

# Sustainability in the Classroom and Beyond Educator's Forum

**Full-day program**

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**GREEN AELAIDE**



Peta White

## **Why we need climate change education: but hold the urgency...**

Climate Change Education (CCE) is an increasing focus of global curriculum advocacy, as countries come to terms with the future threats posed by the Anthropocene poly-crisis. As educators we support our students to become informed citizens that make responsible decisions, manage complexity, and are actively engaged in the politics of living in the 21st Century. This might sound like a lot for our young people to manage - but they are ready and require clarity and intergenerational engagement to ensure there are sustainable futures for all species and beings. In this keynote I will tell the story of how the OECD is leveraging change in schools. We will explore what climate change education is (and is not)... and consider how this can be successfully embedded into science education - providing examples of how science learning sequences can be developed to focus on student agency. I will also share examples of transdisciplinary approaches to CCE and some thoughts about how we can collaborate to advocate for CCE policy across Australia.

Peta J. White is an Associate Professor in Science and Environmental Education at Deakin University. She is the Co-director of the Centre for Regenerating Futures— a transdisciplinary collective attending to Anthropocene challenges and decolonising practices while also building researcher capacity. Peta's research leadership has three narratives: science and biology education; sustainability, environmental, and climate change education; and collaborative/activist embodied methodologies.



Tom Linnell

## **From Challenge to Change: Cultivating Hope and Resilience Through Sustainability Education**

In an era marked by ecological uncertainty and global sustainability challenges, education stands as a powerful catalyst for transformation. This keynote reflects on the current landscape of environmental issues and the pivotal role educators play in shaping resilient, hopeful futures. By empowering teachers, we ignite the capacity of young people to envision and enact change—today and tomorrow. Through stories of impact and strategies for embedding sustainability meaningfully in learning, this session invites participants to reframe complexity as opportunity, and to recognise the profound influence of one individual (you) in building a more just, regenerative world.

Tom Linnell is a sustainability educator, researcher, and advocate, currently Regional Coordinator of Education Futures at UniSA. Formerly Sustainability Coordinator at a leading regional college, he led nationally and internationally recognised initiatives involving student ran solar installation, zero waste projects and pathways to sustainability careers. Recognised nationally with multiple fellowships and awards, Tom's research explores transformative sustainability education across school and teacher training contexts, driving curriculum and leadership innovation for global citizenship.



**WHEN THE RIVER RUNS DRY: A PLACE-BASED LEARNING EXPEDITION ON DROUGHT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

with Erin Bishop & Kyal Roberts (Riverdale Primary School)

In this session, Year 3/4 teachers Erin Bishop and Kyal Roberts share a powerful learning expedition grounded in local context and environmental stewardship. Through the guiding question "When the river runs dry, who says goodbye?", students became scientists, advocates and storytellers as they investigated the impact of drought on their local river system and explored how it affects people, plants, and animals.

**CONNECTING CURRICULUM, CULTURE, AND COUNTRY: A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS**

with Jason McKenzie (Christies Beach High School)

As the Coordinator of English and Humanities at Christies Beach High School, Jason has spent seven years teaching middle and senior school students, with a strong focus on sustainability education through Humanities subjects. The session will explore strategies for driving sustainability education within schools, emphasising collaboration, and curriculum integration.

**KUMANGKA PURTAMANTHI (WE STOKE THE FIRE TOGETHER)**

with Sue Caldicott & Emma Bruce (Stirling Kindy)

Sue is passionate about keeping children curious about their world and developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Emma is passionate about active learning and igniting a love of lifelong learning in children. In this session Emma and Sue share how, they connect sustainability to Cultural learning at Stirling District Kindergarten.

**WALKING TOGETHER WITH KAURNA: PLACE, CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY**

Liesl Von Der Borch (Walking Together with Kaurna)

8 years ago, Liesl began developing place-based learning experiences that connected students with First Nations people and the environment. An educator at Ngutu College; Liesl will be talking about bringing place-based Cultural and ecological politics into student learning, and through this connecting with Kaurna Yarta, (Country) Kaurna miyurna, (people) Kaurna warra (language).

**RECONNECTING WITH NATURE IN A DIGITAL AGE:  
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION FOR FUTURE INNOVATORS**

with Colleen O'Rourke (Hills Christian Community College)



Colleen O'Rourke is the Leader of Digital Innovation at The Hills Christian Community School. She is HALT (Lead) Certified with a Master of Education in Leadership and Wellbeing and teaches Specialist Digital Technologies from Foundation to Year 10. Her workshop will unpack how students can begin to appreciate nature as the original intelligence, highlighting how major tech companies mimic natural systems to optimise their designs, and explores why we must teach young learners to do the same as they develop digital solutions for a more sustainable future.

**SUSTAINABILITY PATHWAYS: EMPOWERING STUDENT VOICE  
FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

with Catherine Pearce & Robyn Palmer (St Michael College)



Robyn Palmer is the Sustainability Support Officer at St Michael's College, working with students from R - 12 across both campuses. Catherine Pearce is a Geography teacher at St Michael's College, Henley Beach. In this session you will Discover how St Michael College students have taken their sustainability journey through to their secondary schooling, using what they have learnt in primary school. Catherine and Robyn will highlight the differences between their primary and secondary programs, challenges faced, as well as unanticipated positive outcomes achieved.

**BUSH PLAYGROUP: BREAKING BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR PLAY**

with Aleesha Yi (Community Hubs SA)



Aleesha Yi is the Community Hub Leader at Karrendi Primary School, with a background in early childhood education and over six years' experience in government preschool. In this session, Aleesha shares how partnering with nine other Community Hubs across SA has helped break down barriers—particularly for families from CALD and low socio-economic backgrounds—to accessing outdoor play.

**EXPLORING CLIMATE FUTURES**

with Peta White



This workshop introduces two innovative transdisciplinary projects engaging students and teachers with science-informed, arts-based futuring: Artefacts of the Future and Time to Act. Time to Act, an educator community of practice, and Artefacts of the Future, an in-school program, support primary and secondary students and teachers to engage holistically with socio-ecological challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss, learn about approaches to climate change education, and use the arts to plan for better futures and develop resilience and hopefulness.

**TALKING TRASH**

with Tom Linnel



This is an engaging and thought-provoking workshop designed for educators who want to embed circular economy principles into their schools and communities. This session will unpack the various dimensions of a circular economy in education, from reducing waste and rethinking resource use to fostering systems thinking in students. Through interactive discussions and hands-on activities, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge and tools to rethink waste, inspire change, and create a more sustainable future—one classroom at a time.

**SENSE OF WONDER: REWILDING EDUCATION WITH NATURE,  
FUN & CURIOSITY**

with Philip Green (Adelaide Botanic Gardens)



Join Philip Green Adelaide Botanic Gardens resident Wildman to discover how simple, curious-minded research can inject awe, humour, and relevance into nature education. From this hands on session you'll walk away with easy and practical strategies to inspire a deep, lasting sense of wonder in students—whether you're teaching in our beautiful botanic gardens, schoolyards, or beyond.

**CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION: BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL AWE  
AND AWARENESS THROUGH THE ARTS**

with Camille Jenkinson (Felixstow Primary School)



In this session Camille Jenkinson will share her experiences of weaving visual art and sustainability based Inquiry at Felixstow Primary School. She will then guide you through a creative experience in the Botanic Gardens where you can tap into your own state of curiosity and awe.

**ADELAIDE BOTANIC HIGH TOUR**

with Lauren Scarfe (Adelaide Botanic High)

Lauren Scarfe is a Psychology teacher at ABHS and author of the Stage 1 Psychology Workbook topic Environmental Psychology among others. Join Lauren for a guided tour of the school and learn more about how environmental psychology is supported by the school design and processes.

## STALL HOLDERS

During meal breaks at the forum feel free to peruse the stall holder tables. Green Adelaide have invited a select handful of amazing service providers that support learning sites in the sustainability space. Take up the opportunity to chat through challenges and opportunities with service providers that can provide you practical support.

Forum stallholders include:



Connection • Wellbeing • Belonging

**Sustainable Schools**

Green Adelaide supports more than 180 schools with professional development for educators, youth voice programs, resources and tailored plans to help you bring sustainability into your curriculum. To access free, continued support for your school, visit [greenadelaide.sa.gov.au/sustainable-schools](https://greenadelaide.sa.gov.au/sustainable-schools)

