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Teacher Enhancement Centre (TECe) <TECE@kelvingrovesc.eq.edu.au>

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Message from our Director: Linda Eager

Happy Semester 2 to all our TECes, alumni, school, universities and partners.

Congratulations to our mid-year graduates who are teaching across Queensland, as well as to so many of our end of year graduates embarking on their final placement. I can't wait to hear all your stories.

It has been a very busy couple months with the TECe team visiting many of our schools across the state last term, bringing along pre-service teachers from UniSC and the University of Queensland (take a look at the fabulous stories below).

We look forward to expanding our diverse trips next year with our other university partners. Our aim is to work with our university partners to increase the number of pre-service teachers experiencing teaching and life in our regional, rural and remote communities through increasing these diverse trips over the coming years using sustainable funding avenues.

This term we will be visiting all our 3rd Year BEd and 1st Year Masters students in their tutorials to promote our fabulous regional, rural and remote schools and communities; and to encourage and support "best fit" professional experiences through our mentorship and professional learnings offerings through our transition program.



We are looking forward to what Semester 2 will bring!



My Journey of Discovery in Far North Queensland by Thys Matthews

Reflecting on my recent participation in the Coast to Country program, I am profoundly grateful for the transformative experiences it has brought to my journey as a pre-service teacher at the University of the Sunshine Coast. From June 16th to 19th, 2024, I immersed myself in exploring rural education initiatives across Far North Queensland. This invaluable opportunity not only allowed me to connect with experienced educational leaders but also deepened my appreciation for community engagement, innovation, and cultural diversity.

Visiting schools like Malanda State School and Innisfail State College showcased the profound impact of community-driven education. Principals Natasha Lyndon and Russell Barlow exemplify leadership dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments that prioritise both academic and personal growth among students. Witnessing their commitment left an indelible impression on me, inspiring a renewed dedication to promoting equitable access to quality education.

At Ravenshoe State School, I encountered innovative educational practices tailored to local contexts, such as yarning circles and Indigenous language programs. These initiatives not only celebrate cultural diversity but also empower students through inclusive learning experiences. My experiences with Coast to Country have broadened my perspective on rural education realities and reinforced the importance of comprehensive support systems in nurturing both teacher growth and student success. With heartfelt gratitude to KGTECe for their unwavering support, I am inspired to continue my journey in education with a passion for fostering inclusive and thriving learning environments.

With deepest gratitude to KGTECe for their unwavering support of programs like Coast to Country, ***I am inspired and empowered to continue my journey in education with steadfast dedication and enthusiasm.***



Inaugural TECe x UQ Diverse Trip to Roma & Surrounds

by Alicia Balea (Lead Mentor: Primary)

Through the dedicated efforts of our TECe team: Lead Mentor – Alicia & Executive Assistant - Ashlee alongside the University of Queensland, Director for Professional Experience: Brianna Bright we were able to showcase the positives, perks and possibilities in starting off a teaching career in Queensland's magnificent rural schools and communities.

Surveys of the participating pre-service teachers revealed that prior to the trip they held flawed misconceptions around teaching and living in rural Queensland, including isolation, excessive behaviour management challenges and insufficient support, **however** through their experiences and offerings provided by participating schools on the diverse trip, their impressions shifted to the supportive realities, connected and caring communities and plethora of professional and personal opportunities for beginning teachers. By the end of the trip, a majority of participants have selected to seek out placement and/or start their teaching careers in a rural school through the TECe transition program.



The twenty-three (23) pre-service teachers experienced rural life, classroom observations, in-class interactions with students and hearing about the myths and realities of rural teaching and living. We were all inspired by proud and passionate early career teachers who shared their stories, the pre-service teachers participated in targeted professional learning workshops from TECe Alumni, now leaders within their respective schools, as well as having direct access to Principals and school leaders to discuss the benefits of starting off teaching in our rural schools.

Participants including the UQ Education Head of School, Dr Robin Shields, relished the opportunity to experience teaching and living in this beautiful part of our state. We spent time in Dalby, Roma and Injune. While Mitchell was a much sought-after visit, due to a community COVID outbreak, this visit was redirected to a second, well received visit to Injune SS.



We extend our appreciation to the QTU Brisbane office for supplying information and tote bags for our professional learning materials as well as to QTU Regional Organiser, Zeb Sugden for your integral part in making our trip a success. We especially wish to thank and congratulate all of our participating principals and their dedicated teams - Mona Anau: **Dalby State School**, Dean Russell & Jeff Hart: **Dalby State High School**, Regan Gant & Alese Woods: **Roma State College**, Lee-ette Williams: **Injune State School**, Diney Harty: **Mitchell State School** and Jo Sutton & David Kucks: **Dalby South State School**.

We look forward to continuing this important work in support of our rural kids and teaching communities, seeking equity and excellence, with all our might!



UniSC NQ Diverse Trip Townsville – Charters Towers – Hughenden – Winton - Longreach

by Mia Gibson (Lead Mentor: Secondary)

I travelled from North Queensland to Central Queensland, visiting a range of diverse schools along the way. At Townsville State High, Principal - Murray James - and Deputy Principal - Amanda Maynard – were very accommodating, sharing their own experience of teaching in regional and rural Queensland and sharing insights into their school and community. We visited a drama class, where students were learning English and an English class, where students were studying Shakespeare (language challenges for both classes). Of interest was the Clontarf program supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys at the school – the organisers shared the valuable work they do to support First Nations' boys engage with school.



At Charters Towers Central State School, we were impressed with the Principal – Linda Blakoe, who shared her experience and vision for the school in improving student outcomes. We visited classrooms that visually were warm, welcoming and engaging for students. The large classrooms were appealing.

In Hughenden, it was great to meet up with a University of Sunshine Coast student who was working in one of the schools. Likewise at the school, it was great to talk to teachers who were living and working in Hughenden. A beginning teacher, who had previously started at the school as a PTT was able to offer some valuable insight into her experience, noting how challenging it was to juggle university commitments and teach at the same time, particularly when having to complete her professional experience and TPA (teaching performance assessment) requirements. She said she had to be very organised.



The Prep teacher was terrific – she showed us her classroom and chatted to us about living and working in Hughenden. Her classroom looked great and they were preparing for Under 8s day, with some wonderful rocket ships for a photo booth. We also saw some older students creating resources for under 8s day.

We also visited a multi-year level classroom, where it was great to see students engaged in a range of activities and welcomed us as we interacted with them. The school also had an Indigenous room, where we chatted to one of the support staff about the space and the type of support it offered to students. While we were invited to join some of the older students playing games on the oval, we opted to explore other spaces in the school and then joined the staff for morning tea.

One of our current TECes is heading to Hughenden next semester for her final placement – I look forward to hearing about her experience.

At Winton, we were treated to coffee and met Principal, Meggin Bahr who, with her husband, relocated from Brisbane with their family. Again, it was great to hear the experiences of teachers, particularly a past TECe – Ashlee, who plans to continue her teaching journey in a rural location next year.



Longreach did not disappoint – a visit to the Stockman’s Hall of fame was awesome, and we enjoyed a night under the stars and by the fire for great food, entertainment and a good old sing-a-long.

At the school, we were again treated to a coffee and enjoyed morning tea with the teaching staff. It

was great to once again hear stories from both High School and Primary teachers and the leadership team. Again, I had a good chat to a former TECE – Josh Lehmann - who, after spending a number of years in Longreach, has a transfer to his first preference school in Brisbane next year. Notably, staff and students seem happy and speak positively about their rural teaching experience. A highlight at the school is the “Big Red Truck”, providing hospitality experience to many schools in the area, also enabling staff and students to cater for a wide range of events in the community. Community involvement was a strong message from all the staff we spoke to, with a range of opportunities for anyone wishing to engage – from motorbike riding, to football, to mustering, the opportunities were enormous and rewarding.



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