

SPERA NEWSLETTER - July 2015



www.spera.asn.au

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Society for the Provision of Education for Rural Australia Inc.

ABN 28 272 704 401



From the President Mr Brian O'Neill

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for the 2015/16 financial year. A great deal has been happening with SPERA and I am happy to highlight these activities in this edition.

This year has heralded the introduction of our **online journal** – that is right, the *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education* (AIJRE) has gone online and our first edition was released on Wednesday 20 May. We are fortunate in having an effective and efficient editorial team. Tania Broadley, Aaron Drummond, Paula Jervis-Tracey, Jodie Kline, Sue Ledger, Elaine Sharplin and Di Gardiner have all worked hard to transition the journal from a hard copy to an electronic one and I thank them for their diligence. It is no easy feat. If you have not yet received your AIJRE access details - that is, your unique logon and password information - please contact me so that I can ensure that you receive it.

The second activity in which your Executive has been engaged is the development of a new SPERA **website**. You won't see it as yet but trust me that it is under way and will be worth waiting for. After a tender process we have engaged the services of WA-based design company, Lodestone. The new website will be mobile-responsive, search engine optimised, social media integrated, providing an improved user experience. We look forward to launching the new site later this year.

Alongside the website redevelopment project has been the development of a new **logo** for SPERA. This new logo is featured in this newsletter and it is intended that a range of colours be used to colour code the various portfolios or sections of SPERA. For example, the sky blue version will be used for core SPERA business and administrative aspects, while an ochre version now represents the Australian Rural Education Awards (AREA). The new colour palette was cleverly derived from a photograph of rural Australia, building the landscape into the SPERA brand.

Jodie Kline, our 2015 **conference** co-ordinator, is working hard on developing a stimulating program for this year's conference. This year our conference will be held at Deakin University's Waterfront Campus in Geelong, Victoria, from Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 November. I am looking forward to catching up with you all in person.

There many wonderful and innovative things relating to rural education which are taking place throughout our country and some of these are featured in this newsletter. I encourage you to keep the good news stories coming as I want to help you to celebrate your successful projects.

Why not consider nominating an innovative project for one of the categories of the Australian Rural Education Awards?

As my school was awarded an AREA in 2011, I know the buzz that results from receiving this acknowledgement. Actually, I attended my first SPERA conference in 2011 to collect the award on behalf of my school and I haven't missed a SPERA National Conference or an International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education (ISFIRE) since that time. The 2011 conference was held at Flinders University and was organised by Professor John Halsey. I couldn't believe my luck; there I was meeting and having coffee with my heroes, the people whose articles I had read and admired – people like John Halsey, Colin Boylan, Elaine Sharplin, Simone White, Jo-Anne Reid, Maxine Cooper, Graeme Lock and Bill Green.

SPERA has amazing people as its members and they are people who do extraordinary things for education and rural education in particular. Two other such people are other heroes of mine, Professor Sue Trinidad and Dr Sue Ledger. Both ladies do amazing jobs and have provided me with terrific support ever since I joined SPERA. They epitomise everything that is so wonderful about our organisation.



Congratulations to Professor Sue Trinidad – Awards for her outstanding contributions

Professor Sue Trinidad was recently presented with two awards in recognition of her outstanding contributions to education and for her continued contribution to her professional teachers' association.

Sue was awarded a Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning at the Australian Government's 2014 Office for Learning and Teaching Australian Awards for University Teaching. Citations recognise and reward the diverse contributions made by individuals and teams to the quality of student learning. These awards are awarded to those people who have made a significant contribution to

the quality of student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period.

Sue was also awarded an Outstanding Professional Service Award at the Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia's (PTCWA) 2014 Presentation Ceremony. PTCWA awards for Outstanding Professional Service recognise the contribution to education in Western Australia, in a voluntary capacity to their professional teachers' association.

Congratulations Sue, we are proud of you and thank you for your magnificent contribution to our profession.

Congratulations to Dr Sue Ledger and Murdoch University

Teacher educators play a significant role in society for they not only ensure the continuation of our profession, but by training teachers they also directly impact on the continuation of every other profession. Congratulations to SPERA Vice President, Dr Sue Ledger, and Murdoch University who were awarded the Australian Teacher Education association (ATEA) School/University Research Award 2015 at the recent ATEA conference. Murdoch was presented the award in recognition of their commitment in providing high quality rural internships. Sue and Murdoch University, along with O'Connor Primary School, were awarded a SPERA Category 3 citation in the Australian Rural Education Awards in 2014 in recognition of the rural practicums and internships.

Well done Sue, we are proud of your contribution to our profession and thank you for your sustained work in providing quality rural teaching experiences.

Regards

Brian O'Neill

South Australian Rural Students Take to the Skies

A small independent school in Port Pirie offers an exciting program that attracts students from many other schools. The Mid-North Christian College, a non-denominational, co-educational, F-12 school of 260 students gives senior students the choice of Aviation Studies.

The program is available to any student who has a desire to enter the aviation industry. The Aviation Studies program provides a course of study to facilitate students to gain an insight into the aviation industry.

Aviation is an industry short on applicants because it is demanding. However, it offers a variety of opportunities. Some students may want to be challenged working at a high level of competency, while others may want to be a recreational pilot or may see this as the start of a career in aviation. The program caters for both avenues of entry into the world of aviation by providing experiences in both pilot training and engineering.

The course is conducted over two years with students completing 40 SACE credits in Years 10 and 11. Students attend one week per term (4 visits per year) of intensive learning, thereby accumulating the necessary hours of study for 20 SACE credits per year.

The pilot training is offered in recreational Aviation. The Engineering component is based on National Training Modules, giving students a good grounding in the type of work the Aviation Industry would demand. The skills gained carry over into many other trades because of the high levels required by the Aviation Industry. The Mid North Christian College obtains generous financial support from the Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith Fund to assist with the costs of accommodation, pilot training time, engineering equipment and materials.

Bronwyn Ellis, University of South Australia, Whyalla.

Student Teacher Draws on Scientific Experience to Lead Whale Shark Project

Dr Andrew Nield with Professor Lyn Beazley



A Murdoch University education student is taking the lead on a [whale shark tagging project](#)^[1] which will see pupils from schools across WA follow the progress of several of the majestic fish. Dr Andrew Nield, who holds a PhD from Murdoch for a [research project](#)^[2] on the emu's role in seed dispersal, will be guiding pupils from [Karratha Senior High School](#)^[3] where he is currently teaching under the [Pilbara Cities Internship Program](#).^[4]

The Whale Shark Race Around the World project is being run by [ECOCEAN](#)^[5] in conjunction with the [WA Department of Education](#)^[6], with the aim of engaging pupils in primary and secondary schools in science while giving them a taste of scientific research. As part of the project, several whale sharks which frequent [Ningaloo Reef](#)^[7] will be tagged and assigned to a participating school. Pupils from that school can then track their whale shark's progress as it swims through the world's oceans while learning about its biology and behaviour. The race begins on July 20 and ends on August 3.

Dr Nield said he was in a unique position to lead on the project in Karratha Senior High School having both tracked wildlife for his PhD and worked with the Australian curriculum as part of the Pilbara Cities Internship Program.

"This is a wonderful project for the pupils because it will bring alive the biological science we are teaching them," said Dr Nield.



“It will offer some real life perspective to the information they read in their textbooks or hear in classrooms”.

“Many of the students will have seen or even swum with whale sharks during visits to Ningaloo. The project will help them to understand that tagging, monitoring and scientific research are key factors in ensuring whale sharks continue to visit this habitat.”

The pupils will be able to monitor the tagged whale sharks via a website and compare their progress against those of other schools. Pilbara schools Baynton West Primary, Tambrey Primary and Roebourne District High School are also taking part in the whale shark race around the world.

Dr Nield began his internship at Karratha Senior High School at the start of 2015. He is due to complete his teaching degree at the end of 2015 and hopes to remain as a science teacher in the area.

The Pilbara Cities Internship Program is managed by the Murdoch University [School of Education](#) ^[8] under the direction of [Dr Susan Ledger](#). ^[9] It is a regional initiative funded by WA Government, Department of Education & Regional Development, Royalties for Regions and the Pilbara Development Commission – Pilbara Cities project.

The 12 month Murdoch Internship Program places high calibre science and math preservice teachers such as Dr Nield *insitu* in Pilbara Secondary schools with the aim of increasing their work readiness for rural contexts. ECOCEAN is run by Murdoch University shark researcher Brad Norman.

Murdoch University – <http://media.murdoch.edu.au> and *Sue Ledger*. **Murdoch University**.

Sun Rises Early for Calen Students Thanks to Passionate Principal

First published: 26 November 2014



Calen District State College Principal Brian O'Neill with L-R Kayla Donovan, Kristen Mackenzie and Zeddicaus Pearson Serjeant, three of the four Year 12 students from the small school who successfully completed SUN courses through CQUniversity this year.

Almost half (44.4%) of seniors who recently completed year 12 at Calen District State College are going on to tertiary studies, compared with the Mackay region 'school leaver to degree' average of 25.4%.

Principal Brian O'Neill is proud that, of the 18 seniors in 2014, six are at CQUniversity Mackay, one is enrolled in Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland, and one is studying Engineering with the NZ Navy.

Mr O'Neill says that 100% of his seniors gained an OP between 1 and 15. Meantime, four of them successfully completed Start Uni Now (SUN) courses with CQUniversity while still at high school.

“I am excited that so many have opted to go to university and so many have gone to CQUniversity,” he says.

“Eight probably seems small when one looks at large schools with large cohorts going on to tertiary but I'm proud of my guys.”

CQUniversity's Widening Participation team have been working hard in recent years to encourage a greater proportion of seniors from regional areas of Queensland to aspire to university studies.

In most Queensland regions, less than a third of seniors have gone on to degree studies in recent years, whereas the metropolitan Brisbane ratio is at 67.7%.

Calen College is showing that it's possible to buck the trend and to encourage more regional students to aspire to bachelor degree studies.

Mr O'Neill acknowledged CQUniversity's integral role in his students' success.

"Calen has been an 'Engaged Ed' school for a number of years and CQUniversity delivers programs from year 6 through to year 12. These programs have created an awareness of different careers and have made university attendance seem very real and attainable," the principal said.

Calen College has also been identified as demonstrating 'above average' NAPLAN gain compared to schools with similar students. Mr O'Neill said he believed that, along with intensive support and internal programs at Calen, CQUniversity's Engaged Ed program was a contributing factor in providing motivation and direction for students.

Marc Barnbaum, CQUniversity Australia.

Allied Health Students get a Chance to Experience Research Projects in Regional City

Once again in the November to February period after examinations, a scholarship scheme run by the University of South Australia's Department of Rural Health has enabled allied health students, mostly from the metropolitan area, to live and work in Whyalla for four or eight weeks. As well as giving them a taste of research and other project work, the scheme aims to encourage students to think about working in a rural area when they finish their degree.

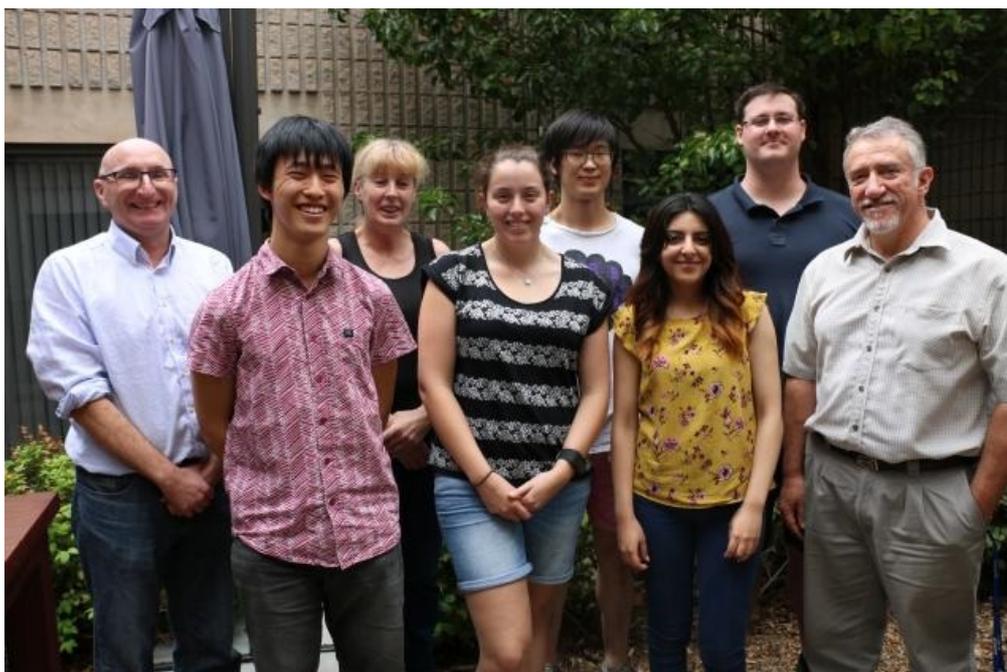
Out-of-town students have their accommodation provided at the on-campus student village, travel costs are met, and they all receive a stipend of \$375 per week.

The latest cohort worked on a wide range of subjects, including projects relating to suicide prevention, health promotion materials for older men, a work, health and safety management system for the local men's shed, a review of computerised therapy supports for people with cardiovascular disease, and a project to track the location of graduates.

A video to accompany a community grant application was produced, involving the learning of many new skills by one of the students, master classes covered various skills needed by researchers, and students were also encouraged to write a health promotion article for online publication by the local press.

Many positive comments were made about the whole experience, with students valuing the learning experiences as 'the real prize we walked away with'.

Bronwyn Ellis, University Department of Rural Health, University of South Australia, Whyalla.



2015 Summer Scholarship people – Dr Martin Jones, Christopher Ghan, Caralyn Hale, Fiona Norris, Ju Sung Han, Reem Hasaneen, Mitch Wilson and Dr Gary Misan.

Encouraging Regional Aboriginal Students to Pursue Health Careers

A conference aimed at encouraging regional Aboriginal students to pursue careers in health, held at the University of South Australia's Whyalla campus early this year, was timely: it came just after the release of the latest *Closing the Gap* report, which revealed only limited progress in areas related to health and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The event built upon the success of a similar conference that took place in Whyalla last year. Approximately 80 students in their final years from secondary schools across regional SA, along with their teachers, attended the Gidja Wongan Regional Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference (February 19-20). They came from schools in Cummins, Port Augusta, Whyalla, and as far away as Amata in the very north of SA. They heard from a range of Aboriginal role models and leaders from diverse health career backgrounds. There were also hands-on activities, including an art project.

Keynote speakers included Tyrone Toomey, an Aboriginal psychologist who provides counselling services and support for students and health professionals in rural and remote areas, and Ruth Wallace, an Aboriginal athlete who completed the New York marathon in 2014 and is working to improve employment prospects for Aboriginal youth. The conference showed young Aboriginal students the wide opportunities available to them as they consider their future plans.

As Ruth Wallace said, "It is all about setting your goals and the steps to get there and then with the support from people at these conferences and support from programs and family, they will reach their goals. When you do something different, uncomfortable, new or exciting you are living outside your comfort zone and you are growing and becoming confident, learning and developing in all different ways."

The conference was organised by UniSA's Department of Rural Health, the lead conference organiser being Research Associate Kate Warren, with Master of Ceremonies Zena Wingfield.

"The conference is designed to inspire those students who are nearing the end of their school years to consider pursuing careers in the field of health," said Kate Warren. "The latest *Closing the Gap* report is just one indicator of the importance and value of trying to promote health career pathways to students. The importance of encouraging school retention and enabling more Aboriginal students to complete their schooling and build career pathways is also what the conference aimed to help address."

Bronwyn Ellis. University of South Australia. Whyalla.

Do you have news to share? Let us help you spread the word.

SPERA aims to connect people and organisations with an interest in education and training to advance the development of rural Australia.

Our newsletter is a forum for the sharing of news, events, collaborations, concerns, ideas, experiences, photos and more. We invite you contribute to our next edition.

To submit a piece for inclusion in our August newsletter, please email president@spera.asn.au by Friday 21 August 2015. Where possible, please include a photograph or image to complement your piece.

Newsletter editions will be archived for future reference on the SPERA website, www.spera.asn.au.

We thank you for your ongoing support of education in rural Australia.



SPERA

Society for the Provision of
Education in Rural Australia

Australian Rural Education Awards

2015 Call for Nominations

www.spera.asn.au

Since 1994, the Australian Rural Education Award (AREA) has been awarded annually to an institution, organisation or industry to recognise excellence in rural education in Australia.

Category 1

Existing Projects which demonstrate a proven link between a school or learning context with the rural community and benefits a defined group. (\$2000 prize)

Category 2

Future projects which support new and creative thinking in professional practice aimed at improving student outcomes in a rural and remote setting. (\$2000 prize)

Category 3

Five pre-service citations will be awarded to pre-service teachers or institutions recognising demonstrated excellence in professional learning practice in rural and remote settings.

Nominations close Friday 4th September 2015

For more information visit www.spera.asn.au



31st NATIONAL SPERA CONFERENCE



MAPPING EDUCATION POLICY LANDSCAPES: RURALITY AND RURAL FUTURES

4-6 NOVEMBER 2015

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY | GEELONG WATERFRONT CAMPUS

SPERA, Australia's leading advocate for rural education invites you to their 31st national conference to be hosted by the Deakin University Centre for Research Educational Futures and Innovation, the School of Education and the Faculty of Arts & Education (Nov 4-6). The 2015 conference will bring together a range of teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, academics, pre-service teachers, community and parents who are passionate about rural education.

The 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 the implications of education policy and reform for rural students. This is an opportunity to showcase the achievements of, and opportunities available to, researchers, schools and communities within a complex policy landscape. The conference venue is Deakin University Waterfront Campus, Geelong, VIC.

Call for abstracts submission deadline

30 JULY 2015 (250 word abstracts)

Email submissions to: brian.oneill@cqumail.com

Notification of acceptance of abstracts

7 AUGUST 2015

Author confirmation of attendance

4 SEPTEMBER 2015

Conference

4-6 NOVEMBER 2015

www.spera.asn.au



Your Executive

If you have any questions or comments for us, please feel free to write. We'd love to hear from you.

Contact	Position / Portfolio	Email
Brian O'Neill	President, Conference 2015, Newsletter, Sponsorship, Strategic Direction	president@spera.asn.au bonei24@eq.edu.au
Sue Ledger	Vice President, Conference 2015, Journal, AREA Portfolio Director	s.ledger@murdoch.edu.au
Louisa Bowman	Treasurer, Website	treasurer@spera.asn.au louisa.bowman@curtin.edu.au
Charles Bradley	Public Officer	ccdecon@zipworld.com.au
Don Boyd	Strategic Direction, Conference 2015	d.boyd@curtin.edu.au
John Borserio	AREA, Pre-service Portfolio	John.Borserio@twb.catholic.edu.au
Aaron Drummond	Journal, Conference 2015	aaron.drummond@flinders.edu.au
Aspen Forgan	Pre-service Portfolio	aforgan@ism.catholic.edu.au
Paula Jervis-Tracey	Journal, Pre-service Portfolio Director	p.jervis-tracey@griffith.edu.au
Jodie Kline	Journal, Conference 2015 Director and Coordinator	Jodie.kline@deakin.edu.au
Louise Martin	Pre-service Portfolio, Parents and Stakeholders Portfolio, Sponsorship	councillor9@bigpond.com
Rebecca Mumme	Executive Officer	Rebecca.mumme@curtin.edu.au
Sue Trinidad	Conference 2015, Student Equity in Higher Education	s.trinidad@curtin.edu.au



Application for Membership 2015/16

New Member Member Renewal Pre-service

Name:

Postal Address:

..... State: Postcode:

Telephone: Facsimile:

Email:

(Please note: the newsletter, journal subscription and billing functions all require an email address)

Educational Institute:

(if applicable)

Position:

2015/16 Membership Fees

- **Payment can be made through the SPERA website www.spera.asn.au via PayPal**
- **Direct Debit – please include your name on the payment advice:**
[SPERA GENERAL OPERATING ACCOUNT;](#)
[BSB 036 105](#)
[ACCT No. 130332](#)
- **Cheques – to be made payable to SPERA.**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full Membership | \$110.00 (GST N/A) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student (Full Time) & Retirees | \$ 60.00 (GST N/A) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Overseas Membership | \$155.00 (GST N/A) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pre-service Teacher Membership | \$ 20.00 (GST N/A) |

I hereby apply for membership of SPERA for the period ending 31 December 2016.

Signed: Date:

As a non-profit organisation with an annual turnover of less than \$150,000, SPERA is not required to be registered for GST. No GST has been charged on goods or services supplied by SPERA, and accordingly no GST is claimable. Australian Business Number (ABN) 28 272 704 401.