ABSA

BOARDER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 27
2026

DELEGATE WELCOME PACK

Burn Bright
Student Leadership. Wellbeing Programs. National Camps.

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Making Boarders' Lives Better

HELLO FROM ABSA

Dear Leaders,

We are very excited to welcome you to our fourth ABSA Boarder Leadership Conference. Boarding is a very unique and special environment and will hopefully be a place where you build life-long friendships and many life skills which will hold you in good stead for the future. This conference is designed to assist you in your boarding leadership role to help create a better environment for your fellow boarders.

The conference will have a range of collaborative lecture style sessions to ensure practical leadership skills and plans can be taken away and used within the boarding setting. ABSA have engaged Burn Bright who are experts in running engaging and impactful leadership programs for high school students to jointly host this conference.

Through experiential learning and inspirational team leadership from keynote speakers and practical sessions with the engaging youthful team at Burn Bright, our aim is for you to leave confident and with the knowledge about how to lead in a boarding setting.



Richard Stokes
CEO, ABSA

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HELLO FROM BURN BRIGHT

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 ABSA Boarder Leadership Conference!

We are beyond excited that you are joining us. In partnership with the Australian Boarding Schools Association, it is my greatest pleasure to officially welcome you to the conference.

As leaders in your schools and communities at large, we trust the Boarder Leadership Conference will be an experience that will allow you to continue to grow as individuals and as leaders.

Our hope is you will feel more connected to your vision, who you are, and where you want to go in the future. Be ready to share, dream, encourage and reflect as we journey together for what will be a great day.

In this pack you will find all the information you will need to prepare for the conference. Please familiarise yourself with the program and key requirements.

On behalf of Burn Bright, thank you!



Madeline Boyd
General Manager, Burn Bright

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BURN BRIGHT 101

Burn Bright is a social enterprise, not-for-profit organisation, that was established in 2014.

At Burn Bright we encourage, challenge and develop students through tailored experiential leadership, wellbeing programs, digital programs and national camps. We are student leadership and wellbeing specialists who work with students from Year 5 to Year 12 in a collaborative, fun and inclusive team culture. This brings about positive behavioural change, a shift in mindset and personal wellbeing, allowing students to make informed choices and decisions.

We have a team based in Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Christchurch who travel to all parts of Australia & Aotearoa to work with young people and partner with schools on a daily basis.

The acquired leadership behaviours, wellbeing habits and character traits help build meaningful, healthy and positive long-lasting skills and friendships that will continue beyond the school years.

For more info, and to check out what we do, head over to our website via the button below.

If you really enjoy the day and our vibe, check out National Leadership Camp - hosted in July each year. Welcoming 120 young leaders from across Australia and New Zealand from Years 10 - 12. Maybe, see you there.

» CLICK HERE

Looking for more info on Burn Bright?

WHAT'S UP NEXT?

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THE PROGRAM

Welcome from ABSA & Burn Bright

Keynote Speaker - The Leader You Choose to Be: Leadership Starts Before Anyone Sees the Badge - Andrew Hawkins, Headmaster, The Southport School.

Burn Bright Workshop #1: Turning Leadership into Reality
What does it really mean to be a leader, and how does leadership show up in our everyday lives? In this collaborative workshop, Burn Bright will challenge students to dive deep into their understanding of leadership, and explore what is necessary to ensure our impact is effective and service-driven.

Keynote Speaker - You Set The Tone: The impact you make today becomes the legacy you leave tomorrow - Ariane Yaxley and Petey,

Burn Bright Workshop #2: Building Foundations for Legacy Leadership
Leadership foundations - we all have them, but how strong and effective are yours? In this collaborative workshop, Burn Bright will explore what makes you, you, and how to leverage these traits to shape the leader you want to be known and remembered for.

BREAK - (30 min)

Welcome Back from Burn Bright

Keynote Speaker - When Leadership Gets Real: Having the courage to lead when it would be easier to stay quiet - Josh Drahm

Burn Bright Workshop #3: Setting a Successful Vision
What is vision? How do we set ourselves a vision? How do we set ourselves a vision that is going to be successful? In this collaborative workshop Burn Bright will explore the elements of a successful vision and provide students with the tools to set a short term goal (6 months) and a long term goal (12 months).

We believe accountability is a major contributor to success; students will have the opportunity to connect and share their vision with others, to ensure a support network in achieving their goals.

Wrap up and Goodbye

End of Day



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LEADERSHIP KEYNOTES

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MR ANDREW HAWKINS

BAPPSC/BED (UQ) M.ED. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING (UQ)



Andrew Hawkins is the first Old Boy Headmaster of The Southport School (TSS) on the Gold Coast. Andrew entered TSS as a boarder from Emerald in Central Queensland giving him a unique insight into regional areas of Australia. After graduating from TSS in 1995, Andrew ventured off on a Gap Year to the UK and it was there that he fell in love with teaching whilst working as a teaching assistant in West Sussex, UK.

After returning to Australia, he studied a combined Bachelor of Applied Science (Human Movement Studies) and Education degree at The University of Queensland with the sole purpose of becoming a Physical Education and Science Teacher. After several years teaching at Corinda State High School and Indooroopilly State High School in Brisbane and a Boarding Master at Brisbane Grammar School, Andrew assumed a full-time teaching position at TSS in 2004. While at TSS, Andrew has held the various leadership roles of Head of Faculty, Dean of Students, Boarding Housemaster, and Deputy Headmaster – Head of Senior School, before being appointed as the ninth Headmaster of The Southport School in 2021.

Central to Andrew's appointment as Headmaster was his unwavering commitment to ensuring all students in his care experience a well-balanced wholistic education where they were ardently supported in their scholastic, vocational and athletic pathways. Andrew continues to embody this philosophy, investing much time and resources into the wellbeing of all students as they progress through adolescence in the modern Australian education environment.

Andrew is an assessor of highly accomplished and lead teachers for Independent Schools Queensland.

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ARIANE YAXLEY



Ariane Yaxley, an alumni of Methodist Ladies College in Perth, now resides on the Gold Coast where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Commerce at Bond University. In her role as a Fture Student Liason in the Office of Future Students, she engages with prospective students and develops skills in communication, relationship building, and stakeholder engagement. Ariane brings a global leadership perspective to her work, drawing on volunteer teaching experiences in Tanzania and Cambodia. Beyond her studies, Ariane is interested in a career in corporate finance, tax law, and wealth management, with a focus on applying both legal and commerical experitise.



PETER FLOWER

Peter Flower is currently in his third semester at Bond studying Commerce with a major in Finance. Having served in senior school leadership and having lived experienced in a boarding house, he knows that leadership isn't about big titles or speeches. It's about meaningful interaction at an individual level to set the tone through small, everyday actions. Whether on the field with his AFL and touch rugby club or advocating for his peers, Peter brings an energetic, approachable, and team-first mindset to actively contribute to a supportive and inclusive culture.

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JOSH DRAHM

Josh was a boarder at Nudgee College in Brisbane before going on to work with the Australian Boarding Schools Association for a number of years. He later transitioned into sales and went on to establish his own business, which has grown from a team of 5 to 35 people since the start of this year, generating $10 million for clients. With his second business set to launch on 16 November, Josh is passionate about building successful businesses and creating opportunities for others. His biggest goal is to one day support Indigenous kids to think big, back themselves and chase ambitious goals.

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ABSOLUTELY
CANNOT MISS

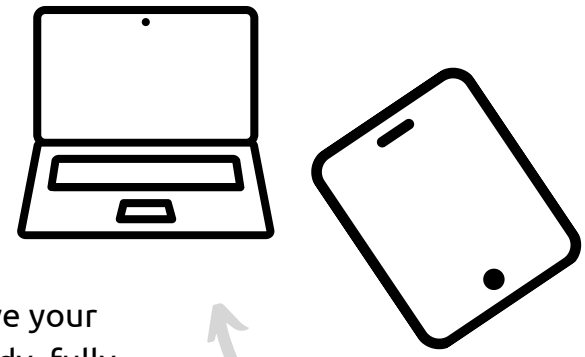
MUST READ

INFO!

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RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR THE ABSA BOARDER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



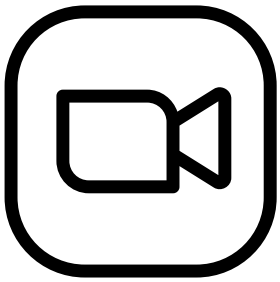
Please have your device ready, fully charged with a charger on hand. **Please be on your own individual device.**

Please have some headphones ready to go as this will allow you to hear us and us to hear you well.

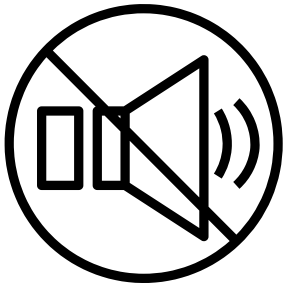


Please prepare some blank sheets of paper and some markers or something to write with.





Please have Zoom dowloaded on your device ready to use the Zoom link provided.



Please, if possible, ensure you are in a room where there is limited background noise and you can move freely.

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MORE INFORMATION

Due to the conference being facilitated online, there are some specific technology and spatial requirements in order for the conference to run smoothly. Here is more detail in complement to the above.

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

A laptop or desktop computer is preferred (either Mac, Windows or Chromebook).

- Apple computers: minimum of macOS Catalina is required.
- Windows computers: minimum of Windows 10 is required.
- Chromebook computers: latest operating system is required.

Your computer is required to have a functioning ***webcam*** and functioning ***microphone*** or the ability to connect a microphone (through headphone etc). All delegates require a pair of headphones which are to be worn during all sessions.

As a last resort an iPad may suffice however this will make the experience more challenging. All iPads must have IOS 14.0.1 as a minimum.

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

During the conference it is important that all students have an appropriate space to view and participate in the conference. As ABSA delegates, you are asked to be in a room that gives you the ability to have conversations without being interrupted, is well lit so that you can be easily seen and has enough floor space to move around comfortably (for example, space to do a star jump or push-up).

Delegates are asked to situated at a desk or table throughout the conference and be on their own device. I.e please, no device sharing as we would like to interact with students equally from their own platform.

GET SOCIAL

Want to connect with ABSA or Burn Bright? Check out the socials and websites below.

Both organisations exist to invest in and help develop young people in their leadership journey, so please feel free to connect and reach out, anytime!

@austboarding
@burnbrightau

ABSA@BOARDING.ORG.AU

INFO@BURNBRIGHT.ORG.AU

WWW.BOARDING.ORG.AU/
WWW.BURNBRIGHT.ORG.AU/

@**BurnBright**

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21ST ANNIVERSARY

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAMP

8TH - 11TH JULY 2026

120 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS



WHO

YEAR 10-
YEAR 12

WHERE

THE TOPS CONFERENCE CENTRE
STANWELL TOPS | NSW

VALUES | SERVICE
GRIT | VISION

MORE INFO

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info@burnbright.org.au | 02 8070 9217

THANK YOU

FROM OUR ORGANISATIONS

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