

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this 'bumper' issue of *Education in Rural Australia*, in which we are pleased to present four keynote speeches from the very successful 2010 conference, three articles on contemporary issues in rural education, and reflective comments on a rural teaching experience from a pre-service teacher.

Michael Barbour presents us with a discussion about K-12 online learning in Canada and the United States. He outlines the history of the growth of online learning, including benefits and challenges, before suggesting that further research is required into the suitability of online learning for rural students.

In the second paper, Scott Gorringer explores the Engoori framework as a means of reconnecting people and reigniting community engagement discussions. In particular he emphasises the need to overcome the prevalent deficit discourse about Aboriginal people, before discussing the aforementioned framework. Scott concludes that engaging Aboriginal people in education will succeed when space is created for Indigenous people: construed as minds, hearts and hands.

John Halsey, a long-time contributor to this journal, considers the future of rural communities through generating understanding of space, spatiality and history. He then takes us to the Mallee region of South Australia, and the Karoonda Farm Fair in particular, when he discusses the data obtained from a survey to which 379 people responded. These data are used to show, together with ideas about space, spatiality and perspectives about history might be used to consider the issue of rural sustainability and how this might be developed. John also gives attention to White's (2010) concept of middle ground.

Our fourth article, from Simone White and her colleagues in the TERRAnova project, discuss results from their research about how rural schools have successfully attracted and retained teachers. After discussing the study's context, method and conceptual framework, Simone identifies the themes emerging from their data, including the link between school leadership and community renewal, development of university-school partnerships, and the desirability of recognising the social and creative enterprise work undertaken by rural teachers and school leaders.

In our fifth article, Nita Lester explores the importance of teachers and principals building relationships with rural communities. Nita's analysis of data collected through interviews, results in the development of a theoretical model, which outlines a pathway to success for teachers and principals in remote rural contexts. She concludes with the observation that to develop relationships is crucial in determining the success or otherwise of remote rural school leaders.

Brian Hemmings, Russell Kay and Ron Kerr extend our knowledge about how social contingencies impact pre-service teacher rural experiences or deter pre-service

teachers from participating in such experiences. Surveying 84 final year pre-service teachers in a regional Australian university, Brian and his colleagues determine the existence of a number of impact factors, prior to discussing the implications of these on pre-service teacher educators and policy makers.

The next paper discusses an ALTC project involving the four public Western Australian universities, in itself quite a unique event. Sue Trinidad and her colleagues show how they are building on the work of the TERRAnova ARC and RRRTEC ALTC projects to develop models for non-metropolitan pre-service teacher practicums in contributing to the sustainability of rural communities.

In our final article, we are pleased to present the reflections of Josie Davidson, a pre-service teacher in 2010, on her internship in a school located in a small rural town. Josie takes us through her internship experience, describing the classes she taught, her non-classroom roles and responsibilities, together with the highlights of her practicum.

Graeme Lock  
Simone White  
Wendy Hastings  
Maxine Cooper

## **Editors**