



National Apprenticeship
Employment Network

**NAEN
2026**



Skills in the Heart

Ayers Rock Resort, Yulara, NT
27-29 May 2026

2026 National Conference

Pocket Program



WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2026

11.45am-
2.30pm

NAEN MEMBERS' LUNCHEON (tickets required)

MC: Tom Emeleus, Chair, National Apprentice Employment Network

KEYNOTE: Group training and apprenticeship outcomes: Trends, insights and what's changed, Dr Melissa Banelis, Chief Product and Data Officer, National Centre for Vocational Education Research

KEYNOTE: Commonwealth apprenticeship programs, Sharon Huender, Assistant Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

KEYNOTE: Leading reform: Scaling apprenticeship innovation in South Australia, Commissioner Cameron Baker, Chair, South Australian Skills Commission

STATE OF THE STATES:

Jason Sultana, AEN NSW and ACT, **Craig Westwood**, AEN QLD and NT,
Matt Lowe, AEN SA, **Stuart Diepeveen**, on behalf of AEN WA,
Gary Workman, AEN VIC

KEYNOTE: Super update, Jaclyn Livingstone, Partnership Manager, AustralianSuper

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE: Dianne Dayhew, CEO, National Apprentice Employment Network

Arnguli Grill & Restaurant,
Desert Gardens Hotel



Brought to you by our
Partner, Apprentice
Employment Network
NSW & ACT

2.45-4.00pm

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ROUNDTABLE (by invitation):

Trevor Gauld, Deputy Commissioner, Jobs and Skills Australia

Tjala Boardroom,
Sails in the Desert

6.00-8.00pm

WELCOME RECEPTION

Hon Jo Hersey MLA, NT Minister for Education and Training

Q&A session with National Indigenous Training Academy graduates and students

Poolside,
Sails in the Desert

Brought to you by our Partner, Apprentice Employment Network QLD & NT



THURSDAY 28 MAY 2026

8.00-8.30am	Arrival tea and coffee	Pre-Function Area, Uluru Meeting Place
8.30-9.45am	OPENING PLENARY CULTURAL WELCOME CONFERENCE WELCOME: <i>Dianne Dayhew, CEO, National Apprentice Employment Network</i> FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADDRESS: <i>Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training</i> STATE OF THE NATION: <i>Deborah Kelly, Senior Investment Director, AustralianSuper</i>	Tjungu Ballroom, Uluru Meeting Place MC: Craig Randazzo
9.45-10.15am	Morning tea and exhibition	Wanari Room, Uluru Meeting Place
10.15-11.45am	PLENARY 2 KEYNOTE: <i>An apprentice's search for meaning, Evie Rushforth, 2025 Australian Apprentice of the Year</i> JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA ADDRESS: <i>Trevor Gauld, Deputy Commissioner, Jobs and Skills Australia</i> KEYNOTE: <i>Work has changed – but so have they, Alison Pennington, Chief Economist, The McKell Institute</i>	Tjungu Ballroom, Uluru Meeting Place MC: Craig Randazzo
11.45am-12.45pm	Lunch and exhibition <i>Including book signing with Alison Pennington</i>	Wanari Room, Uluru Meeting Place

Program is correct as of 14 May 2026, and subject to change.

12.45-1.45pm

PLENARY 3

PANEL: What's going on with apprenticeships

Facilitator: *Claire Field, Managing Director, Claire Field & Associates*

Panellists: *Aaron Hines, Executive Director, Products & Projects, Service and Creative Skills Australia*

Emma King OAM, CEO, HumanAbility

Adrian Lea, Executive Director, Training and Workforce Innovation, AUSMASA

Anthea Middleton, CEO, Powering Skills Organisation

Dugald Murray, CEO, Skills Insight

Sharon Robertson, CEO, Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance

Brett Schimming, CEO, BuildSkills Australia

Tjungu Ballroom,
Uluru Meeting Place

MC: Craig Randazzo

1.45-2.15pm

Afternoon tea and exhibition

Wanari Room,
Uluru Meeting Place

2.15-4.00pm

PLENARY 4

KEYNOTE WORKSHOP: Micro-storytelling, Jason van Genderen, Founder, 11eleven

MC REFLECTION: Craig Randazzo

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE: Dianne Dayhew, CEO, National Apprentice Employment Network

Tjungu Ballroom,
Uluru Meeting Place

MC: Craig Randazzo

CLOSE OF DAY 1

5.00pm

Meet the buses for the Sounds of Silence Dinner - Directly outside the Sails in the Desert front entrance. There will not be pick-ups from the Lost Camel or Desert Gardens Hotel.

5.30-9.30pm

SOUNDS OF SILENCE DINNER (tickets required)

Brought to you by our Partners, NECA Training and Apprenticeships and NECA Education & Careers



10.00-11.30pm

Optional: Join us for a night-cap at the Walpa Bar

Sails in the Desert

FRIDAY 29 MAY 2026

8.15-8.45am

Arrival tea and coffee and exhibition

Wanari Room,
Uluru Meeting Place

8.45-11.15am

PLENARY 5

NAEN 2027 ANNOUNCEMENT, *Dianne Dayhew*, CEO, National Apprentice
Employment Network

LIFE MEMBER PRESENTATION: *Tom Emeleus*, Chair, National Apprentice
Employment Network

KEYNOTE: Walking strong in two worlds, *Michael Liddle*, Board Member, Central
Australian Aboriginal Congress

PANEL: AI on the tools: What it means for apprenticeships

Facilitator: *John Liddicoat*, Founder, Octossure

Panellists: *Ben Bardon*, CEO, National Australian Apprenticeships Association

Saf Flatters, National Project Support Lead, Building Women's Careers, National
Apprentice Employment Network

Brett McCroary, Senior Manager Operations at the Institute of Applied Technology -
Construction, TAFE NSW

Dr Peta Skujins, Senior Manager - Planning, Future Skills Organisation

Tjungu Ballroom,
Uluru Meeting Place

MC: Craig Randazzo

PANEL: Fix the system, not the woman: Reforming workplace culture

Facilitator: *Kit McMahon, CEO, Women's Health in the South East*

Panellists: *Sammy Bowden, National Manager, Building Women's Careers, National Apprentice Employment Network*

Jonathan Cook, National Organiser, Australian Workers Union

Cayla Johnston, Electrical Apprentice, NECA Training & Apprenticeships

Kaitlyn McMahon, Electrical Apprentice, Zeal Futures

Ian Said, Manager, Industry Solutions and Partnerships, Kangan Institute

Chelsea Watt, Carpentry Apprentice, Community Solutions

11.15-11.45am

Morning tea and exhibition

Wanari Room,
Uluru Meeting Place

11.45am-
12.45pm

CLOSING PLENARY

PANEL: Understanding Culture at the Heart

Facilitator: *Anthony Lew-Fatt, Founder, Cultural Journeys*

Panellists: *Courtney Kells, Community Engagement Officer, National Apprentice Employment Network*

Gabriel Oth, National VET Reform and Redesign Lead, IAHA Group Training

Cohen Young, Yanda Services, Industrial Automation Technician

KEYNOTE: Micro-storytelling playback, Jason van Genderen, Founder, 11eleven

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE WINNER ANNOUNCED:

Dianne Dayhew, CEO, National Apprentice Employment Network

Tjungu Ballroom,
Uluru Meeting Place

MC: Craig Randazzo

12.45-1.45pm

Networking lunch and exhibition

Wanari Room,
Uluru Meeting Place

CLOSE OF NAEN 2026

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Gold Partners



Bronze Partners



Sounds of Silence Dinner Partners



Welcome Reception Partner



Members' Luncheon Partner



Coffee Cart Partner



Lanyard Partner



Conference App Partner



Member Conference Supporters



Thank you to our Exhibitors: **AustralianSuper • BUSY at Work • Empressit • MEGT • NAEN • Together We RISE • WorldSkills**



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