

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [I] Goodheart, John

Reference Type: Shire Councillor and Board member at Katanning Senior High School

State or territory: WA

Serial Identification Number: 478676

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

CONSIDERATION #1

Current funding models for education are contingent on student numbers rather than academic requirement and the greatest need for the greatest number. This whole premise is flawed for regional rural and remote education. In urban centres, students have options for pursuing education and learning opportunities by changing schools, or attending outside school hour classes, attending TAFE classes, etc, but in most cases without having to change their family environment. These same options are only available to non-urban students if Mum and Dad choose one of the three options previously listed. Larger urban schools – funded on student population – are more likely to be able to offer courses to suit their cohort of students.

QUESTION – should funding of regional and remote schools be based on student need and student subject choice rather than numbers and greatest need? Should funding be based on the educational ambitions of students by cohort rather than minimum numbers? Meeting student needs is more likely to meet a number of requirements.

1. Students have option to stay locally
2. local communities benefit
3. greater teacher satisfaction (and being able to attract teachers with specialise skills)
4. bring regional education options up to the same level as urban education options.

Perhaps funding should be based on offering what larger and urban schools are able to offer and fund according to student need. This approach seems be a more equitable process.

Rating: 6

Teachers and teaching

CONSIDERATION #4

While there has always been a link between TAFE and the secondary education system through the VET, traineeship and apprentice programs, a better alignment and cooperation is due for full consideration. Aligning programs offered through TAFE with a greater secondary education flavour may have strong merit and may have significant benefits for university bound students. A subject teacher presence is highly desirable for most secondary students. I am familiar with TAFE and its capacity for delivering specific tailored programs to the local community and feel the local TAFE (for policy or funding or some other reason) is not as closely aligned with this space – particularly in regional Australia – as it could be.

Teaching and teachers should be employed on the basis of student need and subjects relevant to the cohort - not what funding is available to support programs and restrictions based on student numbers for subjects to be offered.

CONSIDERATION #3

Perhaps greater focus also needs to go into educational streaming – focusing outcomes on entrepreneurial and economic outcomes for the region. The common version of this has been trade schools but this should not be a limiting factor. Perhaps education support in regions should include support for a mentoring program specifically targeting those with an entrepreneurial flair through the local business association, local Men’s Club or a service club such as Rotary.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

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School and Community

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CONSIDERATION #2

There has been considerable effort by Government, particularly in Western Australia, to consolidate and co-locate Shire Councils and sporting bodies and associations. This consolidation of resources and infrastructure has not necessarily filtered through to the education system yet. Consolidation of education delivery into a Kindergarten to Year 12 approach has many significant benefits, particularly for communities such as Katanning. The cost of infrastructure and resources is consolidated and frees up monies for delivery of education programs in general while for Katanning and like communities, it allows fluency and moderation of courses to benefit students. ESL courses specific for graduation from primary to secondary, intervention programs for identifying student issues early in the primary school cycle and resolving them as part of a natural progression into high school, courses designed to maximise opportunity for students, strengthening of family and community, meeting local community needs, etc.

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

ICT is critical as part of curriculum but it will not stop the urban drift by itself. Students have a natural ability to absorb and lean ICT technologies and resources for their development is crucial if they are to succeed in future Australia.

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools

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Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

CONSIDERATION #5

Perhaps it is also time – especially for Katanning – to revisit a boarding option for remote students who may not benefit from boarding in a large urban/cosmopolitan environment and where they can retain better links with family from a shorter distance. Consolidation of secondary offerings in particular across a wider region may deliver the finances to deliver a fully tailored educational package which helps retain children and their families in the region.

Incentivising or removing restrictions to tackle some of these opportunities seems to be the major impediments to significant change and results oriented outcomes for education in regional, rural and remote Australia.

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See also my earlier comments

Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 0

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

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This approach would help diversity but may cost more.

Linking with TAFE at secondary level is also critical so greater diversity may be offered for smaller cohorts.

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issues early in the primary school cycle and resolving them as part of a natural progression into high school, courses designed to maximise opportunity for students, strengthening of family and community, meeting local community needs, etc.

Rating: 7

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

I think you can see my thoughts in relation to secondary students.

1. Fund according to courses and subjects rather than student numbers
2. Consolidate the primary and secondary education sectors
3. improved mentoring and entrepreneurial opportunities
4. Closer ties between secondary education and TAFE courses
5. Improved availability of regional and rural boarding especially at secondary level.