From Sandstone to Saltwater

Professional Development Day

Saturday 23 May 2026

9.30 AM – 3.15 PM

James Cook University, Townsville

Register here

QATESOL

QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Professional Development Day - 23rd May 2026

Program

8.30 – 9.30	Registration (tea, coffee, snacks)		
9.30 – 9.45	Welcome and housekeeping		
9.45 – 10.45	**1. Plenary: Denise Angelo and Cath Hudson** *Meeting the language needs of First Nations EAL/D students in the classroom: the journey and going forward*		
10.50 –11.35	**2. Aunty Joan McKay, Aunty Nat Howard & Wendy Bode** *The On Country iSee Program* Room 010	**3. Lakshmi Kala Prakash** *Using Office 365 Tools, Copilot and Reading Platforms to support ACSF Level 1 & 2 learners* CANCELLED	**4. Ronan Kelly** *Teaching EAL/D Learners with GenAI: Scaffolding and Resources* Room 105
11.40 -12:25	**5. Tammi Webber** *Our Voices Waiting to be Heard: A Pedagogy of Difference* Room 010	**6. Gae Nastasi** *Accessible Assessment for EAL/D Learner Success* Room 102	**7. Lynette Lingard** *The Power of Functional Grammar: Using noun groups to strengthen student writing* Room 105
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch (catered)		
	1:10-1:30 ***ESL Reads and TEMC presentation***		
1:30 -2:15	**8. Leonard Freeman** *Making Language Visible – Teaching English explicitly through authentic literature* Room 010	**9. Jodie Collins** *Invisible language – Explicit teaching strategies for Indigenous EAL/D learners* Room 102	**10. Cath Hudson & Denise Angelo** *A practical guide to the Bandscales family of EAL/D assessment tools in Queensland* Room 105
2:20 – 3.05	**11. Anne Keary & Janet Scull with Hailey Wetzel, Talitha Friday and Priscilla Geia** *Supporting First Nations children's cultural knowledge and language learning*		
3.05– 3:15	Summary & Closing		

Presenter Information

1. Meeting the language needs of First Nations EAL/D students in the classroom: the journey and going forwards

Denise Angelo & Catherine Hudson, Australian National University

Contemporary services for First Nations EAL/D learners and their teachers have been shaped by long term language policy silos, separating Indigenous from non-Indigenous, born-in-Australia from newly arrived, traditional languages from contact languages and so forth. On the basis of this background information, we outline a suite of practical EAL/D approaches that address the mainstream curriculum contexts and First Nations language ecologies of today. We present the "how tos" for language awareness, identifying EAL/D learners, L2 language assessment and analysing and teaching the language load of curriculum.

Denise Angelo *is a researcher based at the Australian National University, respecting and responding to the diversity of contemporary Indigenous language landscapes. She works with First Nations communities, educators and students on teaching and learning traditional languages, recognising creole languages and approaches to identifying and teaching Indigenous EAL/D learners.*

Catherine Hudson *is an Honorary Lecturer at the Australian National University and an EAL/D specialist. She has been a co-writer of and/or consultant on several EAL/D proficiency scales, with a particular focus on the "Bandscales family" of assessment tools in Queensland. Her current research focusses on policy and assessment related to young Indigenous EAL/D students in schools.*

2. The On Country Indigenous iSee Program

Aunty Joan McKay, Regional Community Education Counsellor, Aunty Nat Howard, Community Education Counsellor, Thuringowa State High School and Wendy Bode, Queensland Virtual Academy

This presentation describes how young learners and their educators learn about the significance and relevance of understanding Indigenous cultural perspectives. This is achieved by enhancing their awareness of how saltwater Indigenous peoples have respected the land, sea, and the wealth of resources provided by country to sustain their communities for over 65,000 years, as well as how traditions have been passed through to the next generations.

This education initiative has a focus on fostering an understanding of how Indigenous peoples have survived and utilised the resources provided by plants, land and marine animals for sustenance and how they demonstrated innovation in science by developing methods to trap animals and regenerate plants, drawing upon their knowledge of a seasonal calendar.

Aunty Nat Howard *is a traditional owner of the Larrakia people and also belongs to the Mwaung group from Arnhem Land. The Larrakia are the traditional custodians of the land known as Garramilla, or Darwin. For the past 20 years, she has served as a Community Education Counsellor. Her responsibilities include providing support to all Indigenous students during their educational journey and enhancing the cultural competence of teaching staff by effectively integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. She holds a Bachelor of Psychological Science and a postgraduate certificate in Positive Psychology and previously worked in the field of Electrical Engineering (telecommunications) with Telecom/Telstra.*

Wendy Bode *is a Deputy Principal at the Queensland Virtual Academy (QVA) where she leads innovative approaches to virtual learning. Previously, Wendy served as Deputy Principal of the Queensland Virtual STEM Academy and played a key role in creating and establishing the QVA. Her passion for empowering schools and enabling students to access high-quality curriculum opportunities, regardless of their physical location, has been the driving force behind her work in creating and supporting virtual learning partnerships between schools and the QVA.*

3. Using Office 365 Tools, Copilot, & a Reading Platform to support ACSF Level 1 & 2 Learners

Dr. Lakshmi Kala Prakash, AMEP TAFE Queensland, Townsville

This hands-on workshop demonstrates how digital tools can meaningfully support ACSF Level 1–2 learners. Participants will explore ways to integrate articles from a reading platform with audio to build confidence and comprehension, followed by designing open-ended tasks that promote critical thinking rather than simple recall. The session models how to use Word and OneNote Class Notebook for collaborative learning and showcases practical, low-barrier strategies for using Copilot as a language and writing support tool for beginner EAL adults. Teachers will also experience simple routines for oral presentations paired with supportive peer feedback, as well as approaches for guiding student reflection in OneNote. By the end, participants will leave with ready-to-use activities and a clear sequence they can apply immediately in their classrooms.

Dr Lakshmi Kala Prakash *is an experienced EAP and EAL educator with extensive background teaching International and Torres Strait Islander students in the Academic Pathways Program at James Cook University College. She currently works as an adult migrant educator and assessor at TAFE Queensland.*

She has had more than 20 years of teaching learners from Thailand, Myanmar and Iran has built a strong foundation in culturally responsive and inclusive practice. As a migrant to Australia and a recent Australian Citizen, the presenter brings lived experience of the challenges faced by migrants, refugees and international students.

A scholarly journey across North America, India, Thailand and Australia has shaped a values driven approach to education and a commitment to supporting EAL and EAP learners through practical, learner centred methods.

4. Teaching EAL/D learners with GenAI: scaffolding and resources

Dr Ronan Kelly, Lecturer and TESOL Study Area Coordinator at Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

How can generative AI support teaching for EAL/D learners? This professional learning session offers practical strategies for teachers looking to integrate generative AI into their EAL/D teaching practices.

Participants will develop their capacity to use GenAI to: (1) Create texts for various genres and purposes and (2) Scaffold and differentiate texts for EAL/D learners. It focuses on how teachers can use GenAI in their context by providing specific examples, demonstrations and take away resources.

Dr Ronan Kelly *has worked as a teacher, program coordinator and teacher educator across Australia, Northern Ireland, Hungary, South Korea and Vietnam. His research publications focus on digital technologies and assessment practices in multilingual education contexts. He currently teaches units on Technology and Second Language Curriculum Design for Master of Education students and on Teaching EAL/D learners for Bachelor of Education students.*

5. Our Voices, Waiting to be Heard - A Pedagogy of Difference

Tammi Webber, First Nations System Adviser, Townsville Catholic Education

Our Voices, Waiting to be Heard: A Pedagogy of Difference invites educators to explore practical, culturally responsive strategies that strengthen engagement and belonging for linguistically diverse First Nations learners. Grounded in a decade of community-led research developed in partnership with James Cook University and Townsville Catholic Education schools, this session centres on relationship, identity, and voice as foundations for learning. This workshop shares classroom-ready practices for Secondary and Primary contexts. Participants will engage with strengths-based approaches, language-rich pedagogies, and reflective tools that honour culture, place, and multilingual identities - supporting teachers to respond effectively to the diverse realities of Queensland classrooms.

Tammi is a proud Kokoberra woman from Kalkadoon Country in Mount Isa. She has spent over 25 years working in education, both in Australia and internationally. As the First Nations Education Systems Adviser with Townsville Catholic Education, Tammi partners with schools and communities to drive change, lead research, and build leadership capacity. She is the creator of the Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme, and lead researcher and presenter of Pedagogy of Difference, who also coordinates Stronger Smarter leadership within TCE. Tammi serves on national Australian advisory groups for AERO, AITSL, and NCEC, and is a passionate advocate for First Nations students and communities, and a dynamic innovator of culturally responsive programs and initiatives.

6. Accessible Assessment for EAL/D Learner Success

Gae Nastasi, Metropolitan South Regional EAL/D Coordinator, Department of Education, Queensland

This workshop explores key principles of accessible assessment informed by current research. Participants will examine how thoughtful assessment design can reduce linguistic and cultural barriers while maintaining academic rigour. This will help teachers to design and adapt assessment tasks to better support EAL/D learners.

Gae Nastasi *has been an EAL/D teacher since 1982, with extensive experience in teaching all levels of secondary EAL/D students. She has also taught English overseas in both high schools and language colleges. Gae is interested in curriculum and pedagogy, with a particular focus on the Senior years of schooling for EAL/D students. She wrote the EAL Senior syllabus in 2016. Gae is also currently QATESOL President.*

7. The power of functional grammar: using noun groups to strengthen student writing

Lynette Lingard, Consultant

This session will explore the supportive nature of a functional grammar approach in the classroom. This scaffolding approach helps students to understand the language choices available to them, improving their ability to communicate effectively in both spoken and written modes. The session will begin by considering a functional approach to the narrative and use that as a stepping stone to one of our most valuable tools, the noun group. I'll share classroom examples and activities that will support teachers to make the most of this extraordinary language tool by considering the ways we can use noun groups to teach other aspects of language

Lynette Lingard *began working as an EAL specialist with Education Queensland in 1998, working at a regional level across the primary and secondary sectors, before moving into the role of Principal Advisor EAL with Education Qld in 2020. Throughout her career, her role has been based around building teacher capability in the areas of supportive pedagogies for EAL learners, Systemic Functional Linguistics and whole school literacy. Over the years, Lynette has presented at numerous conferences on topics covering both literacy and EAL support.*

Her ongoing focus on Professional Learning for teachers has led to her work as a consultant and Tutor Trainer across Australia and internationally with Lexis Education from 2017 to the present. Lynette also works as an independent EAL and Literacy consultant working with numerous individual schools, the Wollongong Diocese, Brisbane Catholic Education, Independent Schools Queensland and the Victorian Department of Education.

8. Making Language Visible - Teaching English explicitly through authentic literature

Leonard Freeman, James Cook University

How can we make the language of the curriculum visible and accessible for students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D)? This workshop explores how carefully selected mentor texts can be used to explicitly teach and scaffold English language and literacy development within meaningful classroom contexts.

Drawing on the Northern Territory's adaptation of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, the session will demonstrate how teachers can move from modelling and deconstructing a text, through guided and shared practice, to supported independent application (Freeman, 2017). The workshop also draws on the "conversations about texts" approach, highlighting the role of purposeful classroom talk and joint construction in supporting students to move from spoken to more written-like language (Rushton & Rossbridge, 2015).

Participants will explore the advantages of teaching language in context through authentic literature, including how rich texts provide opportunities to explicitly teach vocabulary, grammar and text structures in meaningful ways. Practical guidance will be provided on selecting appropriate texts and conducting a simple language analysis to identify key language features for explicit instruction.

Teachers will engage in hands-on activities using a range of children's literature to identify and discuss the grammatical and language features that can be modelled and taught. The session will provide practical strategies that teachers can immediately apply in their classrooms to support multilingual learners.

Leonard Freeman *is a Senior Lecturer and former classroom teacher, teacher-linguist, and school leader with extensive experience in very remote Northern Territory schools. He has worked closely with students who speak Indigenous languages as their first language and learn English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), supporting their development of English language, literacy, and access to the curriculum.*

Leonard's teaching and research focus on making the language and literacy demands of classroom learning visible, with a particular interest in how multilingual learners engage with curriculum content and demonstrate their learning through assessment tasks. His work draws on both classroom practice and research to support teachers in using explicit, evidence-informed approaches to English language and literacy development.

9. Invisible language - Explicit teaching strategies for Indigenous EAL/D learners

Jodie Collins, Townsville Community Learning Centre

Many Indigenous learners in Australian secondary classrooms are learning Standard Australian English (SAE) as an additional dialect or language. As a result, literacy challenges often reflect differences in language exposure rather than deficits in ability. However, the linguistic demands of secondary subject texts are rarely made explicit, limiting students' access to curriculum content. This session explores the concept of the "invisible language" of schooling and its impact on Indigenous EAL/D learners. Drawing on the "nine areas of difficulty" identified by Rosalind Berry and Joyce Hudson in Making the Jump, the presentation highlights selected areas that significantly affect comprehension in secondary contexts and demonstrates how to address them through explicit teaching. Designed for secondary and vocational teachers, this session provides practical strategies to make the language of learning explicit, visible, and teachable.

Jodie Collins *is the Head of Department Curriculum for Townsville Community Learning Centre, with extensive experience in vocational education, remote schooling, and inclusive curriculum design. She has led the development of culturally responsive literacy programs for Indigenous learners, particularly in EAL/D contexts across regional and remote communities. Jodie is currently completing a Master of Education and a Master of Data Science, with a research focus on improving literacy outcomes for Indigenous students through evidence-based pedagogy and data-informed practice. Her work centres on making the language demands of schooling explicit and accessible, with a strong emphasis on practical strategies teachers can implement in diverse secondary classrooms.*

10. A practical guide to the Bandscales family of EAL/D assessment tools in Queensland

Catherine Hudson & Denise Angelo, Australian National University

The Bandscales family of EAL/D assessment tools have had far reaching influence in Queensland school education contexts, across Government, Independent and Catholic schooling sectors. We draw out the significant features of the Bandscales family, starting with the "grandmother" tool, the NLLIA Bandscales, and the aims of subsequent "daughter/granddaughter" developments in Queensland: the Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners, the NLLIA ESL Bandscales version 2 and the Bandscales State Schools (Qld). This talk provides annotated samples of school student work, showing how teachers apply these tools in real classroom contexts.

Catherine Hudson *is an Honorary Lecturer at the Australian National University and an EAL/D specialist. She has been a co-writer of and/or consultant on several EAL/D proficiency scales, with a particular focus on the "Bandscales family" of assessment tools in Queensland. Her current research focusses on policy and assessment related to young Indigenous EAL/D students in schools.*

***Denise Angelo** is a researcher based at the Australian National University, respecting and responding to the diversity of contemporary Indigenous language landscapes. She works with First Nations communities, educators and students on teaching and learning traditional languages, recognising creole languages and approaches to identifying and teaching Indigenous EAL/D learners.*

11. Supporting First Nations children's cultural knowledge and language learning

Anne Keary, Janet Scull, Hailey Wetzel, Priscilla Geia and Talitha Friday, Monash University

This session brings together early childhood educators and researchers who participated in a collaborative action research project on Palm Island, off the northeast coast of Australia. In conversation, educators will share how the project supported young First Nations children's cultural knowledge and language learning. Central to the study was the intersection of place, cultural, language, and educator expertise, and the ways these elements can foster playful, relational, and culturally grounded pedagogies. The project builds on the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded Northern Oral Language and Writing through Play (NOW Play) research, which seeks to enrich pedagogical practice in early childhood education, Indigenous education, and language and literacy teaching. On Palm Island, the NOW Play approach was adapted through to ensure local cultural priorities, languages, and knowledges were foregrounded to examine how children's learning can be supported through "on country" experiences.

During the session we will share a short film that profiles the learning experiences that were co-designed with early childhood educators, who had multiple fluid roles as educators, community and family members. The children's everyday lives, relationships, and connections to place were activities captured on. Participants will be invited to review and reflect on the activities and their relevance for their own practice.

***Anne Keary** is an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Education, Monash University. Her research, teaching and engagement work enhances the provision of socially-just education in diverse cultural and linguistic educational settings.*

*J**anet Scull** is an Associate Professor at Monash University whose research explores language acquisition and literacy development in the early years. Her work focuses on designing effective teaching practices that enhance learning outcomes for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.*

***Hailey Wetzel** is the Manager of the Palm Island Community Company Child and Family Centre. She has extensive experience in Early Childhood Education, with a strong focus on supporting children and families across developmental domains, inclusion support, early interventions, play-based learning, and Bush Kindy programs.*

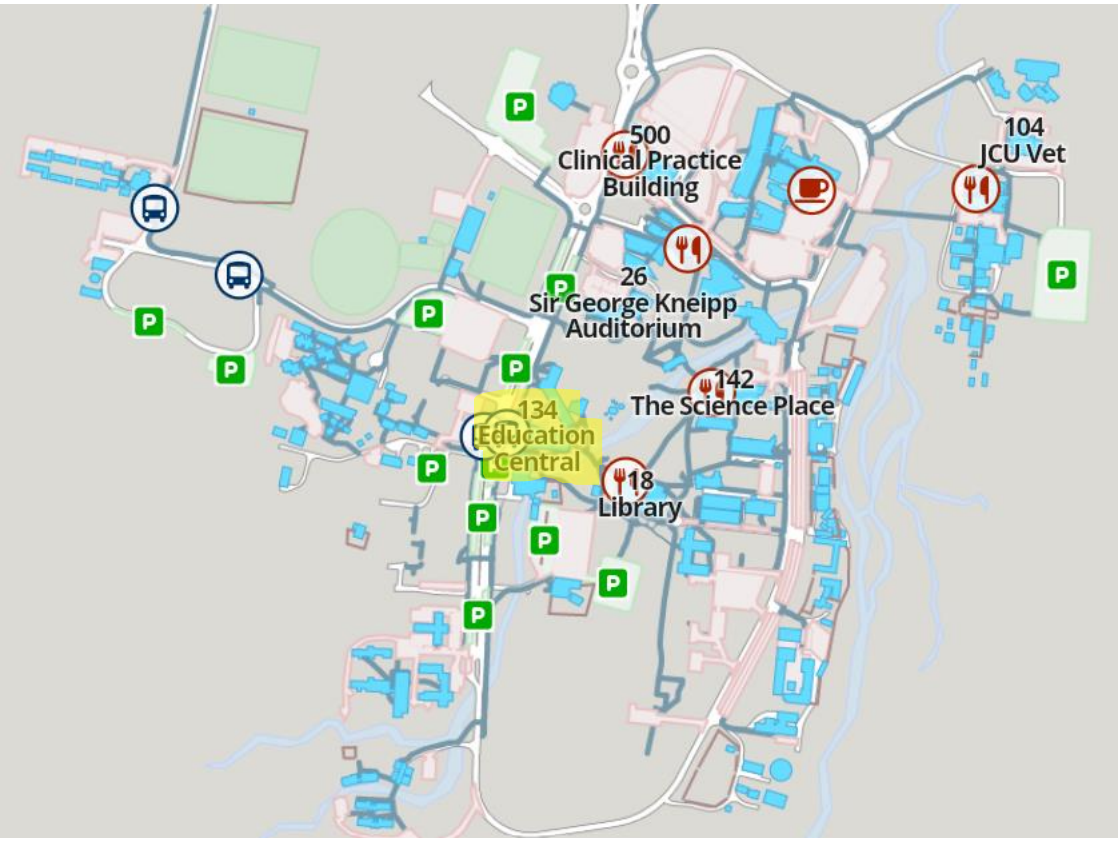
***Talitha Friday** is a Lead Educator at the Palm Island Community Company Child and Family Centre. Talitha additionally is a cultural officer at a youth program. She has extensive experience with trauma-informed practices, working with at-risk and vulnerable children and families, including children living in out-of-home, kinship and residential care placements.*

***Priscilla Geia** is an Educator at the Palm Island Community Company Child and Family Centre. She has comprehensive experience supporting children and families through inclusive and culturally strong practices. Priscilla brings valuable expertise with attachments, art and craft experiences, alongside on-Country learning approaches to strengthen cultural identity, engagement, and community connection for children and families.*

Information about getting there

Location of QATESOL PD Day

The PD will be held at Building 134, James Cook University, University Drive Townsville. A link to the university campus map app is here.



Getting to Townsville by plane

Qantas, Virgin and Jetstar fly to Townsville. It is possible to visit the conference for one day only, flying into Townsville with Jetstar and leaving via Jetstar or Qantas that day to and from Brisbane. Same day flights are also available from Cairns. Flying from other locations will require an overnight stay.

Getting from the airport to James Cook University

The airport is located approximately 20 minutes from the university. It is recommended that you take a taxi or uber there, as public transport options are limited.

Accommodation

There is a variety of accommodation types throughout Townsville, but mainly in the CBD or The Strand. The Strand area is close to the beach and has many options for dining. All hotels, except Cedar Lodge Motel, will require a taxi or uber ride to the university.