

# SPERA NEWSLETTER – August 2012



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## Society for the Provision of Education for Rural Australia Inc.

ABN 282 727 044 01

### From the President

SPERA once again has much pleasure in forwarding the August edition of our newsletter to you. We trust you are all keeping well.

The main focus of the last three months has been finalising the organisation the 28<sup>th</sup> National SPERA Conference. SPERA is partnering with the School of Education, University of Southern Queensland, to host this year's conference. In addition SPERA has been working in partnership with The University of Western Australia to host the third International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education at the University of WA in February 2013. Information is available on the SPERA website regarding the conference, along with details for call for papers (see pages 10-11).

I hope you will be able to participate in the Conference as the agenda is very rich with contributions from schools and academics passionate about rural and remote education. Our keynote speakers: Dr Aaron Drummond, Dr Pauline Taylor and Professor Belinda Tynan are features on Page 4 of this newsletter. We encourage you to register for the conference along with the conference dinner that will held at the best restaurant in Toowoomba – Gipps Restaurant (so I am told). Registration details for the Conference can be found at [www.spera.asn.au](http://www.spera.asn.au)

SPERA, due to the generous sponsorship of ICPA Queensland, ICPA Western Australia and the Catholic Education Office Toowoomba, has extended the opportunity for four pre-service educators to attend this year's conference. I sincerely thank our sponsors for this. The award recipients are: Abbey James from Flinders University SA, Megan Basell, from the University of Western Australia, Catherine Friend from Griffith University Queensland and Penelope Chesters from the Queensland University of Technology (refer to page 2 for article). I am sure, that as you read their applications (which be highlighted in the Conference Proceedings and the October edition of the SPERA Newsletter, you will be impressed and concur that they are worthy recipients of these scholarships. Also of note are the two university students who won pre-service awards for excellence in their teaching courses (Lorrae Charles and Kathleen Cross from the University of Southern Queensland) who will also be attending the conference.

Page 4 highlights the work SPERA has undertaken in partnership with the four Western Australian Universities in completing Office of Learning and Teaching project titled: **Developing Strategies to Address Critical Teacher Attraction and Retention Issues in Australian Rural, Regional and Remote Schools.**

Continued over.....

We wish to thank all those people who have renewed their membership and of course welcome all our new members. It is noteworthy that SPERA membership continues to grow. Finally, as the AGM draws near

(Thursday 27 September 2012 – to be held at the University of Southern Queensland following the day's conference proceedings) I encourage you to consider nominating for SPERA Executive. You will find the work not to be too onerous but truly rewarding!

I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to this newsletter and to Michael Preece for getting this edition underway.

Happy reading – SPERA Executive look forward to seeing and meeting you at the Summit.

Emmy Terry  
SPERA President, August 2012



**DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE**

..... act justly; love tenderly; walk humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8



## Pre-Service Educator Scholarships

Once again, SPERA has been provided with sponsorship to enable a number of pre-service educators to attend the N28th National SPERA Conference at the University of Southern Queensland in September this year.

***Pre-service Educator Sponsorships to attend 2012 SPERA NATIONAL CONFERENCE is provided by SPERA, the Isolated Children's Parents Association QLD, Isolated Children's Parents Association WA, and the Catholic Education Office Toowoomba.***

This offer of support is for four pre service educators, one from WA - a student currently enrolled at a WA University a second, to two pre-service students currently enrolled at a QLD University and a third from a University in one of the states of New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia. The scholarships are provided to enable participation in the 28th SPERA NATIONAL CONFERENCE to be held at the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA CAMPUS, 26 - 28 September 2012. The scholarship covers registration and contributes significantly to offset transport costs to Toowoomba. The cost of the SUMMIT dinner is covered by SPERA.

Each pre-service educator was required to write a brief statement (maximum 2 pages) registering their interest in attending the CONFERENCE and stating their interest in and commitment to rural education. This year SPERA received applications from 18 pre-service educators from around Australia. The successful applicants were:

Abbey James, Flinders University South Australia  
Megan Basell, The University of Western Australia  
Penelope Chesters, Griffith University, Gold Coast  
Catherine Friend, Queensland University of Technology.

Congratulations to these pre-service educators and we look forward to catching up at Conference in September. The next Newsletter will feature the four pre-service winners' statements.

# CONFERENCE 2012



## Conference 2012 **Developing Connections for Sustainable Futures** - Networking the Bush

**26 - 28 September 2012**  
University of Southern Queensland  
Toowoomba QLD



SPERA, Australia's leading professional development or learning organisation and advocate for rural education invites you to their 28th National Conference to be hosted by the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. This National Conference will bring together a range of teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, academics, community groups and organizations and parents who are passionate about rural education.

The 28th SPERA National Conference will be a key means of building and strengthening Australia's rural network and in doing so draw together an increasing body of work focused on improving education outcomes in the bush.



### Sub Themes

- Building and sustaining professional networks
- Bridging the gap – pre-service education; building partnerships with rural and remote communities;
- Networking universities to the bush
- Showcasing good regional, rural and remote education and training practice
- Expanding the network - local, national, international (global)
- Strengthening and networking rural education research

*Society for the Provision of Education for Rural Australia*

[www.spera.asn.au](http://www.spera.asn.au)

# Conference 2012 Keynote Speakers



**Dr Aaron Drummond** is a postdoctoral research fellow in the school of education at Flinders University. Aaron recently completed his PhD in psychology where he was investigating human short-term memory. His current research interests are primarily focused on rural education, particularly with regard to the role tertiary education facilities in rural Australia might play in both increasing equity and attracting and retaining youth. His research is also concerned with the manner in which people make decisions about where to live, and for how long.



**Dr Pauline TAYLOR**, Senior Lecturer, James Cook University . Pauline is currently seconded to teaching and Learning Development as Academic Developer. Pauline has received Awards including: 2010 JCU Award for Excellence: partnerships and engagement; ALTC National Award for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning (2008); JCU Faculty Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning (2008) and ATEA Early Career Researcher Award (2008).

Research includes: Education Policy (equity; language and literacy; Indigenous; performativity; evaluation); Leadership; Teaching and learning; Teacher education; Widening participation in Higher Education, Transitions and First Year Experience; and, Comparative Education.



**Professor Belinda Tynan** is Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Quality at the University of Southern Queensland. Professor Tynan was previously employed at the University of New England as Academic Director, Faculty of The Professions. She is an educator who has practiced as a teacher and academic across various education sectors in the fields of music, history and higher education. She has been researching for a number of years in the area of distance education and a variety of sub fields related to learning and teaching for new and rich media, mobile learning, virtual worlds, workload for elearning and learning design. With many refereed publications, invitations to speak, consultancies and a significant grant record. Belinda is passionate about the field. Belinda is frequently called upon to review for major journals in the field, funding bodies and thesis examination. She is also a current member of ASCILITE, ODLAA, HERDSA and ALT. Previously the treasurer of HERDSA and ODLAA and is on the organising committee of ODLAA's SUMMIT 2013. Belinda is currently co-supervisor of three postgraduate students within the School of Education at UNE.

**USQ** UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND  

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Faculty of Education





## Launch of Training Framework for Producing Quality Graduates for Rural Schools

Over the past two years a number of articles have appeared in this newsletter providing updates on the Office of Learning and Teaching project titled: ***Developing Strategies to Address Critical Teacher Attraction and Retention Issues in Australian Rural, Regional and Remote Schools***. SPERA has been a partner in this project and the entire project team are SPERA members.

On Wednesday 20 July the project came to a conclusion with the launch of the ***A Training Framework for Producing Quality Graduates to Work in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia***.

Applying the Framework will form the basis of ensuring pre-service teachers in Western Australia graduate with an understanding of working and living in rural, remote and regional Australia.

Key features of the Framework are:

### **Employing the National Professional Standard for Teachers**

The National Professional Standards for Teachers are a major milestone for teaching and learning in Australia as they articulate for the first time at a national level what it is that teachers are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The NPST provided a lens for the Framework in terms of focusing on the knowledge and skills needed in the rural, regional and remote teaching and learning context.

### **Building a set of essential knowledge and skills**

In doing this an A3 chart has been produced that makes a start at mapping the key knowledge, skills and concepts that need to be mastered at the Graduate level. The key knowledge, skills and concepts are mapped against the Graduate Descriptors of the NPST

### **Seven Teacher Guides**

Focus areas and their related descriptors from the NPST were used as the foundation for writing the seven teacher guides. Each guide has a brief introduction followed by a set of outcomes pre-service teachers need to aim to achieve. To support the achievement of the outcomes a number of tasks are set along with suggested reference/resource material.

As part of the project, pre-service curricular was also mapped across Australia to determine the extent of attention given to preparing teachers to work in non-metropolitan locations. Generally, there is very little focus in university courses on rural education and the challenges and rewards teachers face when taking up appointments

in rural, regional and remote locations. This is in spite of the fact that many pre-service teachers take up demanding appointments in non-metropolitan locations on graduation.

The Training Framework and its various components are on the SPERA website and can be viewed at <http://www.spera.asn.au/school/2012-06-28-training-framework>

The distribution of practicum placements across the year for each Western Australian public university was also mapped with the intention of identifying common times where collaborative/joint non-metropolitan practicum and field experiences can be planned.



Those attending the launch included members of the project's reference and network groups, Deans of Education, the Chair of the Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (WA) and representatives from education systems and sectors.



SPERA President Emmy Terry and the Hon Brian Ellis MLC and Chair, Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (WA) cutting the ribbon at the launch of the Training Framework

# Sidney Myer Rural Lecture

**Tuesday 4 September 2012**

6.30pm for 7pm-8.30pm. Main Corner, 1 Bay Road, Mount Gambier, South Australia

## Rural Communities... Education for the 21st Century

**Presented by Dr George Otero**

Dr George Otero is an international educational consultant from New Mexico who will share research and practice from around the world which demonstrate the ability of rural communities to work together to create positive futures for every child and young person.

The lecture will explore answers to four critical questions:

- What is our educational and moral purpose?
- What are our under-pinning beliefs about family, schools and communities?
- Why are relationships the key to educational success?
- How do we expand, improve and build new relationships to educate better?

**Follow-up Public Seminar**

**Wednesday 5 September 2012**

9.00 am – 12.00 noon. Main Corner, 1 Bay Road, Mount Gambier, South Australia

## Strengthening Learning Relationships between School, Family and Community

This seminar will look at principles, practices, and policies that are known to increase educational outcomes for all young people, especially in a rural context. Partnership practice results through sharing and dialogue, collaborative action and commitment to expanding and developing.

For further information visit: [www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/education/rural/building-communities/events.cfm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/education/rural/building-communities/events.cfm)

Please register for either, or both of these **FREE** events by 5pm **Tuesday 28 August 2012**.

P: 8721 2555 | E: [city@mountgambier.sa.gov.au](mailto:city@mountgambier.sa.gov.au)

# Catholic Education South Australia Review

During 2011 with the guidance of Paul Sharkey, the new Director, Catholic Education in South Australia (CESA) conducted a review. We consulted the key stakeholders including: students, school staff, parents, principals, deputies and Catholic Education Office personnel. It was a review of policies, procedures and services within our system to identify and strengthen good practice as well as the opportunity to make recommendations for improvement.

The twelve inquiries considered the following issues:

1. religious identity and mission of Catholic educational ministries
2. the spirituality and religious commitment of staff
3. the capacity of leaders
4. higher education partnerships
5. access and equity
6. the rural context
7. financing and planning
8. restructuring the Catholic Education Office
9. ecological conversion
10. whole school reform
11. leading learning
12. the educational power of emerging communication technologies

Each inquiry team's findings, including data-gathering, research, emerging themes and possible strategies were published in an Interim Report. Now each inquiry area has a Project Team working to manage the implementation of some of the recommended strategies.

Michael Preece is leading the Rural Education Project Team along with Bernadette Lacey, who is the principal of our most remote school, situated at Roxby Downs. We are working with the following recommendations:

- RC.1. ***Collaborate to provide technological facilities and software to ensure remote access to CEO-sponsored professional learning sessions***
- RC.2. ***Continue to explore ways of attracting teachers and leaders to rural, regional and remote schools in South Australia***
- RC.3. ***Review current consultancy arrangements in response to the needs of rural, regional and remote schools***
- RC.4. ***Explore the potential of a Rural Education Reference Group to enable a continuous and accessible rural voice in response to the consultative processes of committees and working parties.***
- RC.5. ***Develop a Rural Schools Policy as a formal expression of commitment to Catholic schooling in rural areas.***
  - RC.6. ***Lobby for increased rural access for students to specialist services.***

SPERA and its networks have been able to provide useful research data as well as several ideas that inform both good practice and the challenges we need to overcome.



As a SPERA representative I recently attended a meeting of the National Education Forum of Australia. Please find attached a paper 'An effective voice for National Teaching Associations' which was discussed at the NEF meeting held in Melbourne on Saturday 23 June 2012.

The paper was developed in response to concerns raised by NEF members that professional associations were marginalised when attempting to respond to the national agenda and have not been adequately involved in the development of the agenda. The NEF is an information sharing forum only and is not a constituted entity with authority to act on behalf of its members.

The meeting discussed the paper and agreed to send it to all member organisations to enable further consultation with the Executives/Boards of member organisations.

The working group see the paper as a starting point for discussion and if member organisations feel there is merit in this idea we are sure that there will be numerous suggestions for improvement which would be most welcome. Some people are beginning to explore some excellent ideas for a different membership structure and there has also been a suggestion for a different name for the entity described in the paper. The new suggestion being the Australian Alliance of Associations in Education (AAAE).

The proposal has been developed to create a more authoritative body to speak on behalf of national teaching associations. It is not intended to replace individual association's voice. Despite the excellent work of the NEF over the years, the NEF has not been a constituted body with the authority to speak on behalf of member associations. As a result, the NEF has not been in a position to advocate effectively on behalf of member teacher associations or enter into contractual arrangements for the benefit of member associations.

The purpose of this consultation is to gather suggestions to improve the proposal if it is to progress further. Please have any suggestions to me by 31 August 2012. The working party will then redraft the proposal before seeking expressions of interest from member organisations in participating in further development of the idea.

Emmy Terry



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## Rural Education on the Global Stage: Connecting for Innovation

Mark the 13th to 15th of February 2013 in your diaries for attendance at the Third International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education to be held at the University of Western Australia.

The event is hosted by the Society for the Provision of Education for Rural Australia (SPERA) and The University of Western Australia (UWA).

As the conference title suggests, the aim of the symposium is to “connect the dots” of research happening around the world in the area of rural education. International keynotes include Kai Schafft, Director of The Centre on Rural Education and Communities at Penn State University and Editor of the *Journal of Research in Rural Education* and Michael Corbett from Arcadia University, Canada, author of *Learning to leave: The irony of schooling in a coastal community*.

The program focuses on successful rural stories and the challenge has been to fit all the achievements into the program. The program will include the experiences of successful indigenous educators, accounts of effective school leadership, the development of tools to enhance the learning of pre-service teachers, graduates and experienced teachers and a host of stimulating parallel sessions.

Calls for papers are open until the end of August. All referred papers will be published in the SPERA journal, newly named the Australian and International Journal of Rural Education.

Program information is available from <http://www.spera.asn.au/> and <http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/isfire-2013>

The Symposium will include a range of supporting social and cultural events. Come and enjoy the beauty of Perth and the UWA campus, the delights of Western Australian beaches and stay on for some recreation in the Margaret River wine region and the south west forests.

Contact [Elaine.sharplin@uwa.edu.au](mailto:Elaine.sharplin@uwa.edu.au) for further details or assistance.

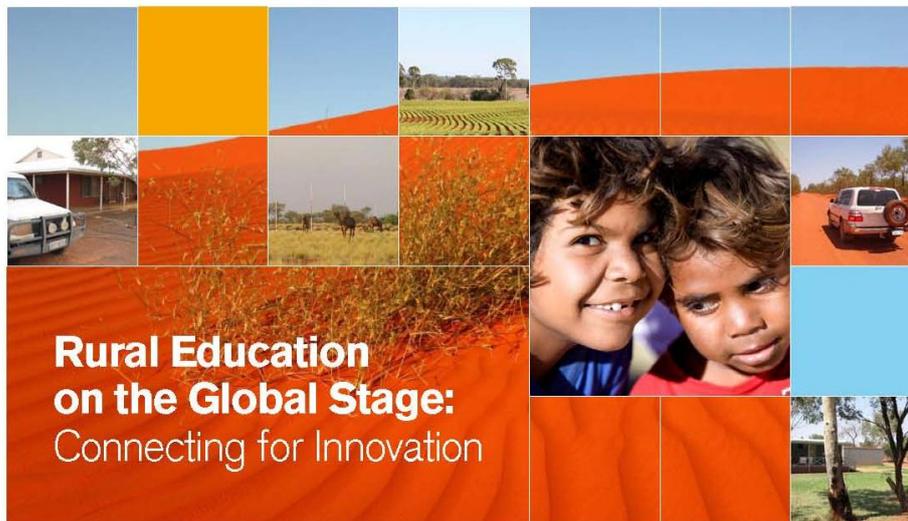


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## CALL FOR PAPERS

**The 3rd International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education (ISFIRE) will held in Partnership with the University of Western Australia; Society for the Provision of Education for Rural Australia and the University of New England (SiMERR).**



**Date:** 13 – 15 February 2013  
**Venue:** University of Western Australia

**Theme:** Rural Education on the Global Stage: Connecting for Innovation

### PERTH: WESTERN AUSTRALIA

International and Australian Educators and academics with an interest in rural and remote education are invited to the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education (ISFIRE) to be held at The University of Western Australia from 13-15 February 2013. You will participate in a stimulating education program of presentations, hands on workshops and panel sessions. Social events will also be a feature of this three day event.

## **SPERA'S JOURNAL: *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education***

The journal is produced three times per year and is part of the SPERA membership package. Non-members wishing to subscribe only to the journal currently pay \$A75 (GST included). This applies to individuals and institutions. Contact person: Graeme Lock [g.lock@ecu.edu.au](mailto:g.lock@ecu.edu.au)

## **MEMBERSHIP**

SPERA membership covers the calendar year.

### **2012 Membership Fees**

- **Full Membership \$110.00 (incl GST)**
- **Student Membership \$60.00 (incl GST)**
- **Overseas Membership \$155.00**
- **Pre-service Educator Membership Free (no journal supplied-journal is available at the standard subscription rate of \$25.00 per issue).**

A membership application form for 2012 is available on the SPERA website: [www.spera.asn.au](http://www.spera.asn.au)

## **KEEPING IN TOUCH**

Newsletter from Australian Council of State School Organisations  
[www.acsso.org.au](http://www.acsso.org.au)

Daily Education Newsletter from USA  
[www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org)  
National Rural Education Association (USA)  
[www.nrea.net](http://www.nrea.net)

Sidney Myer Chair of Rural Education and Communities  
[www.flinders.edu.au/education/rural](http://www.flinders.edu.au/education/rural)

Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia. Newsletters, Publications, Awards.  
[www.spera.asn.au](http://www.spera.asn.au)

## SPERA EXECUTIVE 2011 – 2012



From Left: Prof Graeme Lock, Dr Tania Broadley, Sue Ledger, John Borserio, Gary Allen, Prof Simone White, Charles Bradley, Assoc Prof Elaine Sharplin, Brian O'Neill, Don Boyd.

Absent: Paula Jervis-Tracey, Vince Connor, Michael Preece, Karen Noble, Emmy Terry,

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Email</b>
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