

Title Leading with Humanity: From Surviving to Thriving

Full abstract (300 words maximum)

In times of relentless change, inequity, and rising social demands, schools must be both anchor and catalyst, places where young people feel safe, valued, and ready to learn. Belonging, as evident in PISA data, is not peripheral care but a foundation for engagement and achievement. When connection comes before *curriculum*, *classrooms become inclusive spaces where every child can thrive*.

For leaders, this work requires more than strategy. Today's principals are called to be shield, compass, and steady centre: protecting communities, holding purpose steady, and meeting learners at their point of need. Leading with humanity means placing equity, wellbeing, and learning support at the heart of practice, ensuring they are not add-ons but integral to how schools operate.

Drawing on lived leadership experience and national advocacy, Angela Falkenberg explores how leaders can sustain themselves while building the conditions for others to flourish. Through stories, provocations, and practical strategies, from creating psychological safety, to growing strengths in staff, this session offers both hope and tools for sustainable, human-centred leadership that provides the conditions for students to learn well and be well.

Participants will reflect on how their decisions shape belonging, and how leading with humanity transforms not only what we do, but who we become in the process.

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