

## Recipient Details

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Reference Type: Project Officer Numeracy Literacy (Seconded Teacher)

State or territory: SA

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## Responses

### Curriculum and assessment

The Australian Curriculum has the potential to meet the learning needs and interest of regional, rural and remote students. It clearly articulates what students are entitled to learn each year. However, implementing the curriculum in smaller schools can be difficult, particularly in multi-level classes. Teachers are skilled in overcoming these difficulties through rotational systems in some learning areas such as HASS (eg odd years follow Year 5 curriculum, even years follow Year 6 curriculum). This works for the content but not for the assessment where Year 5s should be assessed against the Year 5 curriculum but on the rotational system they were doing the Year 6 curriculum.

Thematic approaches in primary schools is another way teachers can implement the Australian Curriculum so that every child receives their full entitlement. However, this requires a highly skilled teacher.

Schools can be supported to deliver the Australian Curriculum in flexible ways through knowledge sharing eg, the Myponga Primary School example in the discussion paper. This should be on the AC website, along with further details, and many more examples

Rating: 7

### Teachers and teaching

The incentives in the Whitlam years enabled rural students to attend university. I was one of them. I could not have gone to university without the financial help. I had every intention of returning to the country but chose to marry and orchardist and remain in the Adelaide Hills. However, my daughter now teaches in remote South Australia, and intends to stay there. She won a country scholarship during her university years and spent 6 weeks in regional South Australia. This gave her the confidence to pursue country teaching. She also undertook two stints of prac teaching in country SA. Hence, government incentives may take some time to impact - down to the next generation - but the opportunities for country practice need to be supported. We supported our daughter financially and emotionally so that she could go to the country. Not all families are in the position to do this. Governmental support would be of great benefit. There is another issue though - support those teachers who have a yearning for country service. Find out who they are.

If teachers choose to go to the country, they are more likely to want to stay there, particularly if they have emotional connections. Many country regions can attest to the fact that the Education Department is a key matchmaker, in that people have found their life partner in the country and so stay there.

Country teachers should have access to the same professional development as city teachers. However, travel is an issue. Hence, where possible, the professional development should be

delivered in the country area OR up to a day's travel and overnight accommodation should be provided for country teachers. This raises another issue - relief teachers may not be available. Currently, the government has a small cohort of relief teachers but many country schools find they have to 'cover themselves' as relief teachers are not available.

Country scholarships would be attractive to some high quality teachers - eg work 3 years in the country and gain a paid year to undertake postgraduate studies.

Rating: 7

#### Leaders and leadership

Principals in small schools should not also have classroom responsibilities with the exception of providing release time in exceptional circumstances. That way they can devote most of their time and attention to student achievements and community responsibilities. In bigger schools, a leadership team is important where the second tier of leadership has some classroom responsibilities but also time for leadership and administration.

Rating: 7

#### School and Community

Schools can provide skills needed by community members. However, teachers need to be given time to develop and run courses of interest.

Schools need time to participate in community events such as field days and agricultural shows. This should not be an 'extra'.

The relationship between the school and community should be reciprocal - with the community also assisting the school in its educational endeavours

The philanthropic sector could provide scholarships for students who show potential.

Rating: 4

#### Information and Communication Technology

Quality online courses need to be available for both teachers and students. I completed a Graduate Certificate in Educational Computing through UniSA. This course had high quality readings, interactive requirements and lecturers who replied to emails. Hence, it was highly motivating.

Reliable, fast connections are essential. In my experience, some of my country cousins have better connections through satellite than I do in my outer city environment.

The main barriers to realising the full potential benefits of ICT are not knowing what is available not knowing how to use the interactive environment and unreliable connections.

Rating: 6

#### Entrepreneurship and schools

Good leadership is needed for this to be successful. Furthermore, a basic course explaining what it is, with examples of where it has worked and why, would help unlock potential.

Rating: 4

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Some country schools do take into consideration the harvest and work around it so students can help their families. This should be encouraged.

Daylight saving is an issue in country SA. It is a difficult one to solve as the school is usually located in a town which wants to run its businesses 9am-5pm. However, outlying children have to catch the bus at 7am. Schools should have the freedom to adjust their school hours.

Quality information regarding tertiary education needs to be available in country regions. Students should be given the opportunity to attend 'open days' at the universities. This can be costly eg all day bus travel, overnight accommodation. It should be followed up with career counselling by the local school.

Rating for enrolments: 2

Rating for clusters: 2

Rating for distance education: 5

Rating for boarding: 6

Diversity

Rating: 4

Transitioning beyond school

Leaving home to attend university is costly and is generally left up to the families to organise. A subsidy of some sort would help. Often farming families are asset rich (but they can't sell them) and cash poor. Sending a child to university puts the family under enormous pressure. Furthermore, the student needs to learn new cultural norms, including gaining a part-time job in a foreign environment.

Accommodation could be arranged through the university in the form of a vetted list of home-stay contacts. The home-stays could be subsidised but with the student/or family paying a reasonable fee for service (eg own room, desk, study lamp, bed, breakfast & dinner, washing (Y/N) etc)

Rating: 6

Additional Comments

Regional, rural and remote schools need highly competent teachers. As a country student, I still feel 'cheated' out of a good mathematical education due to the poor quality of teaching received. The quality of the teaching in country schools is critical.

Attracting teachers to country regions is similar to attracting doctors. Ideally, people who have an emotional attachment to the country will want to work in the country. There's a saying, 'You can take the girl/boy out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the girl/boy.' Hence, finding those people with a heart for the country is the critical factor. It is not a matter of money. It is not a matter of rewarding them with 'going back to the city' as that is not a reward for them. Although a holiday is fine. It is a matter of great mirth for some country folk when they are given a financial loading for working in a remote area, which they consider 'home'.