

Appendix 3

ANA Worldwide Applied Neuroscience Day (WAND) Programme

Part 1: WAND2025 - Evidence to Practice

Talk Title & Speaker	Neuroscience in Action	Building Brain Capital in Practice
Opening Note: The Brain Is Our Most Valuable Asset—Yet It Is Also Our Most Vulnerable Treesje Verlinden	Frames the brain as foundational economic infrastructure by integrating lifespan neuroscience with global burden-of-disease data. Shows how neurological, mental, and substance-use disorders together represent the largest source of global disability and ill health, amplified by a persistent lag between scientific discovery and real-world application.	Establishes the economic case for investing in Brain Capital (comprising brain health and brain skills) as a global priority. Repositions brain-related conditions from isolated health issues to system-level infrastructure challenges that directly affect productivity, resilience, and sustainable growth in the Brain Economy.
Talk 1: Neurodiversity as a Catalyst for Systems Change Robert Annis	Applies research on neurodivergent cognition, sensory processing, executive function, and social interaction to explain how standardised systems create cognitive friction, bias, and exclusion. Demonstrates how environments and governance structures often misalign with diverse cognitive styles.	Neuroinclusive systems unlock underutilised talent, creativity, and problem-solving capacity. Reducing friction and exclusion increases innovation, retention, and organisational adaptability—strengthening Brain Capital at both organisational and societal levels.
Talk 2: The PROWESS Model – Brain-Based NeuroLeadership for a Changing World Stephanie Wong	Draws on neuroscience of stress regulation, reward and threat systems, attention, motivation, emotional intelligence, and complex cognition. Translates these mechanisms into the PROWESS leadership framework linking brain states to leadership behaviour and team dynamics.	Brain-based leadership can play a role in reducing cognitive overload, emotional exhaustion, and burnout, while improving trust, learning, and decision-making. Positions leadership as a core lever for protecting and compounding team and organisational Brain Capital.
Talk 3: DECODE YOUR PAIN – Communicating Pain, Telling Your Story Aneta-Herrenschmidt-Moller	Applies pain neuroscience, including threat signalling, predictive processing, memory, and narrative formation, to explain how pain lived experience and communication shape outcomes and even physical symptoms. Shows how fear and misunderstanding can entrench chronic pain through neural and external reinforcement.	Improved pain literacy and communication reduce chronicity, support recovery and return-to-work, and can lower the healthcare burden. Restoring cognitive and emotional resources strengthens individual cognitive and non-cognitive capacity, and participation in the Brain Economy.
Talk 4: The Neuroscience of Modern Work – From Cognitive Overload to Strategic Asset Roxana Seifer	Applies evidence on attention limits, working memory, task switching, and cognitive fatigue to diagnose overload in digitally saturated workplaces. Reveals how organisational design can deplete neural resources at a systems level.	Reframes brain health as a strategic organisational asset rather than a wellness add-on. Reducing cognitive overload improves decision quality, sustainable performance, and innovation—directly protecting organisational Brain Capital.
Talk 5: The High-Performance Brain – Thinking Fast Under Pressure Kimmy Edwards	Explores stress physiology, attentional narrowing, neuromodulators, and the balance between automatic and deliberate decision-making under pressure. Draws lessons from elite sport to explain cognitive breakdown, resilience and recovery.	Equips individuals and leaders with knowledge – what is happening in my brain in high-stakes environments and how can I protect my brain health and effective brain skills in crisis response, and organisational resilience – key components of building Brain Capital.

Talk Title & Speaker

Neuroscience in Action

Building Brain Capital in Practice

Talk 6: Brain Economy Leadership Series – Strategic Vision for the Brain Economy [Maria Haggo](#)

Integrates neuroscience of learning, cognitive stamina, innovation, and behaviour change into organisational and economic strategy for brain-friendly workplaces. Demonstrated how misalignment between systems and brain function undermines performance, self-regulation and wellbeing.

Enables leaders to align policy, strategy, and organisational design with how brains actually function. Treats Brain Capital as a measurable, investable strategic resource that underpins sustainable performance and human flourishing in the workplace.

Talk 7: Are You Surviving or Thriving? From Stress to Strength [Mookie Lee-Menuhin](#)

Translates neuroscience of allostatic load, resilience pathways, emotion regulation, recovery, and neuroplasticity into practical frameworks for understanding chronic stress and adaptation.

Shifting people from survival mode to sustainable thriving reduces long-term health costs societally and increases individual energy, creativity, and engagement, ultimately enhancing Brain Capital at population scale.

Talk 8: Beyond Labels – Demographics, Identity and Wellbeing in Adult Autism Assessment [Howard Childs](#)

Applies developmental and cognitive neuroscience to adult autism assessment data, examining executive function, sensory processing, trauma history, gender, and diagnostic outcomes across the lifespan.

The data tells a story. Challenges categorical diagnostic models, suggesting applied neuroscience can help systems better understand how diverse minds navigate complexity, threat, and meaning. Supporting wellbeing, identity, and participation in society.

Talk 9: The Hidden Cost of Friction – The Economics of Friction for Organisations [Gwen Bach](#)

Uses neuroscience of cognitive load, processing limits, and error rates to identify micro-frictions embedded in processes, tools, and communication in the workplace. Links neural inefficiencies to measurable economic and health costs.

Reducing cognitive friction frees attention and working memory, improves productivity and decision quality, and converts lost effort into economic and human value. Making Brain Capital losses and gains visible on the balance sheet.

Talk 10: The Neuroscience of Play [Kimmy Edwards](#)

Explores play through reward pathways, novelty, exploration, predictive processing, and social bonding. Demonstrates play's role in neuroplasticity, learning, creativity, and emotional regulation across contexts and ages. Play in any context can be a free tool for anyone to apply.

Shows how play-rich environments develop core brain skills such as creativity, resilience, problem-solving, and cognitive agility. Integrating play can enhance cognition, adaptability, and long-term Brain Capital (brain health and brain skills).

WAND2025 Wrap-Up: Building Brain Capital from Here – Turning Insights into Action [Treesje Verlinden](#)

Our brain has always been in the classroom, in hospitals, in the workplace, and in communities. Why are we talking about it now?

The real question is, do we invest in building Brain Capital now, or perpetuate trillions in economic drag and human healthy life lost?