

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Country Education Partnership

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Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Children and young people in rural and remote Australia should have the same access to a high quality and engaging curriculum as their regional and metropolitan peers. This should include access to a quality early years program; a wide range of curriculum choices to cater for the needs and desires of each student; extension learning opportunities and a full range of post compulsory options including both vocational education and training (VET) and Academic option

Rural Early Years Provision:

Research shows that experiences in the early years have a significant impact on children's personal and education development and learning.

A number of initiatives are required to ensure that all children within rural and remote communities has access to a locally provided program including:

Support every rural and remote education community in providing a high quality early years program within the Rural Learning Partnerships framework.

Expand the concept developed within initiatives such as the Victoria "Linking Learning" initiative as a key strategy for supporting the provision of early years learning and development from 0 to 12 years of age across rural and remote communities.

Establish a scholarship initiative that supports all early years educators to be qualified to at least undergraduate level is provided to ensure a quality early years workforce within rural and remote communities.

Blended Learning Approach

Develop a Blended Learning approach (inclusive of an extensive professional development program) to support education organizations within Rural Learning Partnerships to provide access to a broad high quality education through the use of youth friendly technologies. The Aurora Virtual School within NSW is a good example of such an approach

Virtual Learning Centre:

Provide high quality Virtual Learning Centres with high quality and interactive resources available to all students and staff within rural and remote communities?

Rating: 6

Teachers and teaching

Virtual Learning Centre:

Provide high quality Virtual Learning Centres with high quality and interactive resources available to all students and staff within rural and remote communities?

Such a Virtual Learning Centre could be developed through the formation of a "Consortia" of all current Virtual Learning providers and provide a comprehensive national resource for both students and teachers within rural and remote education communities.

Rural Education Promotion:

Develop a clear and comprehensive promotion and communication strategy that promotes the teaching and education leadership opportunities available within rural and remote communities.

Rural School and University Partnerships

Establish state-wide brokerage roles to facilitate partnerships between Teacher Education Universities and Rural and Remote Education Communities that includes:

involve pre service teachers in an "Immersion" experience that will provide them with the knowledge and experience of teaching within a rural or remote education community.

professional development,

and research.

Such an initiative could build on, and expand, the positive impacts that initiatives such as the Teaching Academies within Victoria have had on pre service teachers.

Rural and Remote New Graduate Support:

Develop a comprehensive induction program for all rural and remote beginning teachers to ensure that they are supported in gaining the information, skills and support needed to be effective educators within rural and remote communities.

Establishment of a Rural Beginning Teacher Network, at a regional level supported by a state-wide facilitation role.

Accessible Professional Learning:

Establish a high quality, and accessible professional learning approach that is available and reasonably accessible to all rural and remote educators, is cross sectoral and responsive to the needs of rural and remote communities.

Rural Incentives:

Develop an effective incentive framework and support networks that ensure educators taking up rural and remote teaching positions are supported and retained - especially within "hard to staff" education communities.

Establish a Scholarship initiative similar to the Health sector. Scholarships going to pre service teachers who are committed to then taking up a teaching position within rural and remote education communities after graduation.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Over many years, discussions with education leaders across rural and remote communities; along with findings within research undertaken in Australia and overseas, have highlighted the very diverse and expanded nature of educational leadership required within these communities, and the challenge that many of these communities have in recruiting and retaining high quality education leaders.

Such education leadership roles encompass many aspects that are not necessarily required in numerous other education settings, especially those in larger population centres. In the large majority of these education communities, the education leaders are often expected to undertake a range of other leadership roles within their communities.

Preparing such education leadership roles, along with the provision of an ongoing high quality and accessible professional learning strategy for rural and remote education leaders is required.

Rural Education Leadership Induction:

Develop a comprehensive Rural Education Leadership Induction program that explores all the areas required of such a position within a rural and remote community including:

Leading a rural education organization;

Education leadership within a rural community;

School community relationships;

The role of the Education Leader within the broader rural and remote community.

Establishing strategies to ensure the well being of Rural education Leaders.

Rural Education Leadership Program:

Develop and provide a specific rural and remote education leadership program (“A Pipeline Leadership” program.) that provides a sustainable framework for the development and provision of education leaders across rural and remote communities that:

builds the skills and knowledge required to provide effective education leadership within rural and remote communities, and;

supports education leadership succession.

Such a Rural Education Leadership program could be modelled on the very successful national Rural Education Program.

Rating: 0

School and Community

The Country Education Partnership believes that the future of rural and remote education is centred on the development of locally determined, place based, collaborative partnerships as a key strategy in addressing the challenges faced by such communities in providing a quality and engaging education.

We have learned from previous initiatives and policies related to rural and remote education, that the concept of “clustering” has had a significant impact on both the learning opportunities provided and the educational outcomes for children and young people within these communities.

Such communities as Nathalia and Myrtleford in Victoria, Mount Magnet area of Western Australia and the partnership initiatives within South Australia are examples of how a partnerships approach has enhanced learning opportunities for both students and staff - with many showing improved education outcomes.

We are also seeing a number of countries developing initiatives and policy frameworks to address the challenges that rural and remote communities face in providing high quality education for their children and young people through the formation of partnerships. Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, and The Netherlands are to name a number people.

Such partnerships would:

be based on locally determined rural and remote learning communities,

have a "Common Interest", or "Focus",

Involve all education sectors,

include early years, schooling and further education (where provided),

focus on broadening the learning opportunities provided as well as enhancing the education outcomes of all children and young people.

The Country Education Partnerships would strongly encourage the Commonwealth Government to work with the states in developing an incentive strategy that would support the development and operation of collaborative partnerships to:

develop collaborative education leadership approaches and models,

Establish collaborative approaches to the recruitment, utilization and retainment of educators and support staff,

Encourage collaborative governance arrangements,

Establish locally determined student service approaches in partnership with local health and community service organisations, thus building the capacity of these communities and enhance their sustainability.

Partnership Business Management approaches;

Partnership Governance models,

Supporting whole of community approaches to student wellbeing and support.

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

See above

Rating: 6

Entrepreneurship and schools

Evidence suggests that the best way to raise student expectations and aspirations is to raise awareness of the opportunities they have - whether that be career options, future education opportunities or employment opportunities.

Country Education Partnership believes there is a real opportunity to support an initiative focused on increasing the opportunities provided to rural and remote young people, and also inspire them to realize their dreams.

Rural Student Voice:

Support a national student voice initiative enabling rural and remote young people the opportunity to provide input into education discussions and considerations at an education sector and government level.

Such an initiative could be based on the successful Rural Youth Ambassadors within Victoria, and also link with other initiatives such as Heywire.

Rural Inspire:

Resource “Rural Inspire” as a key strategy to inspire rural and remote young people, raise the achievements and aspirations of students in rural and remote schools, develop their motivation, and increase their ability to choose and achieve positive career, life and learning goals including:

reconnecting people who grew up in rural communities to inspire young people within these communities through guest presentation, workshops, mentoring, work experience opportunities and employment opportunities;

establishing links between rural education settings and urban education settings to enhance students’ knowledge and understanding of each others environments and culture, and to provide them with an enhanced teaching and learning experience;

facilitating leadership workshops for students in upper primary and junior secondary school focused on developing their aspirations and increasing their awareness of opportunities;

facilitating support networks for rural and remote students moving to regional and metropolitan locations for further study, training, or work;

the establishment of an interactive, and youth friendly, website providing a “gateway” to the various activities and initiatives that form the “Rural Inspire” approach.

Rating: 6

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding
See above

Rating for enrolments: 6

Rating for clusters: 7

Rating for distance education: 6

Rating for boarding: 6

Diversity

Rating: 6

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 6

Additional Comments

