



NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR REGIONAL, RURAL, REMOTE EDUCATION

18 - 20 AUGUST 2026 | MERCURE BALLARAT

DRAFT PROGRAM

as at 16/07/26*

Tuesday 18 August 2026

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
8:30am - 5:00pm			Regional University Study Hubs Network Symposium (must be a member of the Regional University Study Hubs)
1:00pm	Regional Uni Campus Forum	Principals Meeting	
3:00pm	Conference Registration opens		
5:00pm - 7:00pm	Welcome Reception & AREA Award Presentations		

Wednesday 19 August 2026

from 8:00am	Registration and Coffee on arrival
8:45am - 9:00am	Conference Opening & Welcome
9:00am - 10:00am	Keynote Presentation

10:00am - 10:30am

MORNING TEA

Room Theme	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4
	Student Engagement, Aspiration & Motivation	Pathways for Education	Connections: Industry, Education & Communities	Strengthening Rural Education Research
Parallel Session 1 10:30am - 11:00am	1A	1B	1C	1D
	"VECTOR" Virtual Education Connections to Overcome Remoteness. <i>Phil Brown, Chelsea Routledge, GUC</i>	Analysing the relationship between reading and writing scores on national literacy assessments in remote schools in Australia's Northern Territory. <i>Leonard Freeman, James Cook University; Bea Staley, CDU</i>	Partnering for Community Benefit <i>Ellyse McNish, La Trobe University</i>	Ethical research practice in remote communities: A cautionary tale <i>John Guenther, Stephanie Dryden, Robyn Ober, Josh Jenner, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Catherine Holmes, ANU; Rhonda Oliver, Curtin University</i>
	10 minute change over			
Parallel Session 2 11:10am - 11:40am	2A	2B	2C	2D
	Parents of First in Family University Students: A Systematic Review <i>Jaimey Facchin, University of Wollongong</i>	What American Rural Schools are Doing Right <i>Catherine Biddle, University of Maine; Ken Haptonstall, Colorado BOCES Association; Nikki Johnson, Campo (CO) School District</i>	Connecting Campus to Community <i>Beth Boland, University of New England</i>	What's Rural about rural education research? <i>Melyssa Fuqua, University of Melbourne; John Guenther, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Christopher Hudson, Westbourne Grammar School</i>
	10 minute change over			
Parallel Session 3 11:50am - 12:20pm	3A	3B	3C	3D
	Roots & Reach: How Student Employment is Transforming Regional Campus Life <i>Nicky Suter, Alistair McCosh, Tamieka McLean, Deakin University</i>	Uni Step-Up Online - Impact of Dual Enrolment Program for RRR students <i>Jamie Fenech, Aidan Stephenson, Emma Wakeling, Australian Catholic University</i>	Schools Plus: Supporting innovative practice in rural and remote communities <i>John Guenther, Robyn Ober, Majon Williamson-Kefu, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Kate Dixon, Sherril Nixon, Schools Plus; Jillian Marsh, Charles Sturt University</i>	Evaluating the Wuyagiba Bush Uni utilising the culturally responsive 'Dilly Bag' methodology <i>Andréa Jaggi, Sam Ricketts, Emilie Ens, Macquarie University; Godfrey Blitner, Helen Rogers, Wuyagiba Bush Hub Aboriginal Corporation; Luke Preece, The Nature Conservancy</i>
12:20pm - 1:20pm	LUNCH			
Room Theme	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4
	Student Engagement, Aspiration & Motivation	Pathways for Education	Connections: Industry, Education & Communities	Strengthening Rural Education Research
Parallel Session 4 1:20pm - 1:50pm	4A	4B	4C	4D
	First Bell to Farewell - How A Rural P-12 Became A Success Story <i>Danny Forrest, Dean Lockhart, Alexander Iser, Emma Milne, Wedderburn P-12 College</i>	Reimagining Access: An Integrated Pathways Model for Regional and Rural Learners <i>Carolyn King, Andrea Carr, University of Tasmania</i>	Innovation in rural school wellbeing staffing, leadership & programs <i>Lachlan Marchant, Kimberley Tempest, Cobram Secondary College</i>	Professional Experience: Preservice Teachers' Strong Beginnings in Regional, Rural and Remote Education Settings <i>Anna Du Plessis, The University of New England</i>
	10 minute change over			

Parallel Session 5 2:00pm - 2:30pm	5A	5B	5C	5D
	The role of place in the widening participation functions of Regional University Study Hubs	Branch Out Mentoring, Peer to Peer transition program	Rooted in Rural: Lessons Learned from Connecting Industry, Schools, and Communities through the ACES Grant	Leading a successful and flourishing rural primary school in Australia
	Joshua James, UTS; Danielle Keenan, Study Hubs Australia	Charlie Bracey, Youthrive Victoria	Kriss Kemp-Graham, Sharonda Pruitt, East Texas AM University (US)	Christopher Hudson, Department of Education Victoria; David Gurr, The University of Melbourne
10 minute change over				
Parallel Session 6 2:40pm - 3:10pm	6A	6B	6C	6D
	Rural Social Space as Method: Exploring Aspiration with Rural Primary School Students	Community-Led or System-Controlled? The 2030 Choice for Regional University Study Hubs	Curtin University and the Western Australian RUSH Network: Co-creating higher education options with RRR communities	Understanding the career pathways of leaders in small rural communities
	Han Worsley, University of Canberra	Chris Ronan, Study Hubs Australia	Luke Webster, Kelly Nowak, Humira Mirza, Curtin University	Pauline Thompson, Hernan Cuervo, The University of Melbourne
10 minute change over				
Parallel Session 7 3:20pm - 3:50pm	7A	7B	7C	7D
		Breaking Barriers in Remote Australia: Place-Based English Language Education and Workforce Pathways for Migrants in the Pilbara	It takes a community to invest in your success	Strengthening regional education through professional learning
		Susan Grylls, Shan Su, Relma Bule-Turner, Pilbara Kimberley University Centres	Angelina Ambrosetti, Central Queensland University	Tyron Paspas, Marcia Devlin, Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership
3:50pm - 4:20pm	AFTERNOON TEA + POSTER VIEWING SESSION			
4:20PM - 5:20PM	Keynote Presentation			
7:00pm	Conference Dinner			

Thursday 20 August 2026

from 8:30am Registration and Coffee on arrival

8:55am - 9:00am Day 2 Welcome

9:00am - 10:00am Keynote Presentation

10:00am - 10:30am MORNING TEA

Room Theme	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4
	Student Engagement, Aspiration & Motivation	Pathways for Education	Connections: Industry, Education & Communities	Strengthening Rural Education Research
	8A	8B	8C	8D
Parallel Session 8 10:30am - 11:00am	STEM in Sport Programme: A Place-Based Model Transforming STEM Pathways in Regional Western Australia	Credential Divides and Unseen Sides: Labour Market Segmentation and Regional Education Pathways	Perspectives on Delivering Bachelor of Nursing Education in a Rural Health Setting: Insights from Students	Transforming Research into Action: Regional, Rural and Remote Research Pitch
	<i>Shan Su, Susan Grylls, Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i>	<i>Ben Archer, Ros Cameron, Torrens University Australia</i>	<i>Louise Allen, Karen Missen, Naomi Cruz, Elissa Dabkowski, Chelsea Webb, Jane Anderson, Federation University; Sarah Bourke, Country Universities Centre, Bass Coast</i>	<i>Dean White, Megan Walsh, Dr Brianna McCourt, Martin Dickens, NSW Department of Education</i>
	10 minute change over			
Parallel Session 9 11:10am - 11:40am	9A	9B	9C	9D
	Pilbara Kimberley University Centres Supporting Aspiration and Higher Education Pathways for Secondary Students across Northern Western Australia	Bridging Education, Industry, and Communities: The Professional Certificate in Education (Rural & Regional)	Building Capability Across Australia's University Study Hub Workforce: Standards, Identity, and Sustainability	From Place to Possibility: Building Career Capability and Community for Regional, Rural and Remote Women
	<i>Jacinta Homann, Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i>	<i>Martin Dickens, NSW Department of Education</i>	<i>Danielle Keenan, Study Hubs Australia; Joshua James, UTS</i>	<i>Jane Coffey, Julia Richardson, Hannah Wilkinson, Curtin University; Kendall Galbreith, RRR Network of WA</i>
Parallel Session 10 11:50am - 12:20pm	10 minute change over			
	10A	10B	10C	10D
	The road to active learning	Growing our Own' Early Childhood Educators in Regional SA	Surveying the Field: A Bourdieusian Framework for Understanding the Community Impact of University Study Hubs	Travelling at the Speed of Trust: Co designing Regional Outreach in the Ovens Murray
	<i>Alexander Iser, Wedderburn College</i>	<i>Shanon Pillion, Uni Hub Spencer Gulf</i>	<i>Ben Archer Adelaide University</i>	<i>Sarah Lambert, RMIT University; Mark van Bergen, Country Universities Centre – Ovens Murray</i>

12:20pm - 1:20pm					LUNCH					
Room Theme	Room 1		Room 2		Room 3		Room 4			
	Student Engagement, Aspiration & Motivation		Pathways for Education		Connections: Industry, Education & Communities		Strengthening Rural Education Research			
Parallel Session 11 1:20pm - 1:50pm	11A		11B		11C		11D			
	Negotiating Uncertain Futures: Young People, Schooling and Aspirations in Rural NSW		Growing our Own' - Uni Hub's place-based cadetship program		Pilbara Kimberley University Centres (PKUC) Building Local Leadership through the Certificate IV in Leadership and Mentoring Program		Reimagining Rural Futures: Creativity, Economic Gardening, and UniversityCommunity Ecosystems for Regional Innovation			
	Leanne Fray, Sally Patfield, Jenny Gore, University of Newcastle		Richard Horgan, Uni Hub Spencer Gulf		Jacinta Homann, Pilbara Kimberley University Centres; Peta Sanderson, University of Notre Dame Australia		Philip Dennett, London South Bank University UAE			
					10 minute change over					
Parallel Session 12 2:00pm - 2:30pm	12A		12B		12C		12D			
	The Four C's - Beyond the Postcode		Local Solutions for Rural Healthcare Workforce				Why Choose Rural? The case for teaching in these schools			
	Danny Forrest, Wedderburn P-12 College; Robert Boucher, Swifts Creek P-12 School		Samantha Avitaia, UOW Regional Campuses				Andrew King, New Zealand Rural Schools Leadership Association			
					10 minute change over					
2:30PM - 3:00PM					AFTERNOON TEA					
3:00PM - 4:00PM						Keynote Presentation				
						Conference Close				

* Program subject to change.