



# YOU'RE INVITED TO THE 10<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL PAINT THE TOWN REaD CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 17 AND FRIDAY 18  
SEPTEMBER 2026 | 9AM-4PM

CAMDEN CIVIC CENTRE  
31 JOHN STREET, CAMDEN  
SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER



## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



DR MARY TAIWO



DR ANTONIA GOETZ



PROFESSOR SHEILA  
DEGOTARDI



DOMINIC LINDSAY

Paint the Town REaD is proud to announce the 10th National Conference hosted in Camden, NSW, delivered in partnership with Camden Paint the Town REaD committee and Camden Council.

Over two days, professionals and like-minded passionate community members will come together to hear from leading research experts and practitioners through engaging keynote presentations, practical hands-on workshops and meaningful conversations. Presentations and workshops will explore the power and possibility of early literacy development. Discover innovative, evidence-based and creative approaches to children's

development, and strengthen communities.

Hosted in the heart of Camden, this milestone conference offers a unique opportunity to learn, connect and be inspired, together, painting our communities with the magic of literacy.

**Let's come together, and Paint the Town REaD!**



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## CIVIC RECEPTION

Delegates and conference attendees are warmly invited to join us for a conference civic reception to welcome you all to Camden. This will be hosted by Camden Council at the Alan Baker Art Gallery at Macaria.

**WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER**

**5-7PM**

**ALAN BAKER ART GALLERY AT MACARIA,  
37 JOHN STREET, CAMDEN**

RSVP: Please contact Kate Ellul on [kate.ellul@camden.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.ellul@camden.nsw.gov.au) confirming your attendance. There is limited spaces.



## CONFERENCE DINNER

In addition, a conference dinner will be held for conference attendees, on the Thursday evening. This is a great opportunity for delegates and attendees to come together and enjoy a relaxed dinner, network and connect with one another at a popular local Camden venue.

**THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER**

**5:30PM**

**BARENZ 2/130 ARYGLE STREET, CAMDEN**

Tickets Paint the Town REaD Ltd | Humanitix



## JOIN US FOR THE FOLLOWING KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS



### **DR MARY TAIWO**

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
NSW AEDC STATE COORDINATOR

Mary is a Senior Population Data Officer with NSW Department of Education where she performs the role of NSW AEDC State Coordinator. Mary managed the 2021 and 2024 AEDC collection cycles in NSW. Mary is passionate about using evidence to inform effective learning practices for all children. Mary is looking forward to engaging with the 2024 AEDC outcomes and supporting various stakeholders across NSW as they use the AEDC data to inform policy and practice over the next few years.

She completed her Master of Philosophy (MPhil, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2011) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 2015) in inclusive and special needs education. Prior to joining NSW Department of Education, Mary worked as a researcher at Macquarie University. Mary has worked with Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) and Early Childhood Directorate as an evaluator and policy officer, respectively.

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This keynote presentation will provide an overview of the 2024 AEDC results in NSW as well as state-level trends in child development over the past 15 years (2009 to 2024). Mary will highlight some of the key AEDC data trends and some considerations that stakeholders can make when planning programs and services for children in communities. The session will also explore some of the immediate implications and values of the AEDC data.

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**DR ANTONIA GOETZ**

MARCS INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN, BEHAVIOUR  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr Antonia Goetz is a Research Fellow at the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development. Her research focuses on early language and communication development in infancy and toddlerhood, with particular attention to temperament, rhythm, and multilingual environments. She works closely with families, educators, and international research partners to translate developmental science into practical, inclusive tools that support children's learning across diverse contexts.

In this keynote, Dr Goetz draws on research from developmental psychology, language science, and neuroscience to examine how temperament,

communication style, and rhythm influence early learning. She explores individual differences in parent-child interaction, highlighting how variations in temperament shape children's language development. The presentation also examines the role of infant-directed speech ("parentese") and rhythm in supporting brain development and early language learning.

The keynote introduces findings from international research on infants' rhythm processing and language acquisition, and presents the OZI-SF—a short, parent-friendly checklist designed to support understanding of early communication development in Australian children aged 12–30 months.

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**PROFESSOR SHEILA DEGOTARDI**

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Sheila Degotardi is a Professor of Early Childhood Education and the Director of the Early Childhood Education Research Centre at Macquarie University. Sheila has over 35 years experience in the early childhood education sector, starting her career as an early childhood teacher before moving into academia in the early 2000s. Since that time, she has concentrated on researching infant-



toddler pedagogies and learning in early childhood education centres. With a deep interest in relationship-based pedagogies, she investigates the nature of social interactions between children, their educators and peers, to consider how these interactions contribute towards very young children's learning.

In her presentation, Sheila will explain the significance of early language development for children's language development and learning more broadly. With a focus on this importance, she will identify key features of a 'language-rich environment' that have been shown to support very young children's development. Using real-life scenarios, participants can explore these features and consider how to apply these to their own talk and interactions with very young children.



### **DOMINIC LINDSAY**

**AUSTRALIAN MUSICIAN, SONGWRITER, MUSIC EDUCATOR AND PRODUCER**

Dominic Lindsay is an Australian musician, songwriter, music educator and

producer with over 30 years' experience working in children's music and education. He has written and arranged hundreds of songs with The Wiggles, contributing to numerous albums and performances, including national tours as Musical Director and the Original Wiggles National Tour in 2023. In 2022, Dominic received the APRA Ted Albert Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Music and an ARIA Award for Best Children's Album with The Wiggles.

Dominic currently teaches primary and senior school music at Oxley College in the Southern Highlands and delivers music programs for preschool children across Australia. Classically trained, he holds a Bachelor of Music (Performance) from the Canberra School of Music (ANU) and performs on trumpet, piano, accordion and other instruments.

In this presentation, Dominic demonstrates how music can support early literacy development in preschool-aged children. Through interactive singing, rhythm-based activities and percussion, he explores how music enhances phonemic awareness, listening skills, vocabulary development and confidence in communication. The session highlights practical, play-based strategies that link music and literacy to support strong early language foundations.

**Paint the Town REaD is Magic!**  
**Talk, Read, Sing, Rhyme, Draw and**  
**Play Creates Magic Everyday!**

