

Case studies: 2022 National Conference for Regional, Rural and Remote Education

Name	Email	University/ School / CUC	Other presenters	Abstract title	Abstract
Robert Mitchell	rmitchel@uccs.edu	University of Colorado	Franny Harris	Remote Coupling: Building Effective Higher Ed-Rural Classroom Collaboration	This case study focuses on an innovative solution for the ongoing rural teacher shortages in the United States. Since 2017, university faculty from one public university in Colorado has partnered with the Campo (Colorado) School District – a district with approximately 50 students in a very remote region – to serve as the classroom instructor for the secondary school. In this initiative, the university professor takes on the role of the regular high school teacher, leading to numerous beneficial outcomes for everyone involved in the project. For students, this unique arrangement has provided access to rigorous instruction that links to university resources, provides interaction with internationally recognized speakers and content experts, and supports connections to international students attending university in the United States. The benefits of this initiative include the addition of a new voice in the rural classroom, plus the university faculty also benefit from their direct and sustained interaction with secondary students in the rural school. In addition, the faculty member gains access to an environment that becomes very receptive for the development of various research efforts. This collaborative partnership between rural schools and the university is uncommon, largely due to the geographic location of the school and the specialized focus inherent within university academic structures. Yet, the project has proven to be successful as students are able to leverage their experience with the university faculty to gain admission and financial support to attend university. This case study demonstrates a true win/win partnership that should be replicated wherever possible.
Melanie Jay	melanie.jay@cuccclarencevalley.edu.au	Country University Centres		CUC Clarence Valley Community Partnerships 2022	The CUC Clarence Valley Community Partnerships Program is about connecting us with our community. This project is twofold. 1. It gives an opportunity for our students to support local businesses, organisations & professional services. We are now a community that provides access to higher education, we have opened the doors to many higher education opportunities. This is a great opportunity for local businesses to access student volunteers for their organisation. 2. It gives an opportunity for social interaction whilst we support local businesses. Studying by distance, and online has many challenges. One of them is the lack of an on-campus culture and social networking opportunities which can leave students feeling isolated. Students also have the challenge of finding time to study, often limiting their opportunity for full-time work and leaving them on a tight financial budget. We want to remove these social and financial barriers by increasing opportunities for social interaction with other students and supporting our local businesses at the same time.

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Annette Daniels	wuyagibastudyhub@gmail.com	Wuyagiba Bush University	Kevin Rogers, Helen Rogers, Emilie Ens, Sue Pickham and Andrea Jaggi.	Educating remote Aboriginal leaders of tomorrow	<p>We are Annette Daniels and Kevin Rogers the Traditional Owners of Wuyagiba, where the Wuyagiba Bush University is located in eastern Arnhem Land. We created and run the Wuyagiba Bush Uni in partnership with our families and Macquarie University staff. The Bush Uni was Annette's mother, Mrs Cherry Wulumirr Daniels vision of having both ways learning and culture to teach our young people around south east Arnhem Land. We began to make this dream happen in 2018 with a trial. We had only one classroom and we all camped in small tents next to Kevin Rogers and his wife Helen's house out at the remote Wuyagiba outstation, about 2 hours drive from the nearest town. There were 20 students in the first trial and one of the first teachers was one of our local young people Melissa Wurramarrba who is now about to complete her Bachelor of Arts in Education at Macquarie Uni this year. She will be the first University graduate since Kevin and Mrs Daniels completed their degrees in the mid-1980s. In 2019 we won a 4 year Regional Study Hub grant from the Australian Government Department of Education. This gave us funds to build a big classroom, dorms, teacher accommodation and a kitchen. We also developed our both ways University curriculum over the following years. In 2020 Macquarie University accredited two of our cultural units, so now our students can study four full University 1st year level subjects out on Country 2 Academic Units and 2 cultural units. We believe this is the first time University level subjects have been developed and taught out on Country by remote living Aboriginal communities and we are very proud of our achievements, because it hasn't been easy. We are looking forward to telling you more about our unique two-ways University program.</p>
Robert Brown	r.m.brown@cqu.edu.au			One University's View of the RUC Landscape: Emerging Trends and Prospective Futures	<p>CQUniversity (CQU) and the Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC) formed partnership in 2011 to support distance education students. Together they pioneered a model that partnered the University's online learning resources with local staff providing specialist academic and pastoral support. The model has been very successful, and provided a template for the Australian Government's Regional Study Hub program, subsequently rebadged as Regional University Centres (RUCs). As the RUC model enters its fifth year, it has now blossomed to encompass some 13 RUCs covering almost 40 locations, with more foreshadowed to commence in the near future. CQU has continued to be an enthusiastic player in the RUC space, with six formal partnerships covering about half of these regional locations, making it the largest current provider of RUC student enrolments. However, the GUC model is no longer the dominant paradigm. Not surprisingly, the spread of RUCs has meant that a number of different models have now emerged, which reflect differing communities, local needs and philosophies. It is therefore perhaps timely to present a survey from one university's perspective of the development of the RUC landscape over the past five years, and to present some speculation about how the program might develop into the future.</p>

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Anita Kuss	ceo@unihubsg.org	Unihubs		Growing our Own - Local Pathways to Jobs of our Future	This initiative aims to bust the unfortunate and pervading belief still held by many regional students, parents and even schools that there are ‘no jobs in the country’ and that the only opportunity for a professional or technical career is to move to a capital city. This view is exacerbated by a lack of accurate and appropriate guidance for regional students in relation to post-school education and careers and the pathways between school, university and vocational qualifications to meet skilled workforce needs becoming increasingly complex and confusing. Not only are there abundant opportunities for a professional career in regions but compared to metropolitan students, regional university graduates are more likely and more quickly able to gain full time employment, attract higher starting salaries and enjoy faster career progression .
Kim Gregory	kim.gregory@unihubsg.org	Unihubs		On the (im)possibility and (un)desirability of aspiring to university: New insights on fair access to higher education for rural youth.	Lower enrolment in higher education by students from regional and remote areas continues to be categorised as an intransigent policy problem. But to what extent is lower enrolment a problem, and can it change? This paper illuminates how the complex geographical dimensions of ‘community’ interrelate with the lived experience of young people, thereby complicating how fair access to higher education is commonly understood and addressed. Drawing on case studies of three rural communities we use interviews (n = 10) and focus groups (n = 27) with students, parents, teachers and community members to explore the local formation of post-school aspirations. In Olearia, a community decimated by destructive drought, there is little chance of being able to physically access higher education. In Oldfields, another drought affected community where students have viable career options in the nearby mining industry, university is largely seen as unfamiliar and irrelevant. In the prosperous township of Ironbark, the utility of a university education is questioned given a plethora of high paying local jobs that do not require university degrees. The case studies demonstrate diverse inequalities within the policy category of ‘rural and remote’ that often escape attention in the widening participation agenda and illustrate the (im)possibility and (un)desirability of aspiring to university for many students in regional and remote areas. In this paper, we unearth the subtle and contextualised inequalities shaping fair access to higher education and demonstrate that ‘low aspiration’ is not the problem it has been made out to be in rural communities.

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Jacinta Homann	jacinta@puc.edu.au	Pilbara Universities Centre		Pilbara Universities Centre (PUC) Case Study	<p>In recognition of the ongoing skills shortage crisis and the unique challenges of access to higher education in the Pilbara, the PUC, sought to develop a grass roots solution to a local problem. In collaboration with major industry organisations and university partners, the PUC identified two Graduate Certificate courses relevant to the Pilbara-based mining industry that would upskill existing employees to meet immediate and future workforce requirements. In 2021 the PUC initiated a pilot project with two cohorts of Rio Tinto employees, establishing a program of supported delivery of these courses. In T2, 2021, eight industry employees commenced studying CQUni's Graduate Certificate in Asset Maintenance and Management, and seven students commenced the Graduate Certificate in Project Management. The PUC provided these Graduate Certificate students local face-to-face support with all aspects of their studies, including contemporary industry knowledge, application and enrolment advice, study preparation and introduction to online student and learning platforms. Throughout the university term, students received regular bespoke and individualised PUC communications around their studies (important dates, upcoming assessments, and events) and weekly tutorial support at the PUC. In their first term of study all 15 students achieved distinction or high distinction grades in their units, and all acknowledged PUC support as a strong contributing factor to their study accomplishment.</p>