Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Western Australia

Reference Type: Parent association

State or territory: WA

Serial Identification Number: 478301

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

* Delivering the full prescriptive Australian Curriculum to multi-level classes can be challenging.

* There are advantages though to multi-level classrooms - students are often able to make connections beyond the parameters of each year's curriculum.

* Requires flexible teaching styles and teachers who have the experience and confidence to prioritise content.

* The curriculum needs to be relevant to the needs and interests of students and lead to real employment opportunities - often requiring practical/hands-on learning experiences and traineeships. This needs to extend beyond school to real links with government agencies and private enterprise/industry.

Rating: 7

Teachers and teaching

* Increase the entry level for teaching at university.

* A compulsory rural and remote component should exist in teaching courses at university.

* It is essential to have hands-on/mentor support for teachers and Principals in rural and remote areas to supplement and follow-up on professional development.

* Need incentives, including cash incentives for pre-service teachers to complete practicums in rural areas to compensate for travel and loss of income from life/job/accommodation in city.

* Replicate programs that work eg Murdoch University Rural teaching program in the Pilbara of WA.

* Better co-operation between education courses and local government eg make residential facilities available in communities for a range of under-graduate studies: teaching, health sector jobs etc to enable city students to get out to rural areas.

* Real net salary incentives for teachers to work in rural areas, as well as relocation and rent incentives.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

* The creation of a dedicated university course for Principals which includes education, commerce, HR and community components.

* Realistic 'hands-on' support and mentoring programmes for new Principals and school leaders.

* Networking opportunities are essential: school clusters as well as school/local govt and community development networks to link school with industry and local employment opportunities.

Rating: 7

School and Community
* School leaders who regularly connect to local govt (ie involvement in local council meetings).

* Scholarships for rural students to attend high quality education programs out of the community, with requirements to contribute back to the community.

* An education hub in communities where all levels of education have access to technology, resources and communications.

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology
* Connectivity is imperative in rural and remote Australia.

* Virtual classrooms – connecting students via Schools of the Air, which operate over the per student ratio (teachers are required at point of delivery, but also supervision at school site).

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools
* West Australian Agricultural Colleges are highly successful in entrepreneurial education, although an expensive model.

* These could be extended with opportunities for city students to enrol in these courses to reverse the rural directional flow of students.

* Extend to other industry initiatives.

* Is dependent on vibrant/motivated people to drive these programs.

Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding
* ICT/virtual classrooms and connectivity. (Successful programs such as Hale @ Home from Hale School in WA. Similar programs operate at Aquinas and Scotch College.)

* Increase AIC and state based boarding allowances such as BAHA in WA.

* Provide travel allowances to parents. Parenting from a distance affects students when a parent is unable to attend parent/student functions due to high costs to attend.

Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 6

Rating for distance education: 7

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

* Bringing Under and Post-Graduates to rural areas as part of their courses, to act as mentors to young people and to provide positive role models in rural areas. (For eg Science under-graduates assisting rural primary schools with STEM subjects – University of Western Australia).

* Business and philanthropy programmes to showcase successful young people from rural areas to 'give back' to the community eg sporting stars and those proposed by Australians such as Andrew Forrest.

Rating: 6

Transitioning beyond school

* More appropriate Youth Allowance and Relocation scholarships for rural young people to assist them to complete post compulsory education.

* More realistic payments to industry hosts for practicum students.

* VET courses require a wholistic approach – not just providing meaningless certificates.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

One of the main aims of ICPA WA is to raise awareness of the issues faced by geographically isolated parents across the remote vastness of WA, to access an equitable education for their children. As the expectations about education continue to rise in Australia, as areas of WA decline in population and changes occur in service delivery, the work of ICPA WA continues to be every bit as relevant now, as it was back in 1972.

Educating rural and remote students is more expensive than the extra allowances which are currently paid above the per student funding model: for disability, location etc. Distance costs money. Children and young people should not be penalised by virtue of where they live.

Building partnerships and shared responsibility is imperative for rural education to be successful in individual communities. School leaders, local government and state regional development commissions need to work together to link education to local community development.

Programs that encourage city people into rural areas to gain experience of rural life should be encouraged, to reverse the growing divide between the city and the country.

Local industry and businesses need to be encouraged to have work experience/traineeship programs to provide pathways for students to employment, but they need to be paid/valued for their input and the programs need to real and quality assured.