

2025 ORBIS YEAR IN REVIEW



**Government
of South Australia**
Department for Education

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kurna people whose ancestral lands we gather on at Orbis. We also pay our respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal people from other areas of South Australia that we visit.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first educators, who have taught and learnt on Country for thousands of generations and continue to.

In 2025, we were grateful to continue learning from Kurna Elder, Uncle Mickey Kumatpi O'Brien. At our recent Family Engagement Institute, he welcomed leaders and the Harvard facilitators to Country with a moving reflection of enduring Aboriginal ties to land, sea and sky.



NIINA MARNI

Welcome to the Orbis Year in Review.

2025 has in many ways been defined by connection, responsiveness and action. Through close partnerships with associations, educators, and leaders, our Orbis team has listened deeply, learned together, and refined our professional learning to better reflect your needs, contexts and aspirations. The result has been stronger engagement across our schools and preschools, including growing participation from our preschool settings.

We are proud of the breadth of opportunities available through Orbis, supporting educators and leaders to develop the skills they need to thrive. Whether it is from Restorative practices and Be well, to Spotlight sessions and targeted programs aligned to system priorities, our work is grounded in evidence and focused on meaningful strategies for improved everyday practice.

Equity and access have remained central to our approach. By expanding flexible delivery modes and strengthening our presence in regional and remote areas, we have worked to ensure that high-quality professional learning is accessible to

all. Our team has shown agility and commitment, delivering support where it matters most.

In 2025, Orbis has also provided system leadership through the development of a new Leadership Capability Framework—bringing greater clarity, coherence, and agency to leadership practice—and contributing to the ongoing development of the Professional Learning Strategy for Public Education in South Australia.

As we continue to refine and strengthen our work, our focus remains clear: supporting educators and leaders to realise the vision of the Strategy for Public Education, and to ensure every child and young person thrives.

We deeply thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Ngaityalya

Jacqui van Ruiten
Director, Workforce Capability

ABOUT ORBIS

Professional learning for educators and leaders to enable children and young people to learn and thrive.

Our learning is anchored in the local context, aligned to the South Australian Department for Education's Strategy for Public Education, and underpinned by the latest research.

We partner with world-leading organisations, universities and our department's own education experts to co-design and facilitate contextualised professional learning. We empower leaders and teachers to improve their knowledge, skills and practice so that learners thrive.

Our collaborative approach and range of partners enables us to draw on expertise both within

the department and beyond. This ensures our professional learning is innovative, relevant and reliable.

Educators attend our purpose-built centre, we travel to regional locations, and we offer increasing opportunities through livestream and online professional learning available 24/7. From pre-service teachers stepping into the classroom to experienced leaders, we provide responsive, high-quality professional learning that meets the evolving needs of educators across South Australia.

2025 SNAPSHOTS

4478

Enrolments in
facilitated programs

5446

Enrolments in
online learning
modules

Online
facilitated
programs

8

programs

20

cohorts



SITES PARTICIPATING



153
preschools



461
schools



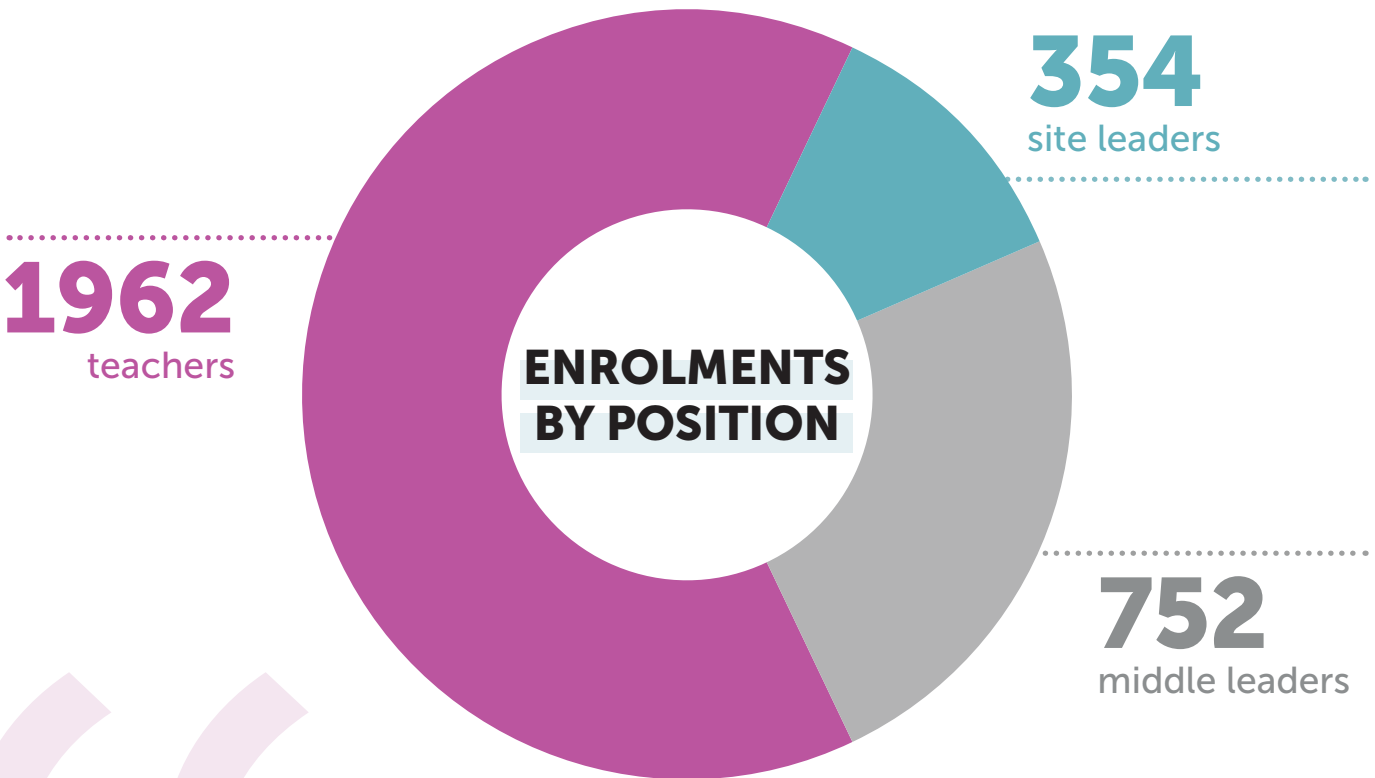
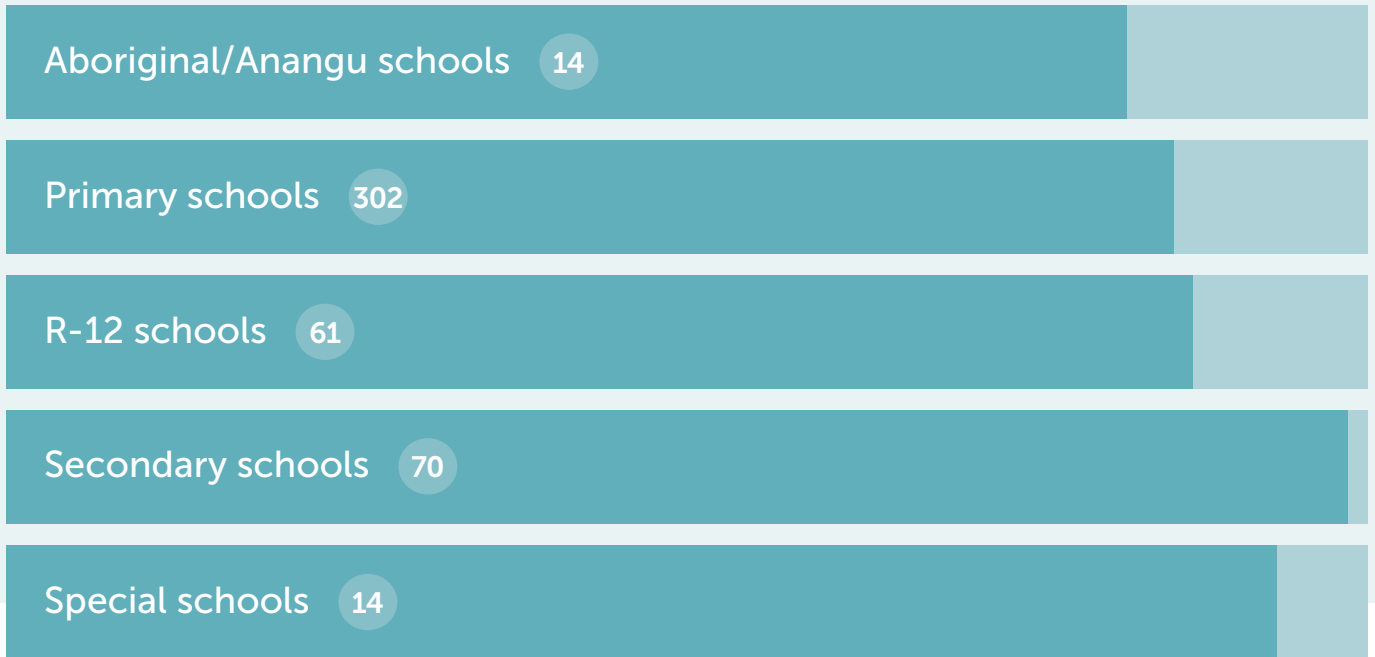
75
corporate teams

This was an important opportunity to learn how to better reach students and make change for learners – and an opportunity to inject joy back into teaching and learning – all packaged in a whirlwind of practical examples and colleague connection, which was so powerful!

– Area school leader

ENROLMENTS BY SCHOOL TYPE

In 2025 we've worked with the majority of the department's schools.



It has made me more cognisant of the importance of empowering student voice and agency, and having students become co-creators of learning.

– High school teacher

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

We are dedicated to supporting educators and leaders across regional South Australia by ensuring they have access to high-quality professional learning. In 2025, we engaged local facilitators or travelled to regional locations to provide tailored programs for teachers and leaders. Regional participants had their travel expenses funded if they attended sessions at Orbis. For those needing flexibility of access for any reason, we expanded our hybrid and online offerings to ensure every educator can engage.

970 educators and leaders from regional schools and preschools participated

235 regional schools and preschools accessed funding for travel expenses

9 regional student support services teams accessed professional learning

8 programs were offered in regional locations



Leadership Coaching



Middle Leadership



Mathematics



Safeguarding Democracy through Public Education



Mentoring ECTs



Early career teacher development – year 1 and 2



National Teacher Certification



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK – QUICK NUMBERS

I plan to share ideas presented during this program back at school

98%



In my own class I have seen growth in confidence and willingness to have a go at new problems. We are about to embark on school wide engagement for 2026 implementation!

– Primary school teacher

The program increased my capacity to support leaders and teachers in their professional development

97%

Overall, I am satisfied with this Orbis program

99%

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

73

70 or more is considered outstanding

This program has inspired our staff in the classroom. We are seeing more engagement and participation from children as they are being delivered richer tasks. We have also seen children question more because staff have changed their questioning during lessons.

– Area school leader

DELIVERING ON SYSTEM PRIORITIES

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS

We were delighted to welcome back Professor Guy Claxton, internationally acknowledged education thought leader and cognitive scientist who has inspired thousands of teachers worldwide.

Working with teachers, school and system leaders, he challenged our thinking about enabling effective learners. Guy explored evidence-informed, practical classroom approaches that build the capabilities and dispositions students need to take an active role in their learning. He described intentional teaching strategies that cultivate dispositions including curiosity and resilience, and enhance reflection and independence, strengthening learners' capacity to exercise agency. Educators and leaders walked away with a toolkit of practical strategies and clear approaches to embed their learning in everyday practice.

[Professor Claxton's Spotlight on Effective Learners](#)



>30

system leaders
attended



>200

teachers and
leaders attended



>410

accessed the
sessions via Orbis
Online Learning



We asked the educators and leaders what learning stood out for them:

“ Praiseworthy failure. Allowing mistakes to be ok and encouraged within classrooms. ”

“ What effective learners actually do and the examples of what that may look like. They are thought provoking and offer opportunities to embed the dispositions. ”

What has expanded or pushed the boundaries of your thinking, knowledge and practice?

“ I thought I already knew quite a bit about learner agency but he has definitely extended my understanding and has challenged my thinking about opportunities to embed the dispositions. ”

“ The concept of, ‘we can’t not be teaching dispositions.’ ”

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

2025 marked the launch of the AI Online learning dashboard with 21 new online learning resources.

This is to support an increase in awareness, uptake and effective use of EdChat, the Department for Education's generative AI chatbot.

We also hosted futurist and global education leader Charles Fadel for a special spotlight: Education in an AI Era. Charles challenged us to consider how AI can strengthen creativity, critical thinking and ethical reasoning within human-centred education. A thought-provoking evening!

Many attendees accessed the AI Drop-In Centre, trialled to gather insights into educator needs. To meet demand, we also livestreamed the session with on-demand access of the recording via the AI dashboard.



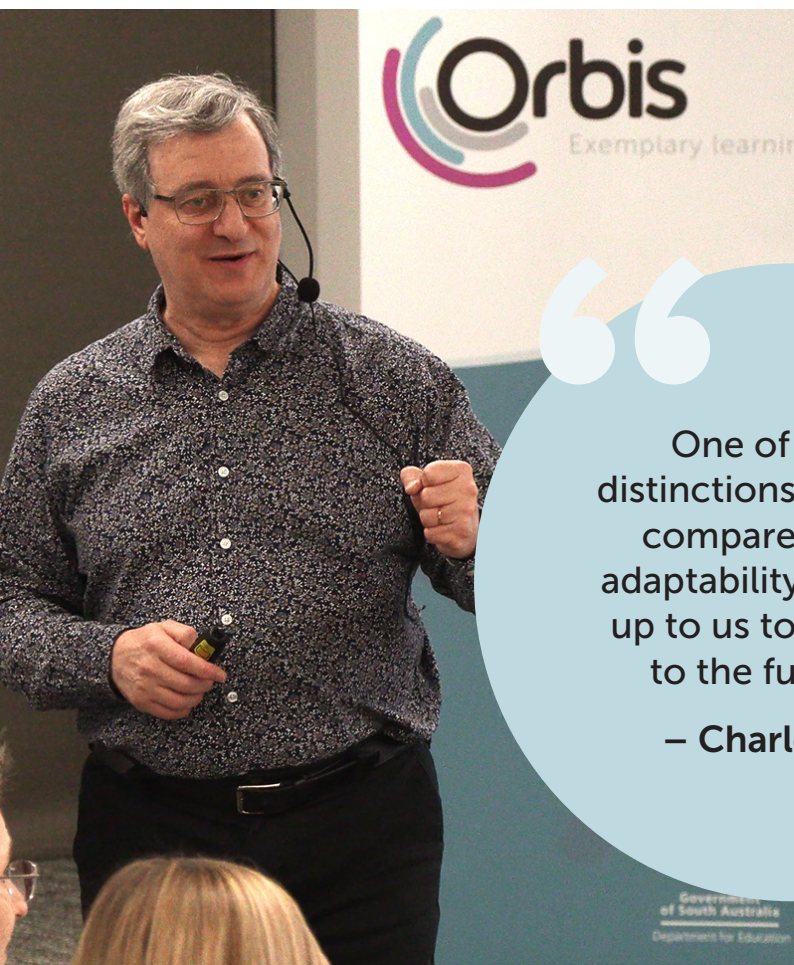
Welcome Orbi!

AI Online resources

3,320 participants

246 sites participated

[AI dashboard in plink](#)



“ One of the key distinctions of humans, compared to AI, is adaptability. And so it's up to us to leverage it to the full extent. – Charles Fadel ”

How would you teach your students to be adaptable?

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING JOURNEY

We support educators to continually grow and excel at every stage of their career, whether building expertise in the classroom or in a leadership role.

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

Year 1	Year 2	Mentors	Sites
578	442	697	401
teachers	teachers		

TEACHERS ACHIEVING CERTIFICATION



71 Highly accomplished

43 Lead teachers

COACHING

472 leaders received coaching as part of Orbis leadership programs

141 teachers received 1:1 coaching as part of the National Teacher Certification program

- 1 Supporting early career teachers
- 2 Strengthening teaching expertise
- 3 Developing middle leaders
- 4 Upskilling emerging site leaders
- 5 Equipping new site leaders
- 6 Building leadership of learning

SUPPORTING EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

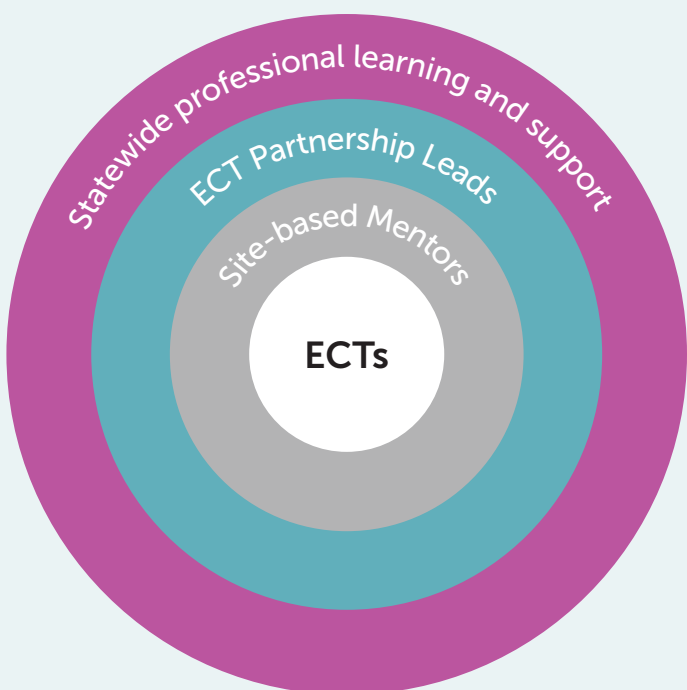
We provide the department’s early career teachers (ECTs) with multi-layered, funded support over their first 2 years. This includes face-to-face professional learning, the guidance of school and preschool based mentors, and ECT Partnership Leads. We help early career teachers to thrive!

Our ECTs benefitted from consistent, high-quality statewide development, and responsive, context-driven professional learning.

In 2025, we continued to build on their systems of support. We expanded our professional learning options for mentors. For experienced mentors, a new offering focuses on enhancing their ability to engage in more impactful professional conversations and targeted feedback— areas identified as priorities through previous participant feedback.

Since 2023, we’ve been proactive in reaching out to recent graduates even before they start teaching. Our Start Strong program has grown from strength to strength, with increasing participation each year.

Multi-layered support for ECTs



79

graduate teachers attended the **Start Strong program** to prepare for their first role.

100%

of ECTs were **assigned mentors**. We work with sites to ensure all ECTs have access to mentors in their first year.

60

ECT Partnership leads
We collaborate with partnerships to identify and develop ECT leads. We work with the leads to co-design local networking and professional learning opportunities for ECTs and mentors across each partnership.

384

mentors developed their skills in **coaching and mentoring** to support ECTs’ practice and wellbeing.

STRENGTHENING TEACHING EXPERTISE

We value the difference educators make. We champion teaching excellence through the certification of Highly accomplished and Lead teachers.

2025 marked South Australia's transition from a pilot to a fully operational, streamlined National Teacher Certification (NTC) model.

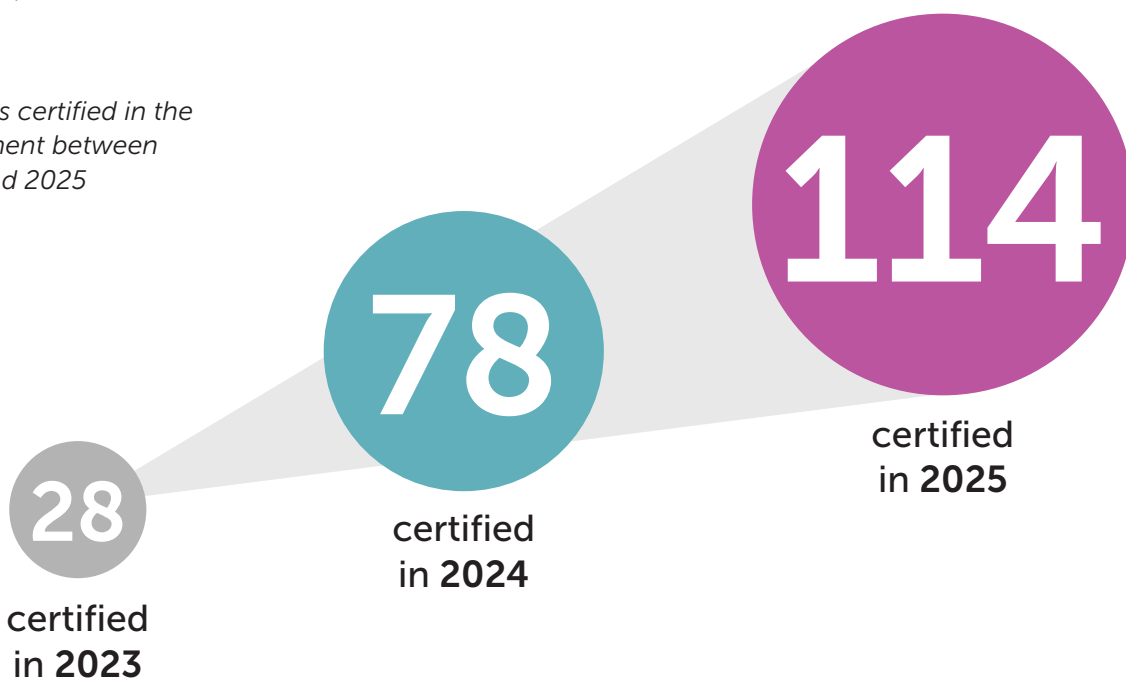
Since starting the new model in 2024, the number of teachers certified annually in the department has risen by over 300%. This is a considerable number of teachers evidencing their commitment to improving outcomes for students and working with colleagues to develop practice.

We are pleased to see the large number of regional teachers represented.

Our work continues with the South Australian Teacher Certification Committee (SATCC), the only cross-sector certifying authority in Australia.

Nationally, we contribute as SA representatives at the Certifying Authorities Network, AITSL, and through sharing SA expertise at the HALT Summit. SA is recognised as being equal with Queensland in leading all states and territories with 612 certified teachers since the program began in 2012!

... Teachers certified in the department between 2023 and 2025



... it built my capacity to reflect on my practice in a meaningful way. I found myself really digging into my pedagogies—reaffirming why I do what I do and celebrating the approaches that positively impact student learning. That reflection assured me of my intentionality and strengthened my implementation of evidence-based approaches.

– Lead teacher, primary school

BUILDING LEADERSHIP OF LEARNING

New site leaders

105

We supported all new Principals and Preschool Directors appointed in 2025. In their first year as leader, we provide targeted professional learning and one-to-one coaching from experienced site leaders or leader advisors.

We continue to refine the professional learning based on participant and system feedback. In 2025, we piloted new components on change theory, building a narrative, and preschool finance – these proved impactful and will be incorporated into future professional learning.

Leading future learning alumni

In our third year of Leading Future Learning, our alumni returned to share how they had progressed their initiatives. They shared their stories of breakthroughs, challenges and lessons that shaped their work and leadership. The day of peer learning built on the expertise and creativity in our system.

Throughout the Leading Future Learning program, thought leaders from around the world engaged with our leaders. This time, Associate Professor Ng Pak Tee livestreamed from Singapore to speak about artificial intelligence. It ignited our own discussion about how we best support educators and learners in this space.

[Short read: Ng Pak Tee's Reflections on real intelligence, paradox and purpose](#)

[Orbis' Leading Future Learning program](#)



Learn to Change the World



Harvard Leadership for school excellence

Once again, we sponsored up to 30 leaders to participate in the Leadership for School Excellence program. This is 5 days of immersive professional development held in Sydney by the Harvard Graduate School of Education faculty for leaders across Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Leaders develop a deeper understanding of leadership skills including cultivating culture and approaches for managing change, high expectations for teaching and learning, and implementing evidence-informed practice. They also learn about fostering learner achievement through stronger family engagement.

In 2025, we were invited to select 2 of our South Australian alumni to join the Harvard faculty as facilitators. Maddy Stewardson (Blackwood Kindergarten) and Adrienne Conley (Victor Harbor High School) turned from active participants to international learning facilitators.

This allowed us to build on previous co-designed follow-up sessions, with our own Harvard trained facilitators leading the learning with peer principals and preschool directors. Peers provided each other with support and challenge on how to best embed their learning into practice.

The sessions have built contextually grounded practice, strong professional connections and expertise among our principals and preschool directors.

What Maddy has to say about her experience as a Harvard facilitator, to co-designing and leading follow up sessions with Orbis:

As a facilitator at Harvard Leadership for School Excellence, I was able to draw on direct instruction from the Harvard faculty to support participants from across the Asia-Pacific region. I then furthered this work with our SA cohort, co-creating and delivering with Orbis and Harvard faculty. These opportunities pushed my understanding of educational leadership to new levels. It also supported my skills to facilitate quality adult education within the cohort, across levels of schooling, and within my partnership.

The skills and perspective I now have has directly impacted the children and families at Blackwood Kindergarten.

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

We took what our leaders told us and asked EdChat to identify the top 3 themes.



1

How has your participation in Orbis' leadership program resulted in changes to your practice?

Strategic, evidence-informed leadership and change management

Educators and leaders highlighted adopting more strategic, structured, and evidence-based approaches to leadership. They are using processes and data to monitor and inform initiatives, planning with greater clarity and purpose, and applying frameworks and tools to drive successful, sustainable change.

Enhanced confidence and reflective practice

Educators and leaders consistently reported increased confidence in their leadership abilities, willingness to take risks, and capacity to handle challenging situations (such as difficult conversations and strategic decision-making).

Collaboration and co-design

There was a significant shift towards collaborative practices, with a focus on co-design rather than traditional consultation. Leaders reported engaging teams, stakeholders, and communities more deeply, sharing ownership, and valuing diverse perspectives in initiating and refining change.

Participant responses:

'A stronger focus on collaboration and prototyping, refining and working with people. Feel much more comfortable about the messy work. I am putting less detail in the initial planning of initiatives, so it happens more quickly, but enables other staff to contribute and refine earlier.' – High school leader

'It has highlighted the importance of being clear in my vision, taking time to plan and implement processes, listening to build understanding of context and checking in along the way.'
– Primary school leader

'Adopted a more evidence-informed, future-focused approach to leadership.' – Primary school leader

2

How has your participation in Orbis' leadership program resulted in changes in your school or preschool?

Pedagogical shifts and improved learner outcomes

There has been an emphasis on changing and improving teaching and learning practices and on learner agency and real-world relevance. Some schools are also seeing positive shifts in data related to achievement, behaviour, and engagement, as well as increased clarity of purpose and vision for learning.

Strategic change implementation and professional learning

Schools reported improved structures and clearer processes for planning and implementing change initiatives. This includes greater alignment between initiatives, professional learning, and strategic plans. Respondents noted increased consistency in professional development, focus on using data and evidence for decision-making, and purposeful rollout of initiatives to staff for sustainable impact.

Cultural and collaborative shifts

Many respondents described a move towards more open conversations, higher engagement, and staff ownership of initiatives. Teams are increasingly reflecting together, being purposeful in their approaches.

Participant responses:

'We are seeing a significant pedagogical shift amongst our staff based on the change initiative.'
– High school leader

'I completed a change initiative which successfully supported staff to get to know students and how they learn. This resulted in staff having a deeper understanding of the learning needs of the students with additional needs in their care, and less of those students being sent out of the class in the learning areas that I manage.'
– High school leader

'We have seen huge shifts in Perspective, achievement, behaviour and WEC data.'
– High school leader



WHAT'S NEXT?

Building on what we have achieved so far, we are dedicated to evolving our professional learning opportunities to better support educators and leaders. Guided by your experiences and feedback, here's what's next for 2026:

- Enhance support for early career teachers in wellbeing and positive behaviour, and grow the professional learning community for mentors statewide.
- Increase professional learning opportunities for highly accomplished and lead teachers to amplify impact in preschools and schools.
- Focus on professional learning for leadership with alignment to the [Leadership Capability Framework](#), supporting growth across career stages and contexts.
- Expand targeted professional learning for emerging and new site leaders, with integrated content (including operational and financial), coaching, on-the-job experiences, and peer support.
- Create an online Leadership dashboard, making resources accessible for leaders at all stages.
- Partner with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, teachers and leaders to innovate family engagement for learner success.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to co-design resources, tools and frameworks that enable high-quality, system-wide sustainable professional learning design, implementation and evaluation.
- Explore models of partnering with Local Education Teams.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & THANKS

Thank you to the educators, site leaders, associations, colleagues from corporate divisions and international thought leaders who have partnered with us. Your expertise and collaborative spirit are integral to our collective efforts in strengthening professional learning that ultimately supports improved outcomes for learners across South Australia.

KEEP IN TOUCH

We'd love to hear from you. Reach out if you'd like more information.

We continue to release programs throughout the year.

Subscribe to our newsletter to be in the know.

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