



NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR REGIONAL, RURAL, REMOTE EDUCATION

18 - 20 AUGUST 2026 | MERCURE BALLARAT

PROGRAM

WADAWURRUNG AND DJA DJA WURRUNG COUNTRY

Tuesday 18 August 2026

8:30am – 5:00pm	Regional University Study Hubs Network Symposium Eureka Ballroom	
ROOM	VICTORIA 1	VICTORIA 2
1:00pm	Principals Meeting	Regional Uni Campus Forum
3:00pm	Conference Registration opens Convention Centre Lobby	
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Welcome Reception & AREA Award Presentation Convention Centre Lobby	

Wednesday 19 August 2026

from 8:00am	Registration and coffee on arrival Convention Centre Lobby			
8:45am – 9:00am	Conference Opening Convention Centre			
9:00am – 10:00am	Keynote — Robert Mitchell Bypassing the QWERTY of Education • Convention Centre			
10:00am – 10:30am	MORNING TEA • Sponsored by Bush to Boardroom • Convention Centre Lobby			
ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
10:30am – 11:00am	1A • Engagement & Aspiration	1B • Pathways	1C • Connections	1D • Research
Parallel Session 01	“VECTOR” Virtual Education Connections to Overcome Remoteness Phil Brown, Chelsea Routledge <i>VECTOR</i>	Analysing the relationship between reading and writing scores on national literacy assessments in remote schools in Australia’s Northern Territory Leonard Freeman <i>James Cook University</i> Bea Staley <i>CDU</i>	Partnering for Community Benefit Ellyse McNish <i>La Trobe University</i>	Ethical research practice in remote communities: A cautionary tale John Guenther, Stephanie Dryden, Robyn Ober, Josh Jenner <i>Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education</i> Catherine Holmes <i>ANU</i> Rhonda Oliver <i>Curtin University</i>

Wednesday 19 August 2026

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
11:10am – 11:40am		2B • Pathways	2C • Connections	2D • Research
Parallel Session 02		What American Rural Schools are Doing Right Catherine Biddle <i>University of Maine</i> Ken Haptonstall <i>Colorado BOCES Association</i> Nikki Johnson <i>Campo School District</i>	Connecting Campus to Community Beth Boland, Julia Day <i>University of New England</i>	What's Rural About Rural Education Research? Melyssa Fuqua <i>University of Melbourne</i> John Guenther <i>Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education</i> Christopher Hudson <i>Westbourne Grammar School</i>

10 minute change over

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
11:50am – 12:20pm	3A • Engagement & Aspiration	3B • Pathways	3C • Connections	3D • Research
Parallel Session 03	Roots & Reach: How Student Employment is Transforming Regional Campus Life Nicky Suter, Alistair McCosh, Tamieka McLean <i>Deakin University</i>	Uni Step-Up Online - Impact of Dual Enrolment Program for RRR students Jamie Fenech, Aidan Stephenson, Emma Wakeling, Paige Duffy, Mikayla Seymour <i>Australian Catholic University</i>	Schools Plus: Supporting innovative practice in rural and remote communities John Guenther, Robyn Ober, Majon Williamson-Kefu <i>Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education</i> Kate Dixon, Sherril Nixon <i>Schools Plus</i> Jillian Marsh <i>Charles Sturt University</i>	Evaluating the Wuyagiba Bush Uni utilising the culturally responsive 'Dilly Bag' methodology Andréa Jaggi, Sam Ricketts, Emilie Ens <i>Macquarie University</i> Godfrey Blitner, Helen Rogers <i>Wuyagiba Bush Hub Aboriginal Corporation</i> Luke Preece <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>

12:20pm – 1:20pm	LUNCH • Sponsored by Sagecool • Convention Centre Lobby			
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12:40pm – 1:10pm	Workshop (Convention Centre Part 1) — Tips and tricks: How to write a good practice article for the AIJRE John Guenther, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Mel Fuqua, University of Melbourne; Ben Archer, Adelaide University			
12:40pm – 1:10pm	Learn more about Sagecool (Convention Centre Part 2) — matching students with the teachers who suit them best, in live online classes Sagecool			

Wednesday 19 August 2026

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
1:20pm – 1:50pm	4A • Engagement & Aspiration	4B • Pathways	4C • Connections	4D • Research
Parallel Session 04	First Bell to Farewell - How A Rural P-12 Became A Success Story Danny Forrest, Dean Lockhart, Alexander Iser, Emma Milne <i>Wedderburn P-12 College</i>	Reimagining Access: An Integrated Pathways Model for Regional and Rural Learners Carolyn King, Andrea Carr <i>University of Tasmania</i>	Innovation in rural school wellbeing staffing, leadership & programs Lachlan Marchant, Kimberley Tempest <i>Cobram Secondary College</i>	Professional Experience: Preservice Teachers' Strong Beginnings in Regional, Rural and Remote Education Settings Anna Du Plessis <i>The University of New England</i>

10 minute change over

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
2:00pm – 2:30pm	5A • Engagement & Aspiration	5B • Pathways	5C • Connections	
Parallel Session 05	The role of place in the widening participation functions of Regional University Study Hubs Joshua James <i>UTS</i> Danielle Keenan <i>Study Hubs Australia</i>	Branch Out Mentoring, Peer to Peer transition program Charlie Bracey <i>Youthrive Victoria</i>	Rooted in Rural: Lessons Learned from Connecting Industry, Schools, and Communities through the ACES Grant Kriss Kemp-Graham, Sharonda Pruitt <i>East Texas AM University (US)</i>	

2:30pm – 3:00pm	AFTERNOON TEA + POSTER VIEWING SESSION • Convention Centre Lobby			
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POSTERS	POSTER 1	POSTER 2
	Learning through local stories: Exploring Rural Teachers' Perceptions and Approaches to Social and Emotional Learning Subekshya Ghimire <i>Ohio University</i>	Scoping the Field: A Visual Framework for Understanding the Community Impact of University Study Hubs Ben Archer, Sharron King, Sarah McDonald, Sarah Hattam <i>Adelaide University</i> Cathy Stone <i>University of Newcastle</i> Kerry Russo <i>James Cook University</i>

Wednesday 19 August 2026

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
3:00pm – 3:30pm	6A • Engagement & Aspiration	6B • Pathways	6C • Connections	6D • Research
Parallel Session 06	Rural Social Space as Method: Exploring Aspiration with Rural Primary School Students Han Worsley <i>University of Canberra</i>	Community-Led or System-Controlled? The Future of Regional University Study Hubs Chris Ronan <i>Study Hubs Australia</i>	Curtin University and the Western Australian RUSH Network: Co-creating higher education options with RRR communities Luke Webster, Kelly Nowak, Humira Mirza <i>Curtin University</i>	Understanding the career pathways of leaders in small rural communities Pauline Thompson, Hernan Cuervo <i>The University of Melbourne</i>

10 minute change over

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
3:40pm – 4:10pm		7B • Pathways	7C • Connections	7D • Research
Parallel Session 07		Breaking Barriers in Remote Australia: Place-Based English Language Education and Workforce Pathways for Migrants in the Pilbara Susan Grylls, Shan Su, Relma Bule-Turner <i>Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i>	It takes a community to invest in your success Angelina Ambrosetti <i>Central Queensland University</i>	Strengthening regional education through professional learning Tyron Paspas, Marcia Devlin <i>Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership</i>
7:00pm	Conference Dinner Convention Centre			

Thursday 20 August 2026

from 8:30am	Registration and coffee on arrival Convention Centre Lobby			
ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
9:00am – 9:30am	8A • Engagement & Aspiration	8B • Pathways	8C • Connections	8D • Research
Parallel Session 08	STEM in Sport Programme: A Place-Based Model Transforming STEM Pathways in Regional Western Australia Shan Su, Susan Grylls <i>Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i>	Credential Divides and Unseen Sides: Labour Market Segmentation and Regional Education Pathways Ben Archer, Ros Cameron <i>Torrens University Australia</i>	Teaching and Student Perspectives of Delivering a Bachelor of Nursing Education Program in a Rural Health Setting: A qualitative study Louise Allen, Karen Missen, Naomi Cruz, Elissa Dabkowski, Chelsea Webb, Jane Anderson <i>Federation University</i> Sarah Bourke <i>Country Universities Centre, Bass Coast</i>	Transforming Research into Action: Regional, Rural and Remote Research Pitch Dean White, Megan Walsh, Dr Brianna McCourt, Martin Dickens <i>NSW Department of Education</i>
10 minute change over				
ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
9:40am – 10:10am	9A • Engagement & Aspiration	9B • Pathways	9C • Connections	9D • Research
Parallel Session 09	Pilbara Kimberley University Centres Supporting Aspiration and Higher Education Pathways for Secondary Students across Northern Western Australia Jacinta Homann <i>Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i> Luke Webster <i>Curtin University</i>	Bridging Education, Industry, and Communities: The Professional Certificate in Education (Rural & Regional) Dean White, Martin Dickens, Megan Walsh <i>NSW Department of Education</i> Matthew Brown, Amy Smith <i>University of Canberra</i>	Building Capability Across Australia's University Study Hub Workforce: Standards, Identity, and Sustainability. Danielle Keenan <i>Study Hubs Australia</i> Joshua James <i>UTS</i>	From Place to Possibility: Building Career Capability and Community for Regional, Rural and Remote Women Jane Coffey, Julia Richardson, Hannah Wilkinson <i>Curtin University</i> Kendall Galbreith <i>RRR Network of WA</i>
10:10am – 10:40am	MORNING TEA • Convention Centre Lobby			

Thursday 20 August 2026

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
10:40am – 11:10am	10A • Engagement & Aspiration	10B • Pathways	10C • Connections	10D • Research
Parallel Session 10	The Road to Active Learning Alexander Iser <i>Wedderburn College</i>	'Growing our Own' Early Childhood Educators in Regional SA Shanon Pillion <i>Uni Hub Spencer Gulf</i>	Surveying the Field: A Bourdieusian Framework for Understanding the Community Impact of University Study Hubs Ben Archer <i>Adelaide University</i>	Travelling at the Speed of Trust: Co designing Regional Outreach in the Ovens Murray Sarah Lambert <i>RMIT University</i> Mark van Bergen <i>Country Universities Centre – Ovens Murray</i>

10 minute change over

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
11:10am – 11:40am	11A • Engagement & Aspiration	11B • Pathways	11C • Connections	11D • Research
Parallel Session 11	Negotiating Uncertain Futures: Young People, Schooling and Aspirations in Rural NSW Leanne Fray, Sally Patfield, Jenny Gore <i>University of Newcastle</i>	'Growing our Own' - Uni Hub's place-based cadetship program Richard Horgan <i>Uni Hub Spencer Gulf</i>	Pilbara Kimberley University Centres (PKUC) Building Local Leadership through the Certificate IV in Leadership and Mentoring Program Jacinta Homann <i>Pilbara Kimberley University Centres</i> Peta Sanderson <i>University of Notre Dame Australia</i>	Reimagining Rural Futures: Creativity, Economic Gardening, and University-Community Ecosystems for Regional Innovation Philip Dennett <i>London South Bank University UAE</i>

Thursday 20 August 2026

ROOM	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 1	CONVENTION CENTRE PART 2	CONSERVATORY	EUREKA BALLROOM
11:50am – 12:20pm	12A • Engagement & Aspiration	12B • Pathways	12C • Connections	12D • Research
Parallel Session 12	The Four Cs - Beyond the Postcode Danny Forrest <i>Wedderburn P-12 College</i> Robert Boucher <i>Swifts Creek P-12 School</i>	Local Solutions for a Rural Healthcare Workforce Samantha Avitaia <i>UOW Regional Campuses</i>	Leading a successful and flourishing rural primary school in Australia Christopher Hudson <i>Department of Education Victoria</i> David Gurr <i>The University of Melbourne</i>	Why Choose Rural? The Case for Teaching in these Schools Andrew King <i>New Zealand Rural Schools Leadership Association</i>
12:20pm – 1:20pm	LUNCH • Convention Centre Lobby			
1:20pm – 2:20pm	Closing Keynote — Conor Ashleigh Everybody has a story worth hearing • Convention Centre			
2:20pm – 2:30pm	Conference Close Convention Centre			
2:30pm – 3:00pm	AFTERNOON TEA • Sponsored by CRERD • Convention Centre Lobby			



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