

24th February 2017

## 2017 ACEL Wellbeing Conference

The 2017 Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) Wellbeing Conference was held in Darwin on the 22nd of February. 300 educational leaders from all states and territories and from as far afield as New Zealand, came together to explore the importance of Wellbeing on staff and students.

The theme of this conference was Unleashing the Power of Confidence - Strengths Based Perspectives and Wellbeing. Delegates engaged with this theme through international keynotes and presenters, who shared innovations, research and data to apply in schools. Dr Robert Biswas Diener identified key ways to identify and use strengths to develop students and schools, stating “bad stuff is going to happen to you, but your strengths give you resources to cope”. He also identified how important it is to value the individuality of each of our strengths. Professor Lea Waters shared extensive tools and research in wellbeing and how to apply it in schools. She stated, “I have a sense of hope when looking at research in school and student wellbeing”. Ex-AFL footballer Wayne Schwass shared his powerful, personal story on how he lives with mental illness and how educators can learn from his experiences to take care of their own wellbeing. He declared, “looking after your own health and wellbeing is paramount”.

The Hon Eva Lawler MLA opened the conference. She articulated the importance of wellbeing on successful schools and students, and that the ‘schools must focus on social and emotional learning and development’. Vicki Bayliss, CE of the Department of Education Northern Territory, closed the conference, articulating her desire to see wellbeing as a focus - “Students growing academically is not enough if they don’t grow as people”, she said. Charlie King hosted the event and provided personal insights to his own resilience and wellbeing.

Aasha Murthy, CEO of ACEL, articulated a clear and personalised narrative for the day unpacking the strong messages contained in the conference theme, stating that “educators need to provide strength based, proactive leadership in their schools to make a positive shift for both staff and students”. She reiterated ACEL’s commitment to providing educational leaders with a wide range professional learning events and resources, with an increased focus on regional and remote centres.

***The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) gives access to world- class empirical research along with the practical support to achieve excellence in leadership in the education sector.***

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