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Name	Email	University / School / CUC	Other presenters	Abstract title	Abstract
Cathy Stone	cathy.stone@newcastle.edu.au	University of Newcastle	Sharron King & Chris Ronan	Partnerships between schools, communities and Regional University Centres.	Across Australia, students at regional, rural and remote high schools are considerably less likely to go to university than their metropolitan counterparts. Recent research (King et al., 2022) with regional high schools in South Australia, using a mixed-methods approach, has highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnerships between universities schools, communities and Regional University Centres in encouraging and supporting more regional high school students to be able to consider university as a realistic post-school option. Such collaborations include universities seeking the input of schools, students, parents, local business and industry to improve the effectiveness and relevance of a number of activities, including university outreach visits to regional schools; availability and accuracy of information about costs, financial support, scholarships and other practicalities of going to university; and the range and diversity of courses available to those in regional areas. Effective collaborations could also see the expansion of peer mentoring programs to encompass transition support for both prospective regional students and first year undergraduates. Building partnerships between universities, high schools and Regional University Centres (RUCs) would highlight student and staff awareness of the support available for studying university online through the face-to-face interaction and technology infrastructure offered by a local RUC. This research indicates a clear need for these types of collaborations between universities, schools and community stakeholders and resources - collaborations that are relevant and targeted towards the needs of the local community, with the focus on understanding university in general, building aspirations and widening higher education participation.
Brad McLennan	Brad.McLennan@usq.edu.au	University of Southern Queensland		Remote Education Tutors: Building a platform to develop career pathways.	This presentation reports on the 2021 survey of Remote Education Tutors (RETs) in Australia and an in-depth case study of governesses and home tutors. Central to the delivery of distance schooling, RETs are accountable for direct supervision and educational support of students. This project strengthens and adds to the existing literature about the tangible existence of this occupation of RETs and the complex roles that they are required to play in the education of distance schooling students.
Richard Holden	richard.holden@unsw.edu.au	University of New South Wales	Isabella Dobrescu, Adrian Piccoli, Philip Roberts, Alberto Motta, Sarah Walker.	Cultural Context in Standardized Tests	We report results from a field experiment on cultural context in standardized tests among 6th- and 8th-grade school students in Australia. The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a series of basic-skills tests given to Australian students. In our experiment, 1135 students in Dubbo – a regional area in the North-Western part of the state of New South Wales – were randomly assigned to either a regular NAPLAN test or a con-

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Holly Randell-Moon	hrandell-moon@csu.edu.au	Charles Sturt University		Indigenous Automation in the Budj Bim eel and Brewarrina fish systems: Cultural Responsivity in Cross-Cultural Indigenous Science Education	Indigenous Automation in the Budj Bim eel and Brewarrina fish systems: Cultural Responsivity in Cross-Cultural Indigenous Science Education In this presentation we outline how an understanding of pre-invasion Indigenous engineering can contribute to teaching and delivery of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) materials in high schools and universities. A growing body of work argues that effective STEM delivery should engage with First Nations communities, their epistemologies (ways of knowing), and their aspirations. This presentation shows how to create a cross-cultural space – a middle-ground – between western and traditional Indigenous knowledge domains by examining Indigenous engineering principles of automation in the Budj Bim eel and Brewarrina fish systems. This cross-cultural space can be achieved through the Mutual Cultural Responsivity framework. Despite principles of automation underpinning the design and operation of many Indigenous agricultural and aquacultural practices, contemporary engineering and technological debates regarding automation exclude Indigenous perspectives. The eel systems at Budj Bim are a vast aquaculture network designed by Gunditjmara peoples to manage and automate the flow of eels and fish. The Brewarrina fish traps, devised by the Ngemba peoples, are estimated to be one of the oldest human technologies and like the eel traps, worked to automate fish farming. This presentation shows how western and Indigenous knowledges can be productively bought into a cross-cultural space and effectively taught together in STEM education. These case studies' use of automation are an impactful way of connecting Indigenous engineering practices to contemporary STEM debates about technology and sustainability. Our lesson plans engage students through intergenerational learning and demonstrate Indigenous science and engineering as an ongoing and lived practice.

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Janine Delahunty	janined@uow.edu.au	University of Wollongong		Exploring motivations and aspiration: Students from regional and remote areas achieving hoped-for futures	Deeper issues around participation of regional, rural and remote (RRR) students in university belie characteristics of determination, resilience, work ethic, problem-solving skills and creativity that often characterise RRR people. RRR students aspire for hoped-for futures, but like others who experience educational disadvantage, it is the capacity to aspire that sets an unlevel playing field in terms of unequal access to resources, information and 'insider' knowledge of university. Achieving future aspirations is much more challenging with geographical distance and within the realities of compounding multiple equity factors, but is unrelated to motivation or academic ability. This will be explored through an Australia-wide project, focusing on qualitative data from university students (n=150) from 21 different universities or campuses. Most students self-selected other equity categories as well as 'Regional/Remote'; they were also very likely to be studying online, part-time and have other competing responsibilities. This presentation views the data through the lens of 'possible selves' theory to explore motivation, and considers how lived experience of collective hardship and familial/community ties can RRR students in good stead for university. These participants clearly did not lack aspiration or motivation to achieve. However, this must be understood around the complexity and emotionality of going to university, as well as the structural challenges that make decisions for hoped-for futures that much more difficult. Recommendations for how institutions can better support their students from RRR areas will be discussed.
Mollie Dollinger	mollie.dollinger@deakin.edu.au	Deakin University	Darci Taylor & Lea Piskiewicz	There is no one size fits all university.	There is no 'one size fits all' university. For every student who dreams of a global, interconnected university, there is a counterpart, a student yearning for a local, community-embedded model that they feel represents their identity, values, and local context. The challenge for universities in the coming years is to understand how they can balance their commitment to global networks and diversity, while supporting a strong connection to place and local missions, and by doing so, jointly support both international and local engagement. In this presentation we will discuss findings from three participatory design workshops that invited Deakin students and staff (n=21) to discuss their perspectives on co-creating a community embedded university (CEU). Our findings highlight the breadth of activities that universities could consider to build stronger local connections, including sharing resources, leveraging local knowledge and expertise, and reorientating the curriculum towards local issues and trends. However, underpinning these activities, we also found that participants desired a CEU which created healthy, sustainable relationships between the university and local communities, centred on transparency, communication, and authenticity. Our findings underscore the importance in exploring not only 'what' universities can do, but 'how' they do it, and how activities are jointly decided upon and enacted in collaboration with local communities. We will also conclude our presentation with a series of future CEU scenarios to showcase the potential value that can be created when universities and communities work together.

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Lynette Vernon	l.vernon@ecu.edu.au	Edith Cowan University	Dr Lynette Vernon	Understanding wellbeing challenges for rural and regional university students across Australia during crisis disruption.	Australian university students have encountered unique challenges in the wake of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally pre-2020, one in five university students, experienced poor wellbeing. In Australia, youth aged 15-24 have the highest prevalence of psychological distress and youth in regional areas have limited access to specialist mental health facilities. Disruptions from COVID-19 further affect students' wellbeing, underscoring the need to understand students' challenges and concerns. Using an explanatory mixed-method design this research reports on survey data collected from students in November and December 2020, from 39 universities across Australia. The study is cross-sectional with quantitative analysis of survey data; however, an open-ended qualitative response informs the quantitative outcomes of the study. The survey instrument has questions related to a student's profile determining rurality as well as gender, age, ethnicity, first-in-family status, pathway and field of study, and questions that examine levels of psychological distress. The survey findings indicate for students living in the rural and regional Australia on average, higher levels of institutional collective support associated with lower levels of psychological distress and on average, higher levels of institutional leadership support associated with lower levels of psychological distress. Technology access contributed to distress. The findings inform courses of action to better support regional and rural university students in crises. Recommendations are noted for higher education institutions to address the wellbeing needs and challenges posed by crisis disruption.
Angelina Ambrosetti	a.ambrosetti@cqu.edu.au	Central Queensland University	Dr Angelina Ambrosetti	Regional delivery models: Tailoring for unique partnerships	Over the past decade, universities have been developing innovative practices and new delivery models to meet the needs of a wider variety of students, particularly those who could not access higher education previously. The rise of the Regional University Centre model provides an opportunity for education innovation through specific partnerships developed between RUCs and universities. In this presentation we discuss two specific partnerships that were developed to deliver initial teacher education in two diverse regions in Australia. Each partnership is unique, with the offering and delivery of teacher education programs tailored to the context and students who enrol. Underpinning the development of each unique delivery model are considerations such as regional and community needs, the needs of the student cohort and the utilisation of local experts and role models as influencers. Although each of the partnerships differ in established protocols, the outcomes for communities and the profession are similar. For example, our research so far has shown that the combination of local study support and professional relationships retains students in the course. It also keeps future teachers within the regions preventing youth drain to the metropolitan cities and increases the professional capabilities of the existing teachers within the region that benefit schools and the community long-term.

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Tanya Rutherford	tanya@learngrowbecome.com	Learn Grow Become		Learning to learn: An exploration of the impact of a self-paced online - Learn2Learn program on students' mindset, study strategies, confidence and self-efficacy	Despite advances in technology and increases in offerings of online learning, there continues to be a discrepancy between the education levels of those people living in regional and remote locations compared to their metropolitan counterparts. It is acknowledged that this is due to a range of factors, including differences in socio-economic status, ease of access and the number of 'first in family' students attending university. Research shows there are also some consistent elements that impact retention, including motivation and mindset, effectiveness of study strategies and confidence/self-efficacy. This presentation reports on a small-scale trial of an online Learn2Learn program designed to enhance these specific student attributes. The trial was conducted with 20 first year university students from various disciplines, all located in regional locations, and assessed using online surveys and focus groups. The program was trialled in two groups, one with and one without the support of a peer mentor. Whilst acknowledging the dangers of drawing conclusions from small cohorts, the survey results combined with the focus groups' feedback appeared to indicate that the program had influenced the students' perception of their mindset, their study strategies, and their confidence/self-efficacy. It appeared that the impact of the online Learn2Learn program was enhanced by the support of a peer mentor, and the trial also identified important insights as to the timing of such programs.
Sue Kilpatrick	sue.kilpatrick@utas.edu.au	UTAS		Connections between industry, education and communities, Pathways for education	Rural communities have a significant role in influencing career and education pathway choices. Families, teachers, employers and others may have conversations that influence young people and adults considering pathway choices. This research, funded by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, aimed to equip these 'key influencers' with knowledge and confidence to have supportive pathway conversations with RRR students and adults, i.e.. the focus was not on students themselves, but rather those who influence their decisions. We used a Community Based Participatory Research approach in three communities to address the question: How can a whole of community approach best equip key influencers to inform and support RRR student tertiary education participation? Community working parties were established and worked with researchers to identify education and career information interventions for key influencers suited to each community's individual geographic, demographic and employment context. Communities were resourced with a local pathway broker and small budget for interventions. Individual interventions and overall project approach were evaluated. Findings suggest that researcher-rural community partnerships can be effective in equipping key influencers with confidence and knowledge to inform and support pathway choice. Community partnerships can take account of community assets, and allow for interventions that address community contexts. Partnerships should foster community ownership to deliver pathway information interventions that are flexible, accessible, sustainable, place-based and authentic. This presentation sets out a model for partnerships that equip key influencers in rural communities to support education and career pathway choices, sharing templates to assist others use the model.

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Samantha Avitaia	sharris@uow.edu.au	University of Wollongong		Supporting Regional Student Success: An Umbrella of Care	The University of Wollongong (UOW) is made up of a network that extends to the NSW regional communities of the Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands, Batemans Bay and Bega. In 20 years UOW's regional campuses have collectively produced more than 3000 graduates, most of whom have stayed in their local area. Students on UOW's regional campuses are typically from a broad range of demographics including; low-socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, First in Family, learners with disabilities, and their carers. Nonetheless, UOW regional campus student retention exceeds comparative institutional and national rates, and academic results are higher than those of fellow metropolitan students. Utilising Tronto's (2013) 'Ethics of Care' as a theoretical framework, this study investigates the practices that support the successful retention of regional students. Through focus groups with students and staff on each campus, we found the ethics of care upheld cultures of support and community on the regional campuses. These cultures in turn contributed to students' engagement through belonging, self efficacy and wellbeing, ultimately resulting in successful progression. As students from multiple demographic backgrounds are typically enrolled on Australia's regional campuses, we wish to share our findings with other regional and metropolitan institutions, assisting in building a best practice framework for supporting all students' successful progression through tertiary education.
Julie Hollitt	jhollittpsychologist@gmail.com			Conceptual worlds and contextual markers: The case of context and formal schooling in regional,	Formal schooling in regional, rural and remote Australia represents a diverse range of what are loosely known – and sometimes referred to - as 'contexts'. This presentation speaks to an investigation of 'context' as an ill- defined concept used in the evaluation of differences in learning, and proposes instances of context or the 'case of context' as a more useful form of observation of learners in regional, rural and remote Australia. The 'case of context' is considered using notions of contextual markers, conceptual worlds and 'contexts within contexts' as co-constituting any case of context. It also proposes including all learners in formal schooling by considering 'imagined learners' and 'context-specific learners' as participating in formal schooling.

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Genevieve Haskett	genevieve.haskett@flinders.edu.au	Flinders University	Connections between industry, education and communities	Allied Health Regional Codesign – connecting industry, education and communities in place-based curriculum design and testing.	The recent review 1 of regional, rural and remote (RRR) education emphasised the need to improve participation and retention rates and strengthen tertiary options for RRR students. Flinders Allied Health Regional Codesign project responds to the need for place-based solutions in areas of critical skills connecting communities, industry, education and professional associations throughout the process. This co-design project aims to produce a regionally centric, connected, professional learning network. Students across South Australia will connect around location and discipline leading to a home-grown pool of Allied Health professionals to support RRR health services, economic development and workforce retention and growth. Using program logic modelling 2 , 3 to guide the development of a new curriculum process, key evidence will inform a model that is practical, feasible and contextualised. The model design ensures the influence of complex factors and interactions informs the final model for place-based allied health curricula. 4 This presentation will outline the consultation, design and testing phases of the project including the co-design with key stakeholders and reflective practices on the project's possible and actual impacts.
Craig Grocke	clgrocke@gmail.com	SA		The Influence of Place Attachment and Social Capital on Rural Education Partnerships.	This research explores the importance of place attachment and social capital as a missing link in the development of regional education partnerships to attract and retain students and educators. Mainstream approaches to regional development tend to focus on specific ad hoc programs, especially facility investment and programming to attract talent. These are often managed centrally within city-based institutions without recognising the distinctiveness of regional communities and place culture. This can limit the potential of rural education partnerships to support a sense of belonging for students and educators. This presentation details how place attachment and social capital, operate as reciprocal influences on place-based partnerships aimed at connecting people to place. Findings are based on a PhD case study research conducted in the Barossa region of South Australia between 2014 and 2021. In regional Australia, place-based partnerships play a central role constituting the social, cultural, and economic dynamic of towns. Towns, equally, play a vital role for students and educators as a place for social interaction, a place to generate and activate social and other capitals, and a place to anchor personal as well as social identity through the processes of place attachment. Place attachment in this context is a less known influence on attracting students and retaining educators, and their potential contribution to the social, economic and environmental prosperity of regional Australia. This position is explored in this presentation.

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Kathleen Blair	kathleen.blair@uts.edu.au	University of Technology, Sydney		The UTS Partnership Evaluation Tool: evaluating our partnerships for social impact	In the higher education context, partnerships often occur across sectors and situate universities in relationships with a highly diverse range of industry, government and community organisations. These cross-sector partnerships are a viable and constructive approach to addressing interrelated societal problems that may be beyond the scope of influence of individual organisations or sectors, and they are critical for effecting systemic change. However, partnerships and how we work with others is rarely evaluated. In 2022, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), is piloting the newly developed Partnership Evaluation Tool. This tool has been designed to assess the characteristics, performance and overall quality of a partnership. It measures the overall experience of partners; power, trust, mutual benefit, collaboration and alignment of goals and expectations; outcomes of the partnership, including social impact; and strengths and barriers of the partnership. This presentation will report on the results of the pilot and how the Partnership Evaluation Tool can be used to evaluate and enhance partnerships across universities, industry and community to enact positive social change.
Stephanie Woerde	stephanie.woerde@reconciliation.org.au	Reconciliation.org		Reconciliation in Regional, Rural and Remote Educational Communities	Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program supports educational institutions to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The ANU-CSRM's ongoing evaluation of Narragunnawali has shown that the number of schools and early learning services engaged with Narragunnawali has continued to increase since the program's inception and, indeed, those schools and services actively engaged with Narragunnawali maintain and increase the reconciliation activities that they have committed to through time.[1] However, engagement is not always even, and it is important to consider the particular place of regional, rural and remote institutions within the wider reconciliation-in-education community of practice. There have been relatively lower rates of participation in the Narragunnawali Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) development process amongst schools in outer regional and remote Australia, and schools and services in regional and remote areas have been generally less likely to progress their RAPs through to publication.[2] Nonetheless, there have also been examples of exceptional commitment to reconciliation demonstrated by institutions operating outside of metropolitan areas, such as the Narragunnawali Award- winning Forbes and Tumut Community Preschools. This presentation will explore some of the challenges and opportunities for rural, regional and remote educational institutions in Reconciliation Action Planning activities, and how the Narragunnawali program may be able to support into the future.

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Matthew Bunn	matthew.bunn@newcastle.edu.au	Newcastle Uni		Country University Centres and emplaced rural regional and remote higher education students	This paper explores the experiences of people who remain in rural communities to complete HE study. To do this, our research has worked with the Country University Centre's (CUC). Our research consists of 38 in-depth interviews with HE students registered with the CUC's across four NSW sites. Its aim has been to engage with rural people who have been left out of the 'metonymic reason' of policy making, whereby the simplification of rural life has meant the invisibilisation of the great diversity of RRR communities. The consequence of this is a great deal of RRR policy, and subsequent outreach and equity programs are conceptualised without understanding the pressures, struggles and intersecting forms of inequality that characterise RRR experiences of study. Higher education provision has thus struggled to provide any meaningful options for emplaced RRR students, having primarily engaged in campus building with narrow degree options, or offering distance study. The paper thus engages with the shape and character of HE from the vantage of remaining, either out of necessity or desire, in rural, regional and remote communities. We explore key issues related to this, including the desire and necessity to remain in RRR place, trying to find suitable spaces and support for HE study, the value of HE study and the lack of support for RRR engagement with professional training. We conclude in considering how Country University Centres (CUCs) are providing a crucial step along the pathway to reimagining RRR higher education.
Matt Lumb	matt.lumb@newcastle.edu.au	Newcastle Uni		Advanced neoliberal governance and the emergence of Australia's rural higher education problem	The focus on regional, rural and remote (RRR) access and participation within Australian higher education policy has been present in different forms for some decades. Recent attention to RRR concerns has tended towards a modern governance practice whereby parts of a population are made visible to bureaucracy only through their construction as a problem demanding a solution. This requires a narrow group of parameters – permissible or sanctioned definitions and measurements for example, that provide a means to construct specific forms of intervention. Through these practices, bodies within populations are rendered legible in new ways that enhance their alignment with contemporary governance arrangements. We contend that governance pertaining to rural space requires a flattening and simplification for it to become legible. To understand this, we turn to the notion of 'metonymic reason' (Santos, 2014, p.165) to articulate some key issues we see as associated with current rural higher education policy in Australia. Metonymic reason displaces forms of knowledge and being that do not suit the internal structure of its logic, effectively producing 'non-existence'. This is because despite something being, metonymic reason excludes the possibility of it being known. This produces a dominant form of knowledge that displaces the very people ostensibly represented within it. Specifically, we use this idea to demonstrate the reasoning used to construct 'the rural' as a higher education problem that seeks a distinctive, and subsequently binary, mode of policy and governance for the needs of people beyond major metropolitan cities.

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Kelly Linden	Klinden@csu.edu.au	Charles Sturt University		Improving assessment outcomes and student perceptions with embedded tutorial support	Widening participation has led to an increase in the number of students from non-traditional backgrounds accessing higher education. However, there is limited information available on interventions that identify and support disengaged students from equity groups at scale. This study investigates the performance and retention of commencing students from different equity groups and the impact of an early intervention targeting disengaged students at a large regional Australian university. The data presented in this study have been analysed from all domestic students enrolled in a bachelor-level course from one regional Australian university 2019-2021 inclusive. 86% of students were from at least one of the 5 equity groups examined. Disengaged students were identified as not submitting an early assessment item in week 4 in the first semester and were provided targeted support via phone and 2-way SMS. If a student identified as disengaged had successful dialogue with the outreach team, they were 1.5 times more likely to pass and 2 times less likely to receive a zero fail. 17% of students were members of 3 or more equity groups which was associated with decreased progress and retention rates, and an increased risk of being identified as disengaged. A key finding of this study is that equity group membership is not necessarily an overall risk factor; however, at stages of a student's commencing session, certain equity groups experience significant disadvantages. This disadvantage is magnified for students who belong to multiple equity groups.
Noelia Roman	nroman@csu.edu	Charles Sturt University		Teaching First: Professional Development for Sessional Academics	As universities rapidly moved to online learning, urgent professional development was provided to academic staff. Many academics had never taught online before, and some with little formal teaching knowledge taught key subjects. Furthermore, they were not aware, or understood, services available to support them. These key subjects played a pivotal role in transition to university, especially for students from non-traditional backgrounds. A six- session course was developed to introduce sessional academics to online teaching at a large regional university. The sessions were funded, so that sessional academics could claim hours for the readings, attendance and post-work completed. Participants were also offered a paid initial 1 hr personal consultation with an educational designer and/or an Academic Skills advisor to support the embedding and modifications of content discussed within the series. A survey to determine previous teaching experience and specific areas of interest was sent to participants. Discussion during the sessions and general feedback was collected as well as the various changes made due to the personalised support given. Feedback indicated that the sessions and the personal consultations have allowed staff to confidently modify subjects quickly and efficiently to support student learning in the online environment. Offering a series of sessions focussed on identified needs, as well as pre and post session activity, enabled deeper engagement and reflection leading to greater impact than traditional single session professional development.

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Aime Sacrez	a.sacrez@latrobe.edu.au	La Trobe Uni		Building Sustainable Pathways into Rural Teaching	Up to 50% of teachers leave the teaching profession in Australia within five years, with even higher rates for regional, rural and remote (RRR) schools (Cuervo, 2016; Dorman & Dyson, 2014). Our experience suggests that a factor in the attrition of teachers from RRR schools may be their transition from studying to teaching, due to the dual challenge of beginning teaching and adapting to the requirements of RRR schools and communities. The Understanding Rural Teacher Transitions project is working with local RRR schools in North-Eastern Victoria to investigate the experiences of graduate teachers during this transitional phase. The results of this research will then inform the development of practical strategies to improve the teacher transition experience, potentially including the use of digitally mediated mentoring, peer interactions and simulations (Quinn et al., 2022), as well as innovative course work such as immersive placements for preservice teachers (Mitchell et al., 2019). Here we present findings from Stage One of our research, an online survey of graduate RRR teachers and focus group interviews with graduate teachers working in RRR Victorian Catholic schools, with implications for educators seeking to build stronger support networks across RRR schools and promote partnerships with universities to foster sustainable pathways into RRR teaching.
Leanne Fray	leanne.fray@newcastle.edu.au	Newcastle University		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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Kylie Austin	kaustin@uow.edu.au	University of Wollongong		Reimagining WP partnerships in regional, rural and remote areas	Partnerships have been positioned as a critical vehicle to delivering Widening Participation (WP) and subsequently increasing access to higher education in the Australian and United Kingdom (UK) national policy contexts. Collaboration between schools, universities, vocational education providers, community organisations and industry is needed to broaden exposure to diverse pathways and professions beyond post-secondary schooling and reduce barriers to enable individuals to seamlessly transition between education and employment. This is particularly important for students in regional, rural and remote (RRR) areas to improve tertiary education participation outcomes. Despite this, WP continues to be uncoordinated in RRR areas, or less frequently WP activities are offered in these contexts. Drawing on the expertise of practitioners in schools and universities, this paper explores how school and university staff located in Australia and the UK qualitatively experience WP partnerships. These partnerships will be understood through Bourdieu's lens of social reproduction, enabling geographical, organisational, and personal influences on partnership development to be understood. Combining these understandings with extant literature and key learnings from the Australian and UK contexts, key learnings for enacting WP partnerships in RRR areas will be presented.
Kylie Austin	kaustin@uow.edu.au	University of Wollongong		Partners in Career Education: Collaboration being key to developing best practice career approaches.	Career education is shifting to meet the needs of a changing world of work, as individuals navigate complex journeys through multiple post-school educational pathways and professions. This situation has provided an impetus for schools, higher education providers and industry to work together to allow students to seamlessly move between various qualifications and employment opportunities to fulfil their aspirations. This presentation and paper will detail the outcomes of a national study that considered how partnerships across various educational sectors may improve career outcomes for young people. Findings indicate how career development learning (CDL) research can be co- designed in ways that leverage partnerships between multiple stakeholders. A partnership approach to CDL research can have significant benefits for participants as learners, as this approach provides an opportunity to utilise stakeholders' knowledge of student cohorts and to position CDL as an ongoing and iterative process through school and into future study and employment.

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Jess Harris	jess.harris@newcastle.edu.au	Newcastle University		Professional Development	Schools striving to achieve high quality teaching in every classroom have led to a thriving industry in teacher professional development (PD) worth billions of dollars internationally. Teachers and school leaders in in rural, regional and remote settings, however, face significant challenges in accessing high-quality PD. Face-to-face PD is frequently delivered in metropolitan centres, posing issues associated with the time and costs of travelling for PD and difficulties in obtaining teaching relief in small communities. Online PD, on the other hand, rarely provides teachers with meaningful opportunities for interaction or collaboration with peers. This presentation focuses on the development and evaluation of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) Digital, an approach to PD that uses digital technologies and videoconferencing to connect teachers across school sites. We report on findings from a two-arm randomised controlled trial (RCT) involving 111 teachers from small, regional, and remote schools across NSW. The study demonstrated positive effects of participating in QTR Digital on the quality of teaching, teacher self-efficacy, and student academic achievement in reading. Participating teachers described QTR as offering ease of access to high-quality, collaborative PD that supported them in creating networks across a system that can be isolating for many. This approach challenges traditional text-based or asynchronous notions of online PD to enable teachers from all schools to engage in high-quality, rigorously tested forms of PD.
Stefan Schutt	S.Schutt@latrobe.edu.au	La Trobe Uni		Understanding Perceptions of Alternative Placements	For pre-service teachers (PSTs), professional experience (or 'placement') is a core element of their professional training. The role of the modern teacher requires flexibility, adaptability, and creative innovation. The COVID-19 lockdowns have highlighted the adaptive skills of teachers in switching to and from online/remote learning, often at short notice. Given "professionals act with insight in their field, deal with complexity, uncertainty and are autonomous in non-process environments" (Weller, 2021, p. 279) placements offer rare opportunities for such skills to be practiced, and to establish the local connections that are important to regional and rural life. However, not all mainstream school placements allow PSTs such opportunities. To fill this gap, non- traditional placements in settings such as community learning centres or schools working with disadvantaged students have long been shown to offer benefits including "learning from other experts, working with colleagues, gaining confidence to teach, experiencing other cultural settings, working with children in informal settings, the importance of personalising learning" (Sangster & Green, 2011, p. 469). Our experience suggests, though, that many PSTs are hesitant to take up the opportunities these kinds of placement offer. Through interviews with PSTs and supervisors of alternative urban, regional and international placements, this research aims to better understand their benefits, and the reasons why PSTs may or may not choose to undertake them. We report on emerging study findings and resulting strategies for helping uncertain PSTs see the value in alternative placements.

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Name	Email	University / School / CUC	Other presenters	Abstract title	Abstract
Lisa Turner	lisa.turner@cucfarwest.edu.au	CUC Farwest		LSA student success	Widening access programs and advancements in online learning technology have improved access to higher education for non-traditional students. However, the Productivity Commission (2019) emphasise that with improving access, focus is now needed on ensuring non-traditional students succeed in higher education, as "access without support is not opportunity" (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008, p.50). Aiming to positively impact student retention and success, the Learning Skills Advisor (LSA) program is a student support initiative established in 2018 at the Country Universities Centre Far West (CUCFW) in Broken Hill, NSW. This face-to-face learning skills support service consists of 4 key features namely: an inclusive, personalised learning pedagogy, which, on a practical level is support that: builds academic capabilities; is delivered in-person; and, is a source of practical insider knowledge of the higher education environment. To explore the impact of the LSA program on student success this presentation will align the program's features with current research in this field and Devlin and McKay's (2017) 8 factors that contribute to success for low socioeconomic (LSES) students. Preliminary data on student participation in the program, along with qualitative student feedback, will be shared to suggest that the LSA model of student learning skills support at CUCFW is having a positive impact on the success of students who engage with it.
Kelly Linden	Klinden@csu.edu.au	Charles Sturt University		Improving assessment outcomes and student perceptions with embedded tutorial support.	Institutional commitment to the student experience in the early stages of university has the greatest potential to exceed student expectations. The cross-institutional Embedded Tutors Program provides undergraduate students with access to subject content experts in approximately 30 first-year subjects from across the university in each of the 3 main teaching sessions. A meeting scheduling tool was embedded in the learning management system and a Zoom link is sent to students during the booking session to allow easy access for students studying online from across Charles Sturt University's 6 regional campuses. Tutors provide one-on-one draft assessment feedback in subjects with a large written assessment task, or small group weekly sessions in content-rich subjects, such as physiology and chemistry. Approximately 1200 students book with a tutor each session and students who met with a tutor had higher average assessment marks and cumulative subject marks than those students who did not attend a session. Feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive, with 78% of students rating the tutor session 'extremely helpful'. This study provides evidence of the value of subject-specific draft assessment feedback for students in first-year subjects. It also provides a sustainable model for providing equitable access to tutorial support.