



WAVES OF WISDOM EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH

CONFERENCE

Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus

30th April – 1st May 2026

CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The wisdom of the early childhood profession is often misinterpreted and misunderstood. As we ride the swell of policy debate and expansion, how can we keep from being dumped in these tidal patterns that work to marginalise and undermine the ways early childhood education is articulated and practised? Our conference employs the concept of wisdom to honour the knowledge within childhoods and the early childhood profession, that is wise, unique and tethered to care, kinships and relational ways of being and knowing.

The Waves of Wisdom Early Childhood Conference 2026 (WOW) is an opportunity to come together and (re)awaken our collective wisdom and reaffirm our sense of community, agency, creativity, and commitment to co-creating a more equitable, just, caring, and welcoming world for the next generation of children, families, and the early childhood sector.

For the WOW Conference 2026, we invite a call for abstracts for research presentations, symposium and provocations from early childhood researchers and practitioners. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, early-career researchers, and practice-led researchers are especially welcome. The conference themes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Troubling the notion of 'wisdom' in the context of early childhood
- Where have we come, where are the waves taking us?
- Innovative methods, theories and pedagogies with children, families and practitioners
- Social justice, cultural responsiveness and inclusive practice to foster children's interconnectedness to places, cultures and identities.
- Empowering and connecting to the wisdoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families, past, present and future.
- Bringing in the wisdom of missing voices of more-than-human, human, majority world and marginalised communities.
- Consider wisdom as acts of ethical resistance and reconfiguration of normative

approaches to early childhood pedagogy and practice.

- Co-creating and co-constructing wisdom with children, families and communities
- Childhood wisdoms
- Co-constructing a sense of be(com)ing and wellbeing in early childhood spaces and places.
- The wisdom of infants and young children, the wisdom of families and the wisdom of early childhood professionals.

We seek to develop a conference program filled with possibilities for early childhood research and scholarship that will guide the sector toward a more just future. Papers presented at the conference will also be considered for inclusion in a special edition of the *New Zealand International Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for submissions is **5pm on March 19, 2026**. Proposals can only be submitted to the conference website. Proposals will be reviewed by our program committee. Your name may appear as presenting author on only one submission to promote broad participation in the conference.

Types of Sessions

The WOW Conference 2026 will include three types of sessions. All sessions can be designed with one or more presenters and presented **only in-person**.

1. Research Presentations (20 minutes) - aim to present current research that shares knowledge and data on the topic related to conference themes. An effective research presentation involves having a clear structure, data examples, engaging delivery, supporting visuals and addressing participants' questions. Additionally, they bridge the gap between theory and practical application, offering a comprehensive view of the research process. Researchers will be allocated 15 minutes for their presentation, followed by 5 minutes for questions and discussion.

Research presentations are ideal for:

- Opportunities to align research with practice
- Provoke new ideas, theories and worldviews
- Concise sharing of the specifics of a study, highlighting methodologies, results, and implications.

2. **Symposium Presentation (60 minutes)** - a group may propose to organise 3 papers and a chair. The symposium will have 1 hour to present their work. Each contributor will have 15 minutes to present their work. Additional 5 mins will be used for Q & A / discussion. A symposium abstract will include an overview of the symposium theme and rationale, and an abstract for each paper should be included.

All contributors should apply with a title for their Symposium. They should collaborate on their joint symposium over email (e.g. to agree with their symposium title, the titles of the contributing papers, who will chair, the order of presentations, etc.).

3. **Provocation (15 minutes)** - presenting a provocation involves offering a bold, stimulating idea or question that challenges practitioners to rethink familiar practices, pedagogies, or assumptions. The provocation will invite participants to critically reflect on issues and the 15-minute session (10-minute presentation followed by a 5-minute discussion) will create space for them to question established norms, share diverse perspectives, and collaboratively explore new possibilities for practice.

Proposals must indicate the preferred presentation type, either research presentation, symposium presentation or provocation presentation. Proposals should not be longer than 300 words and need to include the following information:

- Names, affiliations, addresses, and e-mail addresses of all presenters
- Brief title, capturing the primary focus, concern, or topic of the session
- A one-line summary of the session
- 3-5 keywords
- Indication of session type (workshop, research presentation or round table discussions)
- Indication of provisions for audience participation and format (PowerPoint, maker space, discussion etc)

If you have any questions about this call for proposals or the theme of the WOW Conference, please contact: **The WOW conference organising committee** wowconference@scu.edu.au

Join us for engaging face-to-face discussions, workshops, and research with a global community of researchers and professionals at the WOW conference on **30th April – 1st May 2026, at Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus.**

We look forward to seeing you.

The WOW Conference Organising Committee

Professor Wendy Boyd

Dr Chris Speldewinde

Dr Shaila Banu

Dr Fazlin Mohd Nazir