

Keynote address: Possibilities for Psychology: Reimagining Collective Responses and Wellbeing

Speaker: Professor Christopher Sonn, PhD. Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia, and Visiting Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract: Critical and community psychology in different contexts and countries have offered theories, methods, and practices to respond to issues of oppression, marginalisation and exclusion. In more recent times critical and decolonial scholars have challenged the disciplines to look inward and outward, to examine its role in reproducing privilege and dispossession. Central questions for those in university settings are, how and where is coloniality emboldened, whose knowledge count, whose knowledge is absent, who are we accountable to, and how do we reimagine possibilities otherwise, both in and from place. In this, presentation, I draw on work with the African and other diasporas and Indigenous people in our efforts of place and community making inside and outside our university within the longer history of settler colonial relations in Australia. Narrating through these projects that centre art, creativity, and culture, I show the persistence of dominant racialised lies in the lives of those constructed as other, and how these also become the basis for coalition. The examples highlight practices of reimagining archives, interrogating absences, restoring and reinventing ways of being, and pushing beyond disciplinary boundaries in the efforts to achieve collective dignity, structural equity, and safety in solidarity.