

PROGRAM

8:30 AM | Caffeinate and Connect

9:00 AM | Why are you here?

Hopefully because you're an interesting person who is interested in people, bold ideas and doing and thinking better. Buckle up and our double trouble hosts will prep you for the day ahead.

Jessy Warn, Managing Partner, HR Gurus Emily Jaksch, Founder & Managing Director, HR Gurus

9:10 AM What's around the corner and what haven't you thought of..?

If you're not on top of what's going on in the world, how can you expect to know the people you are leading or prepare them and the business for what's to come?

Global social and geo-political events and trends ripple rapidly into the workplace (Trump bingo anyone?) creating huge local challenges and opportunities. We're kicking off a day of bold ideas with an exploration of future shifts that will impact individuals, societies and therefore organisations. Align your people first strategy with the evolving external environment to adapt and thrive.

STAY TUNED FOR SPEAKER ANNOUNCEMENT

9:40 AM | You can't say that! Cancel culture, free speech, and how to be a bit less of a d*ck!

Anthropologist, Dr Monty Badami, will flip the script on the tired debates of political correctness and cancel culture, shifting focus to what really matters: empathy, accountability, and the human connections that bind us. With humour, boldness, and a touch of anthropology, we'll explore the messy beauty of humanity—how we've resisted oppression, found pockets of hope, and created change throughout history. Through playful insights and practical takeaways, you'll leave equipped to navigate tricky conversations, handle conflict with grace, and, maybe...just maybe... be a little less of a dick. This isn't about rules or ticking boxes; it's about scaling deep into the core of what it means to be human, embracing imperfection, and daring to connect.

- Part One: A History of Douchebag Leaders
- Part Two: Cancel Culture and Political Correctness Simply Hasn't Helped
- Part Three: Scaling Deep...How Policy and More Bloody Online Training can only get us so far! (And can even make us go backwards)
- Part Four: How Anthropology can Help
- Part Five: Practical Takeaways (or How to Be a Bit Less of a Dick)

Dr Monty Badami, Anthropologist, Shit-Stirrer, Founder & CEO, Habitus

10:20 AM | Was Elon Musk right to fire 80% of Twitter?

When Elon Musk took control of Twitter, he fired 80% of the company's workforce in one swift, ruthless move. Reckless or visionary?

Across industries, we're entering an AI-first era where radically efficient businesses will crush the competition. Companies that cling to bloated headcounts and outdated ways of working risk becoming irrelevant.

Sound dramatic? Good. Because this moment calls for hard truths. As a leader, you've got three options:

- Do nothing: Watch your company slowly sink into irrelevance
- Take bold action: Fire faster, hire smarter, automate ruthlessly
- Transform your culture: Make your people indispensable by design. Automate low-value work so your team can focus on high-impact work

The reality is a mix of option 2 and 3. But make no mistake — inaction is not an option.

Which brings us back to Elon and was he right to fire 80% of Twitter's staff?

In an age of AI disruption, leaders will have to confront a similar choice — sooner than they think.

Brace yourself. This isn't your typical feel-good talk but it's the wake-up call every people leader needs.

Steve Glaveski, CEO & Co-Founder, Collective Campus

10:55 AM | Bold Bites

Short, sharp, no-BS HR pulsechecks. Insights and disruption from pay transparency and radical flexibility to AI. Agree or don't agree, just don't ignore....

Jessy Warn, Managing Partner, HR Gurus Emily Jaksch, Founder & Managing Director, HR Gurus

11.00 - 11.25 AM Caffeinate (verb): to get caffeine or to provide caffeine to (someone) by means of a caffeinated beverage (such as coffee)

11:25 AM | Play nicely with your colleagues: The CEO + CPO power combo

No more old-school dynamics where HR is just there to "do" what the CEO says. Today's People & Culture leaders are strategic partners, co-pilots in steering the business - and when that relationship clicks, it's a game changer.

But leadership teams aren't always a love-fest. They can be a battlefield of egos, competing priorities, and "helpful opinions" on things some execs don't really get (like people and culture). So how do a CEO and Head of People & Culture build real trust and lead as a united front?

This session tackles the art (and science) of leadership synergy - how to cut through the noise, build trust, and create an executive culture that actually works for your business.

- Behind-the-scenes on what makes a high-functioning CEO/People partnership work in a Top 10 Great Place to Work business
- How to influence up, down, and sideways without losing your edge
- Leadership dynamics decoded: handling the politics, personalities, and pushback
- Why real leadership alignment makes or breaks company culture

Michelle O'Keefe, CEO, Culture Curator & Semi Professional Ninja, engaging.io Fraser Gordon, Head of People, Culture Whisperer & Chief Vibes Officer, engaging.io

11:55 AM | Tech Track

AI, automation, and predictive analytics promise to revolutionize HR - but which innovations are game-changers, and which are just noise? Let's explore radical efficiency: no fluff, just results.

12:15 PM | The great RTO debate: chaos, culture and the battle for talent

So, everyone has to go back to the office full time now....oh, wait, no they don't, they have to do 3 days a week in the office, but which days and does everyone have to do the same days and what if they want to change which day and how do we justify why some people have to be in the office and others work completely remotely and what about the 4 day work week or job share and what if we don't offer complete flexibility, will everyone go and work somewhere else, but what if we do and it doesn't work for the business, only now we've set a precedent so we can't fire anyone?

The RTO discussion had largely fallen silent and hybrid work arrangements felt pretty normal. And yet full-time office mandates are now back on the table again. Amazon and Tabcorp have called all employees back to the office five days a week to 'improve performance and create a winning culture'.

With post-Covid expectations, multi-generational workforces and inclusivity demands battling with engagement, talent retention and remote leadership challenges, who's really winning at RTO strategy and what bold ideas could you explore for your organisation?

Morag Eyles, Chief People Officer, WPP

12:45 PM | Bold Bites

Jessy Warn, Managing Partner, HR Gurus Emily Jaksch, Founder & Managing Director, HR Gurus

12:50 PM | Refuel your brain and stomach

1:40 PM - 2:10 PM | From legacy to next-gen: a leadership playbook for a 5-gen workforce

From Gen Z disruptors to seasoned Boomers, the workforce has never been more diverse in experience, expectations, and engagement styles. The question is - are we setting up the future workplace for collaboration or collision?

Future generations will enter workplaces shaped by AI, shifting social values, and new definitions of leadership. Are today's leaders ready? Are our cultures built for agility, or are we clinging to outdated models that will alienate the next wave of talent?

- Breaking stereotypes Gen Z isn't lazy, Millennials aren't entitled, and Boomers aren't tech-averse. Let's challenge the myths.
- A leadership power shift What happens when digital-first, purpose-driven talent takes the reins?
- Future-proofing your workforce how to design an adaptable culture that attracts and retains talent across generations.

This is more than just a generation gap - it's a generation revolution.

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2:10 PM | DEI under fire: evolving, endangered, or just good business?

Trump-era politics and legal challenges have put DEI under fire in the U.S with layoffs, lawsuits, and a growing corporate retreat. But in Australia, will we see the same backlash, or is this our moment to redefine DEI for real impact?

As culture wars collide with boardroom decisions, we're now questioning - is diversity divisive and ineffective or is it a necessity that's too valuable to ditch, both from a humanitarian and a business perspective?

This fierce, unfiltered debate will explore:

- Is DEI still the right strategy, or does it need a rebrand?
- What's the risk of 'DEI fatigue' and how do we keep momentum alive?
- Do we still default to hiring people who 'fit in'?
- How do we move from performative to truly transformative?
- Are Australian companies prepared for the legal and cultural shifts heading our way?

No safe answers. No sugarcoating. Just the hard truths on what's next.

Dr Monty Badami, Anthropologist, Shit-Stirrer, Founder & CEO, Habitus Steve Glaveski, CEO & Co-Founder, Collective Campus Kylie Fuller, Founder, Fuller Potential

2:50 PM | Storytime: Lessons, legends & leadership genius

Get ready for a raw, unfiltered session that hits on two levels:

- 1) War stories from the front lines of people leadership the good, the bad, and the downright ugly. Expect truth bombs, tough lessons, and maybe even a little redemption.
- 2) The secret sauce you should prioritise as a leader: storytelling. It's not just for TED Talks it's the ultimate tool for building empathy, trust, and influence with your team and peers.

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3:40 PM | Bold Bites

Jessy Warn, Managing Partner, HR Gurus Emily Jaksch, Founder & Managing Director, HR Gurus

3:45 PM | Happy hour! Future forecasting: Worldbuilding people leaders of the future...

Grab your drink of choice and join this interactive, future-strategy close-out.

Join award-winning speculative fiction author Lili Wilkinson for a thought-provoking session where we'll creatively reimagine the people leader of the future: what will be the role of HR and how can looking at the big picture help you prioritise your critical areas of focus now?

This isn't your typical wrap-up - this is storytelling meets future forecasting. Worldbuilding, characters, and plot twists included. What did today teach you about thinking differently? Let's find out.

Lili Wilkinson, Speculative Fiction Author

4:25 PM – 4:30 PM | Chaos & structure

"Chaos is need for innovation, structure makes those ideas useful", Simon Sinek

Make your day of bold ideas count with this quick, valuable next steps blueprint from our dynamic duo hosts.

Jessy Warn, Managing Partner, HR Gurus Emily Jaksch, Founder & Managing Director, HR Gurus

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Unwind, Debate, Collaborate

Wrap up the inaugural **Bold Ideas in HR 2025** with cocktails, mocktails, nibbles and tunes and useful new humans to share your journey with.

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM | Bold Ideas Date Night

Join the hardcore for a totally informal dinner experience and chat. This is where the magic happens. Invited guests and ticket holders only - limited spaces