

The Big Ideas Day – Presenter Bio

Sunday 16 August 2026

Location: Adelaide Botanic High School

Join Katrina Rees and Suzy Urbaniak for a highly interactive day of appreciative inquiry into geoscience education.

Presenter Bio – Katrina Rees

Katrina Rees is a Principal Structural Geologist based in Perth, Western Australia, with extensive experience across the mining and resources sector. She has led structural geology and resource characterisation initiatives across multiple operations, focusing on improving geological confidence, operational efficiency, and decision quality.

Katrina also brings a unique perspective through her background in education, having taught geoscience and contributed to the delivery of hands-on learning programs. This experience underpins her strong passion for bridging the gap between education and industry, and ensuring geoscience is taught in a way that is practical, engaging, and aligned to real-world application.

She has played a key role in capability development within BHP, including leading the design and implementation of skills frameworks to support workforce development. Katrina is also actively involved in mentoring graduates and interns, and contributes to broader education initiatives such as CoRE Learning Foundation programs, school outreach, and industry engagement activities.

Through her work, Katrina is committed to strengthening the future geoscience workforce by connecting education, capability development, and industry needs.

Presenter Bio – Suzy Urbaniak OAM

Suzy Urbaniak OAM is an award-winning geoscience educator and industry advocate who has dedicated her career to transforming how young people engage with science, technology, and the resources sector. Beginning her career as a geologist in the mining industry, she later transitioned into education, bringing real-world experience into the classroom to make science more engaging, relevant, and career-connected.

Suzy is the CoRE Lead and co-founder of the CoRE Learning Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation focused on delivering hands-on, industry-connected STEM education. Through the CoRE (Centre of Resources Excellence) Learning Model, she has pioneered a highly practical, inquiry-based approach that connects students with real-world challenges, career pathways, and industry insights.

Her work has had significant impact across schools and communities, strengthening the pipeline of future geoscientists, engineers, and STEM professionals. Suzy's contributions have been widely recognised, including the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching and the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her services to science education.

A passionate advocate for collaboration between education and industry, Suzy continues to champion innovative, experiential learning approaches that inspire curiosity, build capability, and prepare young people for future workforce opportunities.