

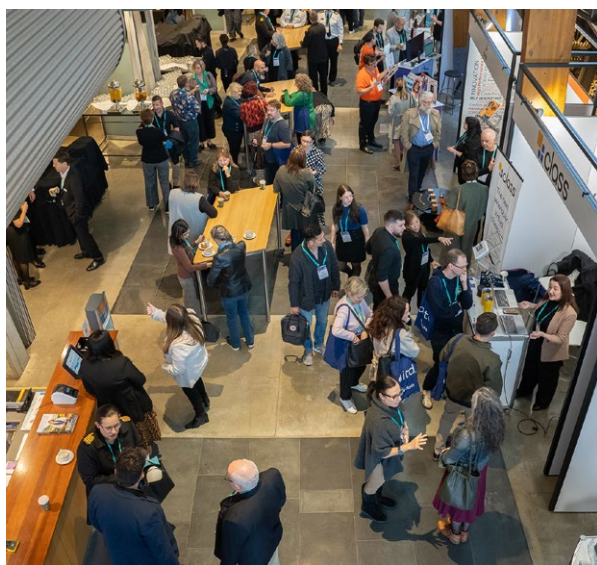
# SUCCESS AS L&D PROFESSIONALS GATHER FOR THE AITD 2024 CONFERENCE

After months of planning and many hours of preparation, the AITD 2024 Conference was a resounding success. Held at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide on 12 to 14 June 2023, AITD's signature event featured a program that inspired and delighted.



AITD was truly humbled by the number of L&D professionals from around Australia who seized upon the opportunity to learn about the latest trends and developments from leading experts across many sectors, and took the time to network, meet up and re-connect with friends and colleagues from near and far.

This year, attendees had the opportunity to maximise their conference experience by attending pre-conference workshops, which showcased case studies from past winners of the AITD Excellence Awards. Frontline L&D professionals presented real-life projects and provided practical ideas and solutions to successfully tackle common issues faced by many industries in the L&D space.



With the theme *Transforming Learning and Development - Empowering Progress through Design and Technology*, the conference agenda over the two days following the workshops was jam-packed with a diverse and high-quality program of Australian and international L&D experts. Topics ranged from cutting-edge tools and technologies through to best practices and theories, ensuring every delegate was able to walk away with valuable insights they can now implement in their workplace.

Industry visionaries and renowned thought leaders shared their ideas and insights into the latest L&D trends, including Britt Andreatta, Charles Jennings, Thomas J. Tobin, Lisa Bale, Peter Hawkins, Andrew Miedler, Ian Handley, Ryan Gifford, Michelle Ockers and Wendy Perry.

Of course, an event like this involves many people to ensure its success. We extend a very big thank you to all our wonderful presenters for generously sharing their knowledge, time and expertise, and contributing to our L&D profession. We'd like to thank our Principal Partners: Business Events Adelaide, the South Australian Government and the National Wine Centre. We'd also like to thank our conference sponsors: Peeplcoach, Elev8 and Guild Insurance; and all our exhibitors.

And finally, thank you to everyone who attended AITD 2024. Plans are already underway for AITD 2025, and we look forward to seeing you all again next year for what promises to be another outstanding event.

# Elevate and Innovate: My Key Takeaways from the AITD 2024 National Conference

BY DAVID BRYSON

The annual Australian Institute of Training and Development conference is the highlight for L&D professionals in Australia. This year's event was extra special, as the event was held in my hometown of Adelaide, at the picturesque National Wine Centre from 12 to 14 June.

The conference brings together leading national and international speakers, talking about topics with current impact. Each time, I come away from conference, I feel like I have attempted to drink from, 'the fire hose of knowledge'.

Summing up such an impactful event is really hard. Faced with any overwhelming task, a previous mentor of mine shared with me an African Proverb. It asks us "How do we eat an elephant?" The simple answer is "One spoonful at a time". Each week I have set aside some time to reflect on the extensive notes I took and to network with others who attended discuss our key takeaways and what we will do with them.

So rather than trying to talk about all of my learning from two and a half days spent at conference, I will do my best to distil my key take aways from the three speakers that I personally found the most influential. If you are interested to hear more, please reach out to me. I would love to share.

## BRAINWAVES TO BREAKTHROUGHS

The first speaker of influence was Dr Britt Andreatta from Brain Aware Training Inc. She spoke on the topic of Wire to Grow – The Neuroscience of Learning. Her message was, "All learning is about building neural pathways", and challenged us to think about how we can help our learners do this.



Myself and colleagues from Westpac, who attended the conference.



"As humans, we are wired to observe others, so expose them to top performers. We are also wired for stories, so we should all look to leverage the power of storytelling in our daily practice," Britt said.

She shared that people are also wired for images. As memories are often encoded with accompanying imagery, the challenge for us is to help others learn by attaching knowledge to visuals, stories, or something they already know.

Britt discussed different ways to cultivate insights from learners. This includes giving people the space to learn on their own and time for reflection. She emphasised the importance of making mistakes in a safe environment and providing opportunities for repetition and practice.

She shared evidence of the importance of using recaps (every 10-15 minutes) to encourage 'A-ha Moments' and create impactful learning

## CRAFTING A CANVAS FOR LEARNING

Dr Thomas J. Tobin from the University of Wisconsin-Madison was one of the best public speakers I have ever had the privilege to hear. It wasn't just what he said, it was his delivery and how he 'walked the talk' on every idea and concept that he shared.

He spoke on How to Lower Training and Development Barriers with Universal Design for Learning. He shared with us his five strategies for universal design learning:

1. **Start with text.** Design what you want to say.
2. **Make alternatives.** Can we give learners more time with different options?
3. **Let them do it their way.** It helps them to make it their own.
4. **Go step by step.** Share learning in manageable bite-sized pieces.

Set the content free (from content requirements)

### TWICE THE WISDOM, DOUBLE THE INSIGHT

Finally, Michelle Ockers from Learning Uncut, a conference favourite and regular speaker. I heard her speak twice over the course of the conference. She first spoke on The L&D Leaders Playbook for Influence, Credibility and Impact.

Michelle talked about strategies for navigating organisational politics and urged people that we need to, “tune into that organisation”. We need to listen well and build real relationships. When building relationships, Michelle said,

**“Make time and be 100% present and respectfully curious.”**

On the second day, Michelle spoke on Working on our Inner L&D Game. She reminded us that we are in the business of changing people’s behaviours, thoughts and feelings.

Michelle challenged us to consider how we think about ourselves.

“We are the stories we tell ourselves. We are what we do.” She challenged us to consider how we think about ourselves. Are we in the business of learning value or business value? Are we L&D First or Business First? She shared her **BOLD** approach to learning practice.

**B = Business First**  
**O = Open Minded**  
**L = Learning and Leading**  
**D = Deliberate**

She said organisations need smart and BOLD individuals. Are we bold?

To strengthen our Inner Game, Michelle said we need:

- Evidence to create confidence.
- Our North Star (Our why, our guiding principle).
- To Practice / Build habits.

- Guidance by Mentors and support by peers (Who are our wingmen?).
- Permission to try.

I was left thinking: what am I going to do to strengthen my inner L&D game?

I hope in sharing these key insights, you think about your own L&D Game. As L&D professionals, it is hugely beneficial to hear from other people and gain their insights. It can help lift the quality of your own work and help us continue to grow and evolve.

If you missed this year’s conference and want to know more, I would encourage you to reach out to the members of the AITD Divisional Council in your state and ask them about their own experiences. The AITD’s values are *Leading, Connecting* and *Sharing*. If you are happy to make time to connect, you will find people happy to share.



Dr Thomas Tobin



The beautiful surroundings of the National Wine Centre



Some of the SA Divisional Councillors