Rm107

7:4 Hyahno Moser (repeated)
Australian Institute of Play QLD

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Breakout Session 7
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PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

8:1 Jill Wood

Parish School Adventure Playground
Texas USA

Rm106

Here you Are: Trusting Play – let’s talk about the history of children on our site at the Parish School Adventure Playground, finding ways to make themselves feel good, including rough and tumble during the pandemic and how we came around to it.

8:3 Karen Darling

Green Dots SA

Play is a skill that all children possess and other myths - as a clinician working in child, adolescent and family mental health, I have witnessed the devastating intergenerational impact of play deprivation and limited play ability. Changes in play culture, and contemporary culture (eg risk adversity), with each generation have also impacted on opportunities for play and play ability, in both children and adults. Supporting children’s play ability supports healing and development, as well as social connection, and provides a stronger indicator of future adult wellbeing than academic performance.

Breakout Session 8

Sunday 10th March 2024 – choose one



Rm107

8:2 Angie Casella & Kaycee Larney
Curious Me QLD (repeated)

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Yoga Play: Connection through mindful play - this is an interactive workshop with Nic (an early childhood educator of 30+ years and a yogi of 20+ years), and Bhala the Koala (a gum leaf loving, singing bowl meditation enthusiast), that will fill your heart with fun and gift you with strategies that you can use immediately with the children in your care.



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That's it – see you there!

Oh! And don't forget to follow
along and share on social media using
the hashtags
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