

## Contextualising Policies in Regional, Rural and Remote Australian Schools

Tuesday 3 August 2021 - Parallel Session 1 - 11.30am to 12.30pm (GMT+1)

**FRASER - Building Enduring Partnerships**

**Alice Herbert** (*James Cook University, Australia*)

Since the 20th century, Australia has practised an industrial 'one-size fits all' model of education for students. National policies ensure millions of students achieve specified annual learning outcomes that meet national curriculum, assessment and teaching standards. However, such policies are rigid and fail to comprehensively understand students' individual learning needs and the intricacies of school context. Within regional, rural and remote (RRR) Australia, national and state-wide policies decontextualise schooling from its broader socio-economic, political and cultural context. As a consequence, social and spatial injustices occur. This multiple case study aims to understand how parents, teachers, students and principals believe policies can be adapted to suit their unique school context. Data were gathered using interviews and observations of students, parents, teachers and principals in one regional, one rural and one remote secondary school in Queensland, Australia. A thematic analysis of the data revealed that effectively adapting policies to suit RRR schools requires communication, consultation, collaboration, clarity, consistency and coaching. These findings present a measure for ensuring national and state-wide policies are adhered to while acknowledging the context in which the policy is being enacted; thus, addressing the needs of RRR students and school community.