

Australasian
Council of Women
& Policing Inc.



ACWAP DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR 2026

20-21 AUGUST 2026 | DARWIN, NT, AUSTRALIA
STRENGTH IN SERVICE • UNSTOPPABLE TOGETHER



PROGRAM



ACWAP DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR 2026

20-21 AUGUST 2026 | DARWIN, NT, AUSTRALIA

WELCOME

We welcome you to the Australasian Council of Women and Policing (ACWAP), set against the tropical backdrop of Darwin, NT, Australia.

It's fantastic to have leaders from across Australia, New Zealand and the region coming together in the Top End – united by a shared commitment to leadership, service and supporting one another to thrive.

Under the theme
“Strength in Service. Unstoppable Together!”
this forum is about connection, conversation and strengthening the future of policing – together.

We are proud to host you on Larrakia Country and to share not just this important work, but everything that makes the Territory so unique.

With the seminar aligning with Darwin Festival, there's plenty to experience beyond the program – from vibrant performances and cultural events to sunset markets, local food and those unforgettable dry season nights.

The Northern Territory is calling – and Darwin is proud to welcome you.

JANELLE TONKIN

ACWAP President

Assistant Commissioner, NT Police Force



DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY

The ACWAP Development Seminar is set against the breathtaking backdrop of Darwin, NT, Australia on the proud lands of the Larrakia Aboriginal people. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people serve as longstanding caretakers of the lands and seas, embodying one of the world's oldest continuous cultures and with an enduring connection to country.

This vibrant city is not only a hub for groundbreaking medical research but also the proud home of the Aboriginal Australians, the world's oldest known civilisation, with a rich heritage spanning an incredible 75,000 years. Darwin is an extraordinary place.

The Larrakia people are the traditional owners of these lands, a place rich in culture and heritage. The landscape offers attendees a unique experience and opportunities to engage with Elders and First Nations representatives.

"You have come by way of the Larrakia Land. You will hear the voice of Larrakia ancestors. When you leave, the Larrakia message will stay with you."

The late Reverend Walter Fejo

DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE

Located on the spectacular Darwin Harbour, the world class Darwin Convention Centre is an iconic landmark in the tropical harbour city of the Northern Territory. Set within the lush tropical setting of the Darwin Waterfront Precinct, the Darwin Convention Centre is a stunning destination for local, national and international delegates to experience your convention or event.

The Darwin Convention Centre's inaugural event was the combined IAWP and ACWAP Conference in 2008, a landmark gathering proudly hosted by Northern Territory Police and one that set the tone for the Centre's legacy of world-class events.



ACWAP DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR 2026

The ACWAP Development Seminar forms a key part of the 2026 Australasian Council of Women and Policing Conference, hosted by the Northern Territory Police Force in Darwin from 20–21 August 2026.

Delivered in partnership with ACWAP, the seminar continues a long-standing commitment to advancing women in policing through leadership development, professional connection and knowledge sharing across Australia, New Zealand and the broader region.

ACWAP has a strong history of advocating for equity, supporting career progression and recognising excellence within policing, with its annual conferences and seminars providing a platform for collaboration across jurisdictions. In 2026, under the theme Strength in Service. Unstoppable Together, the two-day Development Seminar will focus on leadership in complex environments, resilience and wellbeing, and innovation in contemporary policing.

The program features keynote presentations, panel discussions and shared learning opportunities designed to explore current challenges, highlight best practice and support the ongoing development of policing professionals.



SPECIAL EVENTS



PARLIAMENT HOUSE WELCOME RECEPTION

As part of your time in the Territory, you are warmly invited to a Special Welcome Reception at Parliament House.

Wednesday 19 August

5:30pm – 7:00pm

Parliament House, Darwin

This prestigious event will be hosted by
The Honourable Lia Finocchiaro,
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Located in the heart of Darwin City, Parliament House is one of the Territory's most iconic landmarks overlooking the breathtaking Timor Sea and Darwin Harbour.



EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARDS

A highlight of the program will be the 27th ACWAP Excellence in Policing Awards, celebrating individuals and initiatives that are strengthening policing outcomes and advancing equity and excellence across the sector.

Thursday 20 August 2026

6:30pm – 11:00pm

Mindil Beach Casino

Includes Territory-inspired tastings, a sumptuous main meal and dessert, drinks package, and entertainment galore – all celebrated under the stars in a truly unique event like no other.





ACWAP DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR 2026

DAY ONE - 20 AUGUST 2026

Leadership, Culture & Workforce

8:00AM REGISTRATION & ARRIVAL

8:30AM WELCOME & HOUSEKEEPING

Master of Ceremonies - Mel Little, Raw Comedy Winner & Community Champion

WELCOME TO COUNTRY & OPENING PERFORMANCE

9:00AM OFFICIAL WELCOME

ACWAP President, Janelle Tonkin

9:15AM KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Honouring the Women Who Shape Us

Nova Peris - Olympic Gold Medallist

10:10AM MORNING TEA

11:00AM PANEL – DESIGNING THE FUTURE FORCE

What Would It Look Like If Women Designed Police Organisations

12:00 - 1:00PM LUNCH & LIVE LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT

1:00PM SPEAKER

1:20PM PANEL – FROM THE BEAT TO THE BOARDROOM

Recruitment and Succession Planning That Actually Works

2:20PM AFTERNOON TEA

2:50PM LIGHTNING ROUND

Rapid fire of 7 presentations for 7 minutes each

4:00PM CLOSE OF DAY ONE

DAY TWO - 21 AUGUST 2026

Media, Leadership & Resilience



8:00AM **ARRIVAL & NETWORKING**

8:30AM **WELCOME & ENTERTAINMENT**

Mel Little, Raw Comedy Winner & Community Champion

8:50AM **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**

Leading with Integrity: Telling the Story Without Losing the Human
Katie Woolf - National Award Winning Journalist, Mix 104.9

9:10AM **POLICING IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

10:10AM **MORNING TEA**

10:40AM **COMMISSIONER'S PANEL**

Leading the Future Force: What Comes Next
Facilitator: ACWAP President Janelle Tonkin - NT Police Force

12:00 - **LUNCH**
1:00PM

1:00PM **PLENARY SESSION (TBC)**

2:20PM **AFTERNOON TEA**

2:50PM **CLOSING KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**

Michelle Huntington - 'Lady MacGyver'

4:00PM **CLOSE OF DAY TWO**



**STRENGTH IN SERVICE
UNSTOPPABLE TOGETHER**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



NOVA PERIS

Olympic Gold Medallist

Nova Peris is a trailblazing Australian athlete, politician and community leader whose extraordinary journey has inspired a nation. She made history as the first Indigenous Australian to win Olympic gold, helping the Hockeyroos to gold at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, and later became a Commonwealth Games champion in athletics. Nova broke barriers again when she entered federal politics as the first Indigenous woman elected to the Australian Parliament.

A passionate advocate for Indigenous rights, youth empowerment and health initiatives, Nova continues to lead with heart, resilience and purpose – making her one of Australia’s most respected and influential voices.



MICHELLE HUNTINGTON

“Lady MacGyver”

Michelle Huntington is a former airline captain, leadership powerhouse and author of Lady MacGyver – and she knows exactly how to stay calm when everything gets turbulent. One of only a handful of female airline captains worldwide, Michelle spent years making split-second decisions at 35,000 feet, leading crews through high-pressure, real-world challenges. Now she brings those cockpit lessons to the stage with humour, honesty and impact. Her keynotes are fast-paced, practical and unforgettable – packed with tools to help leaders think clearly, act decisively and thrive under pressure.



KATIE WOOLF

National award-winning journalist

Katie is one of Australia’s most recognised and influential media voices. As host of 360 with Katie Woolf on Mix 104.9 Darwin, she’s an eight-time Australian Commercial Radio Award (ACRA) winner, including multiple wins for the prestigious Brian White Award for Excellence in Radio Journalism and Best Talk Presenter.

Katie’s sharp insights, fearless questioning and deep connection to the community make her a go-to national commentator across radio and TV, and in 2021 she was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her contribution to media and community advocacy.

PRESENTERS & PERFORMERS



MEL LITTLE

Master of Ceremonies

Mel is a standout Australian comedian and masterful MC known for her warmth, sharp wit and genuine connection with every audience. She shot to prominence after winning Australia's iconic RAW Comedy competition, earning the chance to perform at the Edinburgh Comedy Festival on the world stage.

Beyond stand-up, Mel is celebrated for hosting events with heart and humour, blending laughter with care and connection to create unforgettable experiences. Her unique voice and engaging presence make her a favourite on stage and behind the mic.



CAOIMHE PANGILINAN

2025 NT Pitch Perfect Winner

Caoimhe is a rising young singer from Darwin, known for her powerful vocals, confidence on stage and natural connection with audiences. A standout talent in the Top End, she was crowned Grand Winner of the 2025 Pitch Perfect competition, quickly building a reputation as one to watch.

With a passion for music and performance, Caoimhe represents the next generation of Territory artists – bringing energy, authenticity and heart to every performance.



NICOLE BROWN

Welcome to Country

Nicole is a proud Larrakia woman, respected community leader and advocate for inclusive, culturally grounded leadership. A City of Darwin Councillor and Managing Director of Following In Their Footsteps, Nicole works with organisations to build trust, strengthen relationships and create meaningful impact with First Nations communities.

She is a City of Darwin Citizen of the Year recipient and is deeply committed to uplifting voices, investing in future leaders, and creating spaces where culture, connection and opportunity come together.

EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARDS



INSPECTOR JOANNE HOWARD

Master of Ceremonies

Joanne Howard is a seasoned South Australia Police leader and a natural on the mic, known for bringing energy, warmth and sharp insight to every room she enters. A respected inspector with years of frontline and leadership experience, Joanne has hosted major policing celebrations — including many of the Australasian Excellence in Policing Awards — connecting audiences with her engaging style and polished event presence. Her ability to balance humour, professionalism and genuine connection makes her the perfect MC to guide our Awards Dinner with flair and heart.



THE KICKS

High-energy live band

The Kicks bring pop, soul, rock, funk and dancefloor classics to every stage with irresistible groove and vocals that keep crowds moving. Featuring some of the Territory's top musicians and the powerhouse voice of Natalie Pellegrino, they've been a standout live act since 2012 — lighting up corporate events, festivals and parties with vibrant performance and crowd-pleasing musicianship.



FASHION SHOWCASE

Welcome to Country

This Fashion Showcase brings the Top End to life on the catwalk — bursting with bright tropical colours, First Nations prints rich in story, and the bold creativity of our local designers. Expect a celebration of culture, colour and confidence as the runway lights up with designs that reflect our climate, our people and our unmistakable Territory style. This is fashion with heart, soul and plenty of colour — Top End style at its finest.



LILLA WELLINGTON

Solo Artist

Lilla is a soulful Territory performer whose voice carries both power and heart. With effortless stage presence and emotional depth, Lilla creates moments that linger long after the final note. Her performances are uplifting, moving and a beautiful reminder of the talent thriving right here in our community.

AWARD CATEGORIES

**Bev Lawson Memorial Award for the
Most Outstanding Female Leader**

Integrity and Courage Award

Emerging Leadership Award

Most Outstanding Female Investigator Award

Most Outstanding Female Practitioner Award

Most Outstanding Female Employee Award

Most Outstanding Female Intelligence Practitioner Award

Indigenous First Nations Peoples Excellence in Policing Award

Excellence in Law Enforcement in the Pacific Region Award

**Excellence in Law Enforcement Initiative for
Women in the Community Award**

**Excellence in Research on Improving
Law Enforcement for Women Award**

Champion of Change Award



ACWAP DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR 2026



Australasian
Council of Women
& Policing Inc.

