



SPERA

Society for the Provision of  
Education in Rural Australia

2024

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR REGIONAL  
RURAL & REMOTE EDUCATION**

COFFS HARBOUR | GUMBAYNGGIRR COUNTRY

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GROWTH THROUGH EQUITY

# Conference Venue

## Address

Pacific Bay Resort Coffs Harbour  
Corner Pacific Highway & Bay Drive  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

## Floor Plan



# Welcome



**Chris Ronan**  
President - SPERA

Welcome to the 2nd National Conference for Regional, Rural, and Remote Education (NCRRE) hosted by the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) on Gumbaynggirr Country.

The NCRRE was established by SPERA to create an in-person opportunity for anyone working in regional, rural, and remote education to come together, share their expertise, build personal relationships, and develop a platform for collaborative learning.

There are great people, ideas, and programs happening across Australia, but working in RRR education can sometimes be isolating; we want to change that. This conference was created as a conduit to bring together people on the front lines who are driving innovation and creating educational opportunities in their local communities.

Regional communities are strongest when they work together, and we want to provide an opportunity through this conference for people driving educational change in their communities to share, learn, and collaborate.

The entire SPERA Executive is delighted that you have made the time to be with us at the conference, and we hope you find inspiration, energy, and build relationships over the next few days. Enjoy the conference!

# Sponsor Acknowledgement

We thank the following Sponsors for their support of the 2024 Conference.



**Gold Sponsor**  
**The University of New England**

Celebrating our 70th year in 2024, the University of New England has pioneered teaching to external students by correspondence, making UNE Australia's most experienced provider of distance and now online education. Our focus is on your future, providing you with a personal and flexible approach to learning. Whether you need a postgraduate qualification, or it's your first time doing a degree, UNE offers a variety of entry pathways and study options across more than 140 courses and a wide range of disciplines, with the majority available for online study.

Now, more than ever, UNE's experience as an online university can help you respond to disruption, new technology, changes at work, and new possibilities. Students choosing on campus study enjoy a truly regional education experience in the beautiful New England region of NSW at our Armidale campus, with access to unparalleled support, accommodation and sports facilities or at soon at our new campus in Tamworth opening in 2026. Our metro-based students can study on campus or online through our Sydney campus in the heart of Parramatta, one of Australia's fastest growing economic regions. Online regional students have access to UNE's study and support hubs in Taree and Tamworth as well as our network of regional study centres across New England and North West NSW communities. UNE is proud to partner with CUC and Taree Universities Campus to work together to increase accessibility and support for our students.

# Sponsor Acknowledgement



## Name Badge Sponsor The University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania is committed to improving educational attainment in Tasmania and providing accessible offerings for the state's dispersed population. It offers shorter, more affordable qualifications to support work-ready graduates, especially from regional areas. Globally recognized, the University ranks second worldwide in the prestigious Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for 2024. Additionally, it holds the top position globally for climate action. Since 2016, the University has been certified carbon neutral.

# Keynote Speakers

Professor John McKendrick

Professor of Social Justice, Glasgow Caledonian University

Commissioner for Fair Access Scottish Government



Professor John McKendrick is Professor of Social Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University, where he co-directs the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit. He arrived at the university twenty-five years ago, having spent the first four years of his career at the University of Manchester. His work at the university was interrupted with two years on secondment to the University of Edinburgh (2002-2003 at the

Centre for Families and Relationships). Professor McKendrick was appointed Commissioner for Fair Access in January 2023 by the Scottish Government. The Commissioner is independent of government and responsible for leading a system wide effort to deliver fair access in Scotland, including the development of a framework for fair access. He provides impartial policy advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations and works across the entire education system to:

- develop best practice
- improve the evidence base
- hold to account all those with a role in advancing fair access to higher education

His route to higher education was through Carmyle Primary School (Glasgow), Pennyburn Primary and Kilwinning Academy (North Ayrshire). He studied Geography at the University of Strathclyde, before heading across the city to complete a PhD at the University of Glasgow. Technically, the first in his family to go to university, he prefers to credit that family milestone to his mum who gained a teaching degree as a mature student at Craigie College of Education (now the University of the West of Scotland).

He is on the Child Poverty Programme Board and Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme Board and serves as a committee member on a number of anti-poverty initiatives and organisations.

## Keynote Speakers

### *Access and equity through lifelong music education: NSW's Regional Conservatoriums*

**Dr Wendy Brooks, CEO, Young Regional Conservatorium**

**David Francis, President of the Association of NSW  
Regional Conservatoriums**



#### **Dr Wendy Brooks**

Wendy has been a passionate music educator since completion of her undergraduate degree in the mid-1980s. As well as running a successful piano teaching studio, Wendy taught in primary and secondary schools in western Sydney as a music and creative arts specialist for many years. Through these roles, Wendy was inspired to return to postgraduate and since 2007 has completed Master's degrees in Music (Music Education) and Education (Educational Leadership), and a PhD.

Between 2011 and 2017, Wendy worked as a lecturer in music education and primary education at Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Western Sydney University respectively. She maintains a keen interest in Teacher Education, and has mentored teachers at various career stages of their careers. She is a Commissioner with the Music in Schools and Teacher Education Commission (MISTEC) of the International Society for Music Education (ISME), working with a Committee of six international members to plan and present an interactive seminar biennially, disseminating current research and best practice.

Since 2017, Wendy has worked within the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, and is committed to broadening access and increasing equity to music education opportunities for non-metropolitan students. She is currently the CEO of Young Regional Conservatorium, located in the south western slopes of NSW, and Vice-president of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums.

## Keynote Speakers



### David Francis

David joined WollCon as their CEO in May 2021 and is currently President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums.

Prior to joining WollCon, David was the Executive Director of renowned regional arts organisation Four Winds Concerts Inc - home of the Four Winds Festival. His work at Four Winds in Bermagui on the Far South Coast of NSW, transformed the organisation from a biennial music Festival to a thriving, year-round arts organisation.

David came to Australia from the UK in 2014 when he was appointed General Manager of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. David led a turnaround for this important choral organisation who recently celebrated their 100th birthday. David has held several senior positions in the arts in the UK including Director of Arts at Dartington and Senior Producer for Arts Council England during which time he developed Sound and Music - the UK's peak body for art music. He also developed and launched The PRS For Music Foundation, now the UK's largest funder for new music and talent development. For the past 6 years David has been a Board Director of the Australian Music Centre and he currently serves as a Board Director for NSW based 'Music in the Regions'.

With a career developed entirely in the arts/music sector, David's strengths lie in leadership as well as organisational development. He has a strong commitment to and experience of delivering sustainable organisations, particularly in regional centres.

David studied music and undertook Post Graduate Vocal Training at the Guildhall School of Music in London. He holds a 'One Planet' MBA from Exeter Business School. David is still a practicing musician and is Music Director and Conductor of Spirit Allegro - a community chamber choir based in Pambula on the Far South Coast of NSW.

COFFS HARBOUR | GUMBAYNGGIRR COUNTRY



# Full Program

Click on the Session Number to open the Session Summary

## Tuesday 13 August 2024

3:00pm Registration opens

5:00pm - 7:00pm Welcome Reception

## Wednesday 14 August 2024

from 8:00am Registration and Coffee on arrival

8:30am - 9:00am Conference Opening & Welcome

9:00am - 10:00am Keynote Presentation

**Professor John McKendrick**  
*Professor of Social Justice, Glasgow Caledonian University*  
*Commissioner for Fair Access, Scottish Government*

10:00am - 10:30am Australian Rural Education Awards

10:30am - 11:00am MORNING TEA

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 1	1A - Academic Presentation	1B - Academic Presentation	1C - Academic Presentation	
11:00am - 11:30am	<p>Habitus in the Hallways, Skill Shortages in the Streets: Linking Student Aspirations with Vocational Outcomes in Regional Communities.</p> <p><i>Ben Archer</i> <i>James Cook University</i></p>	<p><i>Place Based, Community Led Widening Participation: Insights from the Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership</i></p> <p><i>Erin Wrafter; Chris Ronan; Bethany Ross; Sonal Singh, Dr Kylie Austin</i></p> <p><i>CUC Central; UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion; University of Wollongong</i></p>	<p>On Names and Naming</p> <p><i>Emeritus Professor John Halsey</i> <i>Flinders University</i></p>	
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	

10 minute change over

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 2	2A - Academic Presentation	2B - Academic Presentation	2C - Case Study	2D - Academic Presentation
11:40am - 12:10pm	<p>Roadmap to Success: Decoding the Regional Universities Study Hub</p> <p><i>Danielle Keenan</i></p> <p><i>University of Technology Sydney Australian Centre for Student Equity Success</i></p>	<p>Roads to the regions: creating impact through sustained relationships between regional communities and metropolitan universities</p> <p><i>Jindri De Silva, Jacinta Carruthers, Adeline Pandian, and Solest Montgomery</i></p> <p><i>Macquarie University</i></p>	<p>The 4 Rs - Rural Recruitment, Retention and Recognition</p> <p><i>Ms Kimberley Tempest &amp; Mrs Dianne Ferguson</i></p> <p><i>Cobram Secondary College</i></p>	<p>Seeing teachers, schools, and communities as assets for the retention of rural school staff</p> <p><i>Hernan Cuervo</i></p> <p><i>University of Melbourne</i></p>
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities

10 minute change over

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 3	3A - Case Study	3B - Case Study	3C - Case Study	3D - Case Study
12:20pm - 12:50pm	<p>The Power of Exchange</p> <p><i>Ms Linda Adhyana and Ms Natalie Nelmes</i></p> <p><i>Student Life &amp; Community Curtin University and Geraldton Universities Centre</i></p>	<p>TUC EduVenture Project</p> <p><i>Mrs Gemma Death, Mr Evan Weller</i></p> <p><i>Taree Universities Campus</i></p>	<p>Growing our Own' Connecting Schools, Employers, Careers and Study Pathways in Regional South Australia</p> <p><i>Ms Anita Kuss, Ms Cate Wuttke, Ms Hannah Samson</i></p> <p><i>Uni Hub Spencer Gulf</i></p>	<p>Growth through Equity: A case study focusing on empowering communities through a grassroots campaign</p> <p><i>Ms Lisa Carrick, Ms Wendy Mason</i></p> <p><i>Country Education Foundation of Australia</i></p>
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities

12.50PM - 1.50PM

**LUNCH**

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 4	4A - Case Study	4B - Academic Presentation	4C - Academic Presentation	4D - Academic Presentation
1:50pm - 2:20pm	<p>Provide it and they will come: equity of access to professional learning in regional Victoria</p> <p><i>Tyron Paspas, Paul Nolan</i></p> <p><i>Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership</i></p>	<p>Impact of Regional Diversity on Higher Education Participation: A Comparison of Two Australian States</p> <p><i>Professor Sharron King; A/Prof Cathy Stone</i></p> <p><i>University of South Australia (King); University of Newcastle (Stone)</i></p>	<p>Staying and studying: rural, regional and remote access to higher education 'in place'</p> <p><i>Dr Matthew Bunn, Dr Matt Lumb</i></p> <p><i>Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education, University of Newcastle</i></p>	<p>Shaping self while being pushed, pulled and shaped at the cultural interface: The post-schooling transitions of Cape York boarding school graduates.</p> <p><i>Dr Katrina Rutherford</i></p> <p><i>Jawun Queens Centre, Central Queensland University</i></p>
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Pathways for education	Pathways for education	Pathways for education

10 minute change over

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 5	5A - Case Study	5B - Case Study	5C - Academic Presentation	5D - Academic Presentation
2:30pm - 3:00pm	<p><b>Finding Common Ground - the birth of a hyper-local, provider-agnostic outreach program in Cooma, NSW</b></p> <p><i>Mx Han Worsley</i></p> <p><i>Country Universities Centre Snowy Monaro, and the University of Canberra</i></p>	<p><b>Enhancing university preparedness through UniPrep: A strategic pathway program for rural, regional, and remote secondary school students.</b></p> <p><i>Dr Naomi Ryan</i></p> <p><i>UniSQ College, University of Southern Queensland</i></p>	<p><b>Partners, Not Predators: Using Dialectical Social Exchange Theory to Reconceptualise the Relationship Between Regional University Study Hubs and Higher Education Institutions</b></p> <p><i>Mr. Ben Archer</i></p> <p><i>James Cook University</i></p>	<p><b>Addressing the marginalisation and status of rural educators through Quality Teaching Rounds Digital</b></p> <p><i>Dr Sally Patfield, Laureate Professor Jenny Gore</i></p> <p><i>Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, School of Education, The University of Newcastle</i></p>
Topic Area	Pathways for education	Pathways for education	Strengthening and networking rural education research	Strengthening and networking rural education research
15 minute change over				
Parallel Session 6	6A - Academic Presentation	6B - Academic Presentation	6C - Academic Presentation	
3:10pm - 3:40pm	<p><b>Advice-seeking relationships in remote schools: A social network analysis on enhancing educational experiences of Aboriginal students</b></p> <p><i>Dr Tracy Durksen, Dr Claire Galledge, Dr Keiko Bostwick, Dr Kevin Lowe, Dr Annette Woods, Dr Greg Vass</i></p> <p><i>UNSW; University of Sydney; Queensland University of Technology; Griffith University</i></p>	<p><b>Rural perspectives: How rural school and district leaders view the present and future of rural education</b></p> <p><i>Dr. Robert Mitchell, Ms. Kriselda Craven, Ms. Evelyn Adams</i></p> <p><i>University of Colorado Colorado Springs</i></p>	<p><b>The Perennials and Trends of Rural Education Discourses that Shape Research and Practice</b></p> <p><i>John Guenther</i></p> <p><i>Batchelor Institute</i></p>	
Topic Area	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Strengthening and networking rural education research	Strengthening and networking rural education research	
3:40pm - 4:10pm <b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>				

From 6:30pm

**CONFERENCE DINNER**  
Sponsored by UNE

**une**  
University of  
New England

# Thursday 15 August 2024

from 8:30am Registration and Coffee on arrival

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

9:00am - 10:00am Keynote Presentation

**Access and equity through lifelong music education: NSW's regional conservatoriums**

Dr Wendy Brooks, *CEO, Young Regional Conservatorium*

David Francis, *President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums*

10:00am - 10:30am **MORNING TEA**

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 7	7A - Academic Presentation	7B - Academic Presentation	7C - Academic Presentation	
10:30am - 11:00am	<p>The Rural Education Experience: Student Perspectives</p> <p><i>Dr. Robert Mitchell, Mr. Daniel Kirby, Ms. Chianna Smith</i></p> <p><i>University of Colorado Colorado Springs (all)</i></p>	<p>Developing Mathematical Self-Efficacy: some tips and traps for leaders and teachers</p> <p><i>Dr Vincent Connor</i></p> <p><i>Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst</i></p>	<p>Community impact on student aspirations: Space, place and power hierarchies in rural areas</p> <p><i>Dr Leanne Fray, Dr Sally Patfield, Laureate Prof Jennifer Gore</i></p> <p><i>School of Education, College of Human and Social Futures, University of Newcastle</i></p>	
Topic Area	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	
10 minute change over				
Parallel Session 8	8A - Case Study	8B - Case Study	8C - Case Study	8D - Case Study
11:10am - 11:40am	<p>Cobram Secondary College - A rural school catering for all kinds of minds</p> <p><i>Kimberley Tempest</i></p> <p><i>Cobram Secondary College</i></p>	<p>The Rural Learning Exchange: connecting teachers and students in rural and remote schools to strengthen educational outcomes</p> <p><i>Kathy Eisenhauer</i></p> <p><i>NSW Department of Education</i></p>	<p>Student Experience Survey 2024 Analysis Report</p> <p><i>Kinne Ring</i></p> <p><i>Country Universities Centre</i></p>	<p>Student engagement strategies in remote communities of East Arnhem Land: What works?</p> <p><i>Mr Moe Pourkarim and Mr Ryan Buckley</i></p> <p><i>The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA)</i></p>
Topic Area	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation
10 minute change over				

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 9	9A - Case Study	9B - Case Study	9C - Case Study	9D - Case Study
11:50am - 12:20pm	<p>The Skills to Navigate</p> <p><i>Mrs Nicole Gray &amp; Mr Aaron Dewhurst</i></p> <p>Country Universities Centre Clarence Valley</p>	<p>Strengthening students STEM engagement through new access to opportunity</p> <p><i>Amy Boulding, Leah Solyum</i></p> <p>CSIRO Education and Outreach</p>	<p>Holistic Regional and Remote outreach at the University of Sydney</p> <p><i>Tyrone Anderson</i></p> <p>The University of Sydney</p>	<p>Wiradjuri Choir case study</p> <p><i>David Shaw</i></p> <p>Wula Gurray (Voices of Change) Choir Orange Regional Conservatorium</p>
Topic Area	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation	Student engagement, aspiration and motivation

**12.20PM - 1.20PM LUNCH**

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 10	10A - Case Study	10B - Case Study	10C - Case Study	10D - Case Study
1:20pm - 1:50pm	<p>Local Links: Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven and TAFE NSW Ulladulla - Working Together to Build a Fresh Vision for Tertiary Education and Vocational Training in the Southern Shoalhaven</p> <p><i>Adam Gowen, Stuart Bellingham</i></p> <p>CUC Southern Shoalhaven &amp; TAFE NSW Ulladulla</p>	<p>Wuyagiba Bush Uni - 7 years on</p> <p><i>Mr Godfrey Blitner, Ms Annette Daniels, Dr Helen Rogers, Ms Andrea Jaggi, Ms Sue Pinckham and Dr Emilie Ens</i></p> <p>Wuyagiba Bush Hub Aboriginal Corporation, Macquarie University</p>	<p>Community-Led Initiatives in Higher Education: A Case Study of the Country Universities Centre</p> <p><i>Danielle Keenan, Kinne Ring, Erin Wrafter</i></p> <p>Country Universities Centre</p>	<p>From little things big things grow: A thriving Community of Practice</p> <p><i>Dr Stephanie Richey, Dr Merete Schmidt, Mrs Melissa Finnen, Dr Linda Jaffray, Dr Robin Krabbe, Dr Pieter Van Dam, Dr Sarah Prior</i></p> <p>University of Tasmania</p>
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities

1 minute change over

Parallel Session 11	11A - Case Study	11B - Case Study	11C - Case Study	11D - Case Study
2:00pm - 2:30pm	<p>The disadvantage of distance. How regional and rural students are less likely to finish year 12 and why Deakin University is imbedding equity outreach into communities.</p> <p><i>Nicky Suter, Tamiaka McLean</i></p> <p>Deakin University</p>	<p>The CUC Vision for the Future of Regional Higher Education</p> <p><i>Chris Ronan</i></p> <p>Country Universities Centre</p>	<p>University Strategy Outcome for Teacher Education</p> <p><i>James McKechnie</i></p> <p>Office of Engagement and Enterprise</p>	<p>Engaging with industry, community and schools to bring real world STEM to life for young people</p> <p><i>Amy Boulding, Becky Solomons</i></p> <p>CSIRO</p>
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities

10 minute change over

Room	Marina Room	Harbour Room	Jetty Room	Beaches Room
Parallel Session 12	12A - Case Study	12B - Case Study	12C - Case Study	
2:40pm - 3:10pm	<p>Regional Health Care Traineeship Collaboration with Aged Care Industry</p> <p><i>Ms Samantha Avitaia, Mr Stephen Lowe</i></p> <p>Regional Campuses, University of Wollongong</p>	<p>Growing our own - A community-centred approach to building a regional health workforce</p> <p><i>Rhys Millington, Ms Kalie Ashenden</i></p> <p>Uni Hub Spencer Gulf - Health Services Coordinator</p>	<p>Empowering Remote Communities through Education: The Roxby Downs Early Childhood Pilot Project</p> <p><i>Mrs Sue Barry Ms Hannah Samson</i></p> <p>Uni Hub Spencer Gulf</p>	
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	
10 minute change over				
Parallel Session 13	13A - Case Study	13B - Case Study	13C - Academic Presentation	
3:20pm - 3:50pm	<p>Luminosity Youth Summit</p> <p><i>Kate Wood-Foye</i></p> <p>Luminosity Youth Inc ( NFP), Charles Sturt University Office of Engagement &amp; Enterprise</p>	<p>Yadha Muru Foundation City Country Partnership</p> <p><i>Professor Leanne Holt, Sean Gordon, Peter Berkley, Cherie Johnson</i></p> <p>Speaking in Colour</p>	<p>Examining the experiences of regional and rural students in an urban university: the role of place and class in pathways to belonging</p> <p><i>Hernan Cuervo</i></p> <p>University of Melbourne</p>	
Topic Area	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	Connections between industry, education and communities	
3:50pm - 4:20pm	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>			
<b>CONFERENCE CLOSE</b>				

## POSTER PROGRAM

<b>POSTER 1</b>	Meeting schools where they're at - place-based aspirations outreach in rural primary schools	<i>Mx Han Worsley</i>	<i>Country Universities Centre Snowy Monaro, the University of Canberra</i>
<b>POSTER 2</b>	My Dreaming Track of Knowledge with Community and Elders	<i>Aunty Ellen Mundy, Bronwyn Luff, Emma Stewart, Samantha Avitaia</i>	<i>Djiringonj Community Resource Project, University of Wollongong</i>
<b>POSTER 3</b>	Empowering Regional Youth: A Mentor's Journey with On Course	<i>Ms Isabella Lesslie, Mrs Cath McNiven, Dr Meg Southwell, Mrs Sarah Stephenson</i>	<i>Country Universities Centre Goulburn</i>
<b>POSTER 4</b>	Exploring how the two-way, on-Country 'Bush Uni' model can benefit remote Australian Indigenous higher education	<i>Andréa Jaggi, Dr Helen Rogers</i>	<i>Faculty of Science and Engineering, Macquarie University, Wuyagiba Bush Hub Aboriginal Corporation</i>

