













## Thesis Fest 2025 – Speaker Profiles




DAY ONE		
	Professor Harlene Hayne Vice Chancellor Curtin University	Professor Hayne has been the Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University since 2021. Originally from the United States, Professor Hayne received a BA from Colorado College and a MS and PhD from Rutgers University before spending three years as a post-doctoral fellow at Princeton. Professor Hayne has enjoyed an outstanding career in higher education leadership and academia, including serving 10 years as Vice-Chancellor of Otago University in New Zealand. Professor Hayne is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and of the Association for Psychological Science. In 2009 she was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to scientific and medical research, and in 2022 was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in recognition of her services to health and wellbeing.
	Professor Nick Hopwood   University of Sydney	Nick Hopwood is Professor of Professional Learning at UTS School of International Studies and Education. He has supervised doctorates on a range of topics in diverse contexts. He offers his talk about rejection from a position as a published author and co-author, a frequent peer reviewer, journal editor, and many, many times rejectee.
	Professor Kit Messham-Muir   Curtin University	Kit Messham-Muir is Professor of Art at Curtin University's School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry. A specialist in contemporary art and visual culture, his research focuses on the art and visual culture of conflict, terror, and political violence. Since the 1990s, he has critically engaged with affect and trauma theory, exploring topics such as contemporary war art, Holocaust museums, and the aesthetics of 'culture war'. His books include Double War (2015), and with Uroš Čvoro, Images of War in Contemporary Art (2021) and The Trump Effect (2023), and The Politics of Artists in War Zones (2024) co-edited with Čvoro and Monika Lukowska-Appel). He was co-curator of Art of Peace: Art After War at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (2025), a major international exhibition of post-conflict art from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and Timor-Leste. He has supervised to completion 18 PhD students, 6 Masters students and 10 Honours students, and teaches the core art history and theory units at Curtin.
	Professor Min Teah   Curtin University	Associate Professor Min Teah is a mid-career researcher and was previously the Dean, Research for Faculty of Business and Law, and Director of Graduate Studies in School of Marketing. Her PhD thesis was a blend between biological sciences, consumer psychology, and branding. She enjoys industry informed research projects, and those that marry design and branding, copying and strategy, sustainability and innovation. She is a strong advocate for PhD students and believes in developing balanced capabilities that can open academic and non-academic career opportunities. She is currently working on a collection of content from academics on reflective advice, tips and stories and #How I Wish I'd Known.

	<p>Mr Hugh Kearns   Flinders University   iThinkWell</p>	<p>Mr Hugh Kearns is recognised internationally as a public speaker, educator, and researcher. His areas of expertise include self-management, positive psychology, work-life balance, learning and creativity. He has coached individuals, teams, and executives in both the public and private sectors. Hugh lectures and conducts research at Flinders University. As a co-author with Maria Gardiner, he has published twelve books which are in high demand both in Australia and internationally and has had several articles published in the prestigious journal Nature.</p>
	<p>Dr Franca Jones   Curtin University</p>	<p>Franca Jones completed her BSc (Hons) at the University of Sydney and her PhD at Curtin University. After a 2 year postdoctoral stint at the Max-Planck Institute for Colloids and Interfaces in Germany, Dr. Jones returned to Perth and to Curtin University where she has been for the last 20plus years. She has been the Chemistry Major coordinator, the School Director of Graduate Research and took on the role of Faculty Dean of Graduate Research in 2023. She also continues to be a teaching and research academic in the chemistry discipline.</p>
	<p>Dr Ahmed Gedawy</p>	<p>Ahmed is an experienced pharmacist registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), He is also a recognized practitioner in the Middle East and holds registration with the Egyptian Records of Qualified Pharmacists. With over 20 years' experience in the field of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences, he serves as a Sessional Academic at Curtin Medical School. Ahmed's research expertise spans therapeutic delivery, pharmaceutical formulations, drug pharmacokinetics, drug analysis, industrial R&amp;D, quality control, bioequivalence of pharmaceuticals, drug stability profiling and analytical method validation protocols. Ahmed's academic journey includes a Master of Philosophy in Pharmacy (M.Phil.) from Curtin University (2020), and a Ph.D. in Pharmacy from Curtin University (2025).</p>

	<p>Dr Thomas Hales</p>	<p>Dr Tom Hales is a core member of the Emergency Response team at ChemCentre. He has recently graduated from a PhD in Physics at Curtin University, based in the Hydrogen Storage Research Group (HSRG). His thesis was entitled "Energy Storage Materials Using Metal Boranes as Solid-State Electrolytes". Prior to this, Tom completed his Master's degree in chemistry at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. He has three publications from his PhD studies with a fourth near to submission.</p>
	<p>Dr Terry Humphries   Science &amp; Engineering</p>	<p>Terry Humphries is a Senior Research Fellow in the Hydrogen Storage Research Group (HSRG) at Curtin University. He has been developing hydrogen and energy storage materials for 18 years and this time has worked in many research labs around the world including Canada, Norway, Denmark, USA, Japan and Australia.</p> <p>During his career, Terry's research interests have been in the development of materials for hydrogen storage, thermal energy storage, hydrogen export and solid-state batteries. His research endeavours have led to the publication of over 80 research articles with over 150 global collaborators. Terry has supervised 17 HDR students with 9 completions since 2015.</p>

## DAY TWO

	Claire Jackson   Founder, The Habit Lab	Claire is a behavioural science practitioner and strategic consultant specialising in habit formation, wellbeing, and performance in education. As the founder of The Habit Lab, she works with universities across Australia and the UK to embed scalable habit-based systems that support graduate researcher success. Claire's work bridges behavioural science and higher education strategy, equipping HDRs and their supervisors with practical tools to build sustainable habits for writing, wellbeing, and academic progress.
	Professor Inger Mewburn   Australian National University	Professor Inger Mewburn is the Director of Researcher Development at The Australian National University where she oversees professional development workshops and programs for all ANU researchers. Aside from creating new posts on the Thesis Whisperer blog, she writes scholarly papers and books about research education, with a special interest in post PhD employability, research communications and neurodivergence. Professor Mewburn co-hosts the successful podcast "On The Reg" with Dr Jason Downs, which has garnered over 100,000 downloads. This platform allows her to share insights and engage with a broader audience on topics related to higher education and beyond.
	Dr Vikki Wright	Dr Vikki Wright is an ex-Professor and certified life coach. After a 20+ year academic career, Dr Wright founded The PhD Life Coach where she runs a coaching membership programme for PhD students. She helps with issues like overwhelm, procrastination, imposter syndrome, and generally not feeling good enough. She also hosts The PhD Life Coach podcast and you can join her free online community ( <a href="https://thephdlifecoach.mykajabi.com/newsletter-form">https://thephdlifecoach.mykajabi.com/newsletter-form</a> ) to get access to podcast summaries, a searchable archive and free monthly webinar.

	<p>Dr Jess Day   Humanities</p>	<p>Jess Day is an artist, technician, and writer based in Perth, Boorloo, Western Australia. Day's practice investigates wilderness concepts, prepping culture, conflict &amp; othering, and non-linear narratives. Since graduating from Curtin University with a PhD specialising in Fine Art, Day has exhibited at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Lawson Flats, Another ARI, Curtin University, Heathcote Museum and Gallery, Firstdraft, Politzia, MOANA Project Space, and Fremantle Arts Centre, among others.</p>
<p>No photo</p>	<p>Dr Xingwei Fang   Business &amp; Law</p>	<p>Xinwei Fang holds a PhD in Finance from Curtin University. Her research focuses on corporate finance, ESG, and the Chinese financial market, with publications in Global Finance Journal and Finance Research Letters. She has taught across multiple finance units and presented at leading academic conferences.</p> <p>Dr Fang is a teaching assistant and research assistant at Curtin University.</p>
	<p>Dr Ayomide (Mide) Ogundipe   Health Sciences</p>	<p>Mide is a pharmacist, researcher and educator passionate about advancing pharmacy practice through digital innovation and patient-centred care. She recently completed her PhD at Curtin Medical School, where she investigated the technological needs of community pharmacists to support modern, connected healthcare. Mide has been recognised nationally for her leadership, receiving the 2019 MIMS PSA Intern Pharmacist of the Year and the 2023 PSA WA Early Career Pharmacist of the Year awards. She also holds an Associate Fellowship with the Higher Education Academy. An active leader within the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Mide serves as National Early Career Pharmacist Board Director and holds several key roles at state and national levels. Her work reflects a strong commitment to evidence-based innovation, collaborative leadership, and the future of digital health in pharmacy.</p>
	<p>Dr Harry Morris Rodriguez   Science &amp; Engineering</p>	<p>In early 2021, at the height of the pandemic, Harry left his decade-long career as an industrial chemist in the Philippines to take a deep dive in chemistry at Curtin University. He officially completed his PhD last May 2025 and was awarded a Chancellor's Commendation for his thesis entitled "On-water Electrochemistry: A Study of Local Current Densities and Ion Transport at the Electrified Hydrophobic-Aqueous Interface". Harry is now a Postdoctoral Fellow at CSIRO (Waite Campus) and is developing technologies that would help save the planet from PFAS (aka "forever chemicals"). Outside his workplace, he enjoys reading high fantasy literature and experimenting in the kitchen.</p>

## HOSTS



Kylie  
Percival

Kylie commenced as University Librarian at Curtin University in 2022 in time to lead the reopening of the TL Robertson Library in February 2023. Under her leadership, the Library has expanded its support to researchers including a current project to implement a new institutional repository and staff profiles solution for the Curtin research community. Kylie is also serving the wider sector as a Council of Australasian Librarians (CAUL) Board member. Previously she held the role of the Associate University Librarian, Academic Engagement at the University of Adelaide.



John Brown



John Brown is Coordinator, Research Services at Curtin University Library. He provides support and advice to researchers on research data management and related practices. His work includes developing training initiatives and helping researchers navigate institutional policies and systems to meet data requirements.



Petra  
Dumbell

Petra is one of the Library's Learning Success coordinators, working with a team to create and facilitate workshops and online resources on a range of academic skills, including Gen-AI, academic writing and soft skills such as time management. The team also creates dedicated programs for specific student cohorts such as Indigenous or mature-age students. In a previous role, Petra was responsible for organising and delivering GRASP, the Graduate Research Advanced Skills Program dedicated to Curtin's HDR students. Petra completed her PhD in Library and Information Science at Curtin, so she has lived experience of what it is like to be a HDR student at Curtin.



	<p>Bithiah Esabunor-Nukie</p>	<p>Bithiah is a Library Makerspace Officer who supports students and staff in using creative technologies like 3D printing, laser cutting, and Arduino to bring ideas to life. When she is not tinkering with Arduinos or painting at the Makerspace, she is in the Hydrogen Storage Lab where she is completing her PhD on hydrogen transport in polymer coatings, researching how materials can better support clean energy pipelines. Whether she is supporting student projects or explaining gas diffusion through a membrane, she is always up for a conversation about how science and creativity intersect.</p>
	<p>Nila Tenzil</p>	<p>Nila is one of the Library's Learning Success Advisors at Curtin University Library. She facilitates the Find Your Tribe initiative and some study skills workshops, such as oral presentations and Milestone 1 presentations. Nila is a PhD candidate at the School of Education. She is also a published author of three books and a passionate children's literacy advocate in Indonesia.</p>