



THE CUTHILL FAMILY FOUNDATION

Early Years Literacy Roundtables

School of Education

UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA 



Acknowledgment of Country

Today we are meeting on lutruwita (Tasmania) Aboriginal land, sea and waterways. We acknowledge, with deep respect the traditional owners of this land, the Palawa people, which we meet today.

The Palawa people belong to the oldest continuing culture in the world. They cared and protected Country for thousands of years. They knew this land, they lived on the land and they died on these lands. I honour them.

For many years the Palawa people referred to this land as palanwina lurini kanamaluka meaning 'the town near river Tamar'.

We acknowledge that it is a privilege to stand on Country and walk in the footsteps of those before us. Along the river banks, among the gums and seas that continue to run through the veins of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

We pay respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continue to care for Country.

We recognise a history of truth which acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people resulting in the forcible removal from their lands.

Our Island is deeply unique, with spectacular landscapes with our cities and towns surrounded by bushland, wilderness, mountain ranges and beaches.

We stand for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history. And a continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights paving the way for a strong future.

Welcome to the Cuthill Family Foundation Early Years Literacy Roundtables

Literacy plays a fundamental role in life. Research confirms that the development of literacy begins in the early years of life and is an important focus for children and families – from conception and prior to transition to formal schooling – enhancing opportunities for strong beginnings and successful outcomes.

There is a current spotlight on early years literacy (and literacy more broadly) at global, national and local levels. This is evident in the State of Tasmania, with social, cultural, political and economic factors being considered in the prioritisation and development of policies for improving literacy outcomes for all children and adults residing in Tasmania. However, there is a consensus regarding the need to better understand the specific strengths and barriers among Tasmanian communities which can impact the effectiveness of diverse, place-based approaches to literacy.

In collaboration with our philanthropic partners from the Cuthill Family Foundation, the University of Tasmania's School of Education is excited to present the Cuthill Family Foundation Literacy Roundtables event to be held between August 29-30th at the University of Tasmania's Inveresk campus in Launceston, Tasmania.

This event aims to contribute to the interdisciplinary dialogue to improve literacy levels in Tasmania with a specific focus on early years literacies. It will bring together early years literacy researchers, educators, key Tasmanian stakeholders, national organisations, policymakers, allied health professionals and community-based literacy initiatives to discuss and unpack early years literacy for strong beginnings

It is anticipated that this interdisciplinary and collaborative event will offer important contributions to the early years' literacy context. This event will support educators, services, policymakers and the broader community and provide new insights into literacy learning and outcomes for young children and their families in Tasmania.

Our philanthropic partners

The Cuthill Family Foundation

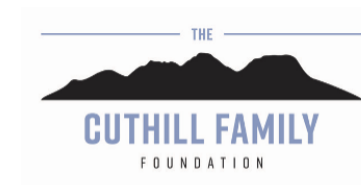
The Cuthill Family Foundation is an independent philanthropic trust established by Harvey and Suzanne Cuthill. The Board now comprises three generations of Cuthill family members. The Cuthill Family Foundation is based in Tasmania and has an ongoing commitment to engage with local projects.

Vision

- Disadvantage is no longer a barrier for those seeking a quality education.
- Tasmania becomes a global health research destination, with leading clinical services for its communities
- Australians respect and are accountable for their environmental impact and live sustainably
- The Tasmanian Arts sector thrives through the support of local projects.

Aim to support

- Merit based equity scholarships and bursaries to ensure students can access quality education
- Health research and practice in Tasmania
- Community based climate solutions and effective campaigns and;
- Sustainability in the Arts sector.



ROUNDTABLE 1

Early Years literacy for strong beginnings in Tasmania

Framing questions:

1. What does diverse early literacy development look like and what does it mean to be literate?
2. How can we strengthen and support early literacies for all children from the very beginning?
3. How do different disciplines come together to respond to complex literacy challenges in Tasmania?

Moderator: Professor Victoria Carrington



TIMETABLE – 29 AUGUST 2023

| Time | Item |
|-----------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:15am | Celebration of Country, Ms Skye Cox, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre |
| 9:15 – 9:30am | Welcome and housekeeping, Professor Victoria Carrington, Head of School of Education, University of Tasmania Greetings from, Professor Kate Darian-Smith, Executive Dean, College of Arts and Law and Education College Office (CALE), University of Tasmania |
| 9:30 – 10:45am | Part A: Tasmanian Literacies – panel presentation Professor Natalie Brown, Peter Underwood Centre; University of Tasmania Associate Professor Alison Holm and Dr Samuel Calder, School of Health Sciences, University of Tasmania Ms Courtney Dunbabin, Speech Pathologist, Literacy Advisory Panel, DECYP |
| 10:45 – 11:15am | Morning Tea |
| 11:15 – 12:30pm | Part A (continued): The Early Years Literacies Context – panel presentation Ms Jodi Upton and Jennifer Ashton, DECYP Ms Raylene Foster, Director of Connected Beginnings lutruwita (Tasmania) Associate Professor Janet Scull, Monash University |
| 12:30 – 1:00pm | Responses from the audience |
| 1:00 – 1:10pm | Concluding remarks/final thoughts for reflection |
| 1:10 – 1:15pm | Video response: Ms Leanne McLean, Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP) |
| 1:10 – 1:15pm | A Tasmanian Story Ms Suzanne Finn and Ms Jo Rann, co-creators of the 'Look Who's Talking' program, Burnie CFLC: A story about Literacy |
| 1:15 pm | End of public event |
| 1:15 – 1:45pm | Lunch |
| 1:45 – 2:15pm | Part B: Expert roundtable discussions |
| 2:15 – 3:00pm | Reporting back and looking forward |
| 3:00pm | End of Roundtable 1 |

ROUNDTABLE 2

Knowing the world through storytelling: Exploring place-based and diverse literacies for enhanced literacy outcomes in Tasmania

Framing questions:

1. What can place-based, embodied, digital, sensory and non-verbal languages contribute to children's knowledges and expression of their worlds?
2. What can we learn from listening to Country and to more-than-human literacies with children to support rich oral literacies?
3. How can these approaches strengthen and support future literacy outcomes in Tasmania?

Moderator: Professor Iris Duhn



TIMETABLE – 30 AUGUST 2023

| Time | Item |
|-----------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:15am | Celebration of Country, Ms Skye Cox, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre |
| 9:15 – 9:30am | Welcome and housekeeping, Professor Iris Duhn, Professor of Early Years Education, Early Years Living Lab, University of Tasmania |
| 9:30 – 10:30am | Part A: Exploring place-based and diverse literacies – panel presentation Dr Jane Merewether, Murdoch University: More-than-human place-based literacies Ms Lou Kirkwood, New Horizons: The Tasmanian context Ms Chloe Woolnough, Connected Beginnings: First Nations perspectives and place-based literacies |
| 10:30 – 10:45am | Responses from the audience |
| 10:45 – 11:00am | Morning Tea |
| 11:00 – 12:20pm | Part A (continued): Exploring place-based and diverse literacies – panel presentation Mr Ashley McPherson, Bruny Island District School: Digital literacies from a Reggio perspective Dr Denise Chapman, Monash University: A poetic voice for Early Years literacy Ms Annette Fuller, B4 Early Years Coalition; DECYP: Experiences of digital storytelling Associate Professor Janet Scull, Monash University: Diverse literacies in the Early Years |
| 12:20 – 12:50pm | Responses from the audience |
| 12:50 – 1:15pm | A Tasmanian Story Mr Ashley McPherson, Principal of Bruny Island District School; DECYP: A story about Sea Country and children's voices |
| 1:15pm | End of public event |
| 1:15 – 1:45pm | Lunch |
| 1:45 – 2:15pm | Part B: Expert roundtable discussions |
| 2:15 – 3:00pm | Reporting back and looking forward |
| 3:00pm | End of Roundtable 2 |

Our Interstate Experts



Associate Professor Janet Scull
School of Curriculum Teaching & Inclusive Education,
Monash University

Associate Professor Janet Scull's research focuses on the areas of language and literacy acquisition, literacy teaching and assessment and practices that support the continuity of children's literacy learning across early childhood settings and the early years of schooling. She has also contributed to the design of early literacy teaching for students from a range of diverse backgrounds.



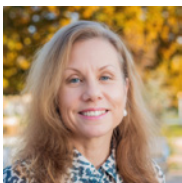
Dr Jane Merewether
Academic Chair of Bachelor of Education
(Early Childhood and Primary Teaching), Murdoch University

Dr Jane Merewether is a Senior Lecturer at Murdoch University where she teaches and researches in early childhood, cultural and Indigenous studies. Through working with children in local contexts that include materials, place, and more-than-human others, she is interested in generating liveable and ethical pedagogies for a climate-changed world.



Dr Denise Chapman
Lecturer, School of Education Culture and Society,
Monash University

Dr Denise Chapman is a counternarrative storyteller, poet, critical autoethnographer, and academic who lectures in children's literature and inclusive children's media at Monash University. Her counter-hegemonic creative work continues the traditions of her Gullah heritage, exploring themes of immigration, belonging, Afro Diasporic-motherhood, and racial literacies in communities, classrooms, and universities.



Professor Natalie Brown
Peter Underwood Centre; University of Tasmania

Professor Natalie Brown is the Senior Academic in the Division of the Vice Chancellor at the University of Tasmania. She has been an educator in schools and in higher education for over 30 years. From 2017 – 2022, Natalie joined the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment as Director. Natalie has most recently been the Co-Chair of the Premier's Literacy Advisory Panel which recently released a Community-wide framework for lifting literacy together with 23 priority recommendations.

Our Interstate Experts



Associate Professor Alison Holm
School of Health Sciences, University of Tasmania

Associate Professor Alison Holm is an associate professor of speech pathology at the University of Tasmania. She has extensive clinical, research and teaching experience working with preschool and school-aged children. Alison's research focus has been on speech, language and literacy acquisition and disorders, particularly for multilingual children.



Dr Samuel Calder
School of Health Sciences, University of Tasmania

Dr Sam Calder is a lecturer in speech pathology at UTAS. He has extensive clinical and classroom experience working alongside educators to support young children with language and literacy difficulties. His research focusses on understanding the nature of and improving outcomes for children and young people with Developmental Language Disorder.



Ms Courtney Dunbabin
Speech Pathologist, Literacy Advisory Panel, Department
for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP)

Courtney Dunbabin is a speech & language pathologist with over 14 years of experience and expertise working with children, adolescents, and adults. She has worked in inclusive education, private practice, early years, and NGO. Courtney held the Literacy Project Leader role for the Department of Education's Literacy Framework and was a member of the Premier's Literacy Advisory Panel.



Ms Jennifer Ashton
ADD, Department for Education, Children and Young People
(DECYP)

A dedicated educational leader, Jennifer Ashton is motivated to improve the literacy outcomes of all learners. She is currently leading the Lifting Literacy – Reading priority for the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP), implementing an equitable literacy provision for all DECYP learners across the years of schooling.

Our Interstate Experts



Ms Jodi Upton

Principal Education Officer – Birth to Four, Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP)

Jodi Upton supports the delivery of quality early literacy experiences for all Tasmanian children and families through Launching into Learning and Child and Family Learning Centre [CFLCs]. She is forever grateful to her mum and teachers for nurturing her love of stories and reading.



Ms Annette Fuller

B4 Early Years Coalition; Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP)

Annette Fuller is the Senior Project Officer for the B4 Early Years Coalition with the Department of Education, Children and Young People [DECYP] Tasmania, a Collative Impact initiative focusing on the Early Years of pregnancy to 4 years with a particular emphasis on the first 1000 days. She has an extensive history working in community development, early childhood education and care, service system reform; including policy and programming for the Australian Government, and over 10 years working in Central Australia with Aboriginal communities focusing on integrated early childhood services and systems for both the Territory Government and Non-Government Organisations. Annette is a passionate advocate for social justice and the need to get it right in the Early Years, so we get it right now and for life!



Mr Ashley McPherson

Principal – Bruny Island District School; Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP); Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) ALEA TAS South Committee

Ashley McPherson is a passionate educator with experience as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, Principal Education Officer (providing professional learning for teachers and school leaders), Assistant Principal and now the Principal of Bruny Island District School in Southern Tasmania. Ashley is deeply committed to improving the lives of our children and young people by focusing on positive educational outcomes for students, supporting families to develop their skills and understanding for how best to support their child; and advocating for positive educational outcomes and partnerships throughout the wider community.

Our Interstate Experts



Ms Lou Kirkwood

School Leader, New Horizons Preschool, Hobart

Lou Kirkwood has over 25 years' experience working in Early Childhood Education. She is currently the School Leader at New Horizons Preschool, Hobart. Lou is determined in her commitment to ethical and political practice. She is passionate about values education, democratic classrooms, the pedagogy of listening and collaborative work environments.



Ms Raylene Foster

Director of Connected Beginnings lutruwita (Tasmania)

Raylene Foster is a highly respected and dedicated professional with over 28 years of experience in the Tasmanian Aboriginal health and education sector, and currently holds a number of positions with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, including Director of Connected Beginnings lutruwita/Tasmania and Chief Operations Officer of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. She has a strong commitment to advocating for and improving the lives of Aboriginal community members. As a proud palawa woman from lutruwita, Tasmania, Raylene is dedicated to ensuring that health and education services are tailored to the needs of Aboriginal communities and are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.



Ms Chloe Woolnough

Connected Beginnings lutruwita (Tasmania)

Chloe Woolnough is a proud Palawa woman. She has a strong interest and commitment in empowering communities to build upon their strengths and have their voice and stories heard. Experienced in the early years sector, Chloe has provided her knowledge and experience to working with children birth to 12 years and their families. In her previous role at the Aboriginal Children Centre, she worked within the Aboriginal Community supporting children and their families to prepare and transition to school. In her current role with the Connected Beginnings Program, she enjoys supporting communities and service providers to collaborate to identify and overcome challenges.

Our Interstate Experts



Ms Suzanne Finn
Co-creator of the 'Look Who's Talking' program, Burnie
Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC), Burnie

Suzanne Finn has worked at the Burnie Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC) as a Speech and Language Pathologist since 2015. *Look Who's Talking* is based on her experiences there and the hundreds of conversations she has had with parents and carers about language development, communication and literacy.



Ms Jo Rann,
Co-creator of the 'Look Who's Talking' program,
Burnie Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC), Burnie

Jo Rann has 31 years teaching experience with a special interest in family engagement and attachment theory. Jo is passionate about working with young children and their caregivers through Launching into Learning (LiL), Play Therapy, Circle of Security Parenting and facilitating *Look Who's Talking* which she co-designed with Suzanne Finn at the Burnie Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC).



Ms Leanne McLean
Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP) and former
Co-Chair of B4 Early Years Coalition, Department for Education,
Children and Young People (DECYP)

Leanne McLean was appointed Tasmania's *Commissioner for Children and Young People* (CCYP) in 2018. As Commissioner, Leanne's work to date includes instigating the *Tasmanian Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*, establishing mechanisms for children and young people to have a say in matters that affect them, working with young Tasmanians across the state to influence the development, implementation and communication of policies which impact their lives, and empowering them to determine their future.

Our Roundtable Curators



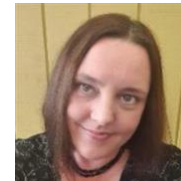
Professor Victoria Carrington
Head of School, School of Education, University of Tasmania

Victoria Carrington is Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education, University of Tasmania. She researches and writes extensively in the areas of new technologies, youth and literacies with a particular interest in the impact of new digital media on literacy practices both in and out of school. Her work has drawn attention to issues of text production, identity and literacy practices within the affordances of digital technologies and new media.



Professor Iris Duhn
Early Years Education, University of Tasmania

Iris Duhn is a Professor in the School of Education where she leads the Early Years Living Lab. She is an early childhood expert with a particular interest in climate change, sustainability and environmental education.



Dr Lauren Armstrong
Lecturer in Early Childhood Education, University of Tasmania

Dr Lauren Armstrong is a lecturer in early childhood education within the School of Education, University of Tasmania. Her research interests involve early childhood policy development, educational change and reform, teacher education and professional learning, and how these factors impact early childhood professionals in the field.



Dr Sarita Galvez Donoso
Postdoctoral Research Fellow – Early Years Education,
University of Tasmania

Dr Sarita Galvez Donoso is a Research Fellow at the Early Years Living Lab at the School of Education at the University of Tasmania. She is interested in collaborative and interdisciplinary work that brings together education, ecologies, arts, and health to attend to complex issues such as ecological precarity, biodiversity loss and climate crisis.

Acknowledgments

Our Roundtable Curators from the School of Education, University of Tasmania wish to acknowledge our philanthropic partners, the *Cuthill Family Foundation*. Their passion for literacy in Tasmania and generous support have been paramount for the development and success of this Early Years Literacy Roundtables event.

We wish to thank all our Roundtable Experts for dedicating their time to share their profound knowledge and experiences of Early Years literacies for strong beginnings. Their panel presentations, stories and contributions to our expert roundtables will foster and strengthen our collaborative community partnerships to improve literacy outcomes for all Tasmanians.

Thank you to all members of the community for participating in this event. It is wonderful to facilitate a multidisciplinary approach to Early Years literacy, and a meaningful opportunity for experts from across the national and state landscapes to come together and learn from one another. This approach can help us to strengthen our understandings of the strengths and barriers for enhancing literacy outcomes, and how we can engage in diverse, place-based literacies to best support the children, families and communities within Tasmania and more broadly.

The Roundtable Curators would also like to take this opportunity to thank the amazing teams across the University of Tasmania and the community services who made this event possible. Special thanks go to our following teams and those working behind the scenes:

Roundtable Curators

Lauren Armstrong
Iris Duhn
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