

## Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Isolated Childrens and Parents Association Winton Branch

Reference Type: Parent association

State or territory: Qld

Serial Identification Number: 477901

## Responses

### Curriculum and assessment

The curriculum is still very complex and content heavy often within the Home Distance Education schoolroom the mother is the Home Tutor delivering the curriculum with no teacher training. It is very difficult to teach confidently and create a positive learning environment if the person teaching is not confident or fully supportive of the content of the curriculum. To combat this Distance Education schools need to provide more opportunities for profession development not just to teachers within the school but to the Home Tutors who are delivering the curriculum.

Teachers in Rural, Regional and Remote schools need to be well trained in the skills of adapting the curriculum to suit their environment and cohort of Students. If the curriculum was less content heavy teachers would have more time to adopt and adapt the workload to create a more engaging learning environment with a rural community emphasis.

Rating: 6

### Teachers and teaching

Attracting good quality high performing teachers to rural schools is a must to improve student learning outcomes. Winton Branch of ICPA (Isolated Children's Parents Association) sponsors student teachers \$100 per week that come to Winton to carry out their practical work to try and attract them to return to the area when they complete their degree. In letters of appreciation from participating students they have expressed that the community was very welcoming and had more to offer for example sporting opportunities, recreational and social activities than they anticipated. Most stated they found the experience worthwhile and would now consider working in a regional area.

If regional schools have a high performing teacher could a mentoring program be implemented to benefit new teachers? Not only does the teaching job in a remote area need to be appealing but also selling the benefits of the community they would be involved in.

Rating: 6

### Leaders and leadership

Could the formula that is used within schools to determine staffing levels especially administration staff be altered so that Rural, Regional and Remote schools have supportive administration personal who can take on some of the responsibility of housing, timetabling and bus runs to allow principals more time to be effective leaders and run efficient schools. When a school influenced by good leadership has a reputation for having a great learning and working culture teachers are more willing to apply to work there. Every staff member needs to accept some responsibility for the culture that is created within a school.

Rating: 6

### School and Community

“Imagine a school where the playground is as vast as the outback and the partnership between home and school is legendary” This is a quote from the Longreach School of Distance Education website. Within a Distance Education climate there is always a lot of parent engagement as most mothers are the Home Tutors and are heavily invested in their child’s education. Longreach Distance Ed has also had great success with tourism that has involved the whole community and also the travelling public. Smaller towns are mostly very supportive of local schools and events and have a sense of pride and involvement in the culture of the school. If schools have admirable leadership and a supportive parent body the community is involved because parents are the majority of the community and it is interwoven.

It is important to value the success of people in the community whether it is sport, politics or business. This can motivate students and staff to see what can be accomplished within their own communities. David Elliott of Australian Age of Dinosaur fame is a local who was educated and brought up in the community he was an average student but with determination and passion he has built a world class tourism facility and been nominated for Australian of the year. I think we can all learn something from this.

Rating: 5

### Information and Communication Technology

Many a Distance Education mother has said “We are a school of the future constrained by the infrastructure of the past”. Within the Distance Education Schoolroom when the internet is out it is like a student in a mainstream schoolroom watching through the window and not hearing what the teacher is saying. Even with the roll out of the NBN the internet is still a major source of frustration for Rural, Regional and Remote families. Teachers need to have more training to be able to assist and use the infrastructure to its full potential. Reliable and efficient internet is a major tool for enhancing the professional development of teachers and also furthering the study of tertiary students who want to remain in the area.

Rating: 7

### Entrepreneurship and schools

There is such variation between schools and communities and what they can sustainably offer students. A one size fits all model will not be found and schools must be given the autonomy to do what will benefit their students and region

Rating: 7

### Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Winton State School in Queensland is a by-pass school for years 11 and 12 meaning that parents can access the Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA) to assist with boarding school costs. The downside of this is that even with this assistance some families still cannot afford or may not want to send their children away but the numbers are decreased within the State School so the funding and resources for these year levels are less. People move away from the area to access to better education. If these year levels looked more engaging and good quality teachers were on hand to deliver it more students would stay. The reality for bush families is many kids leave for boarding school in year 7 and never return as they further the studies and careers.

As the connectivity issues improve in rural areas students both secondary and tertiary will have more access to furthering their education and still remain in the community but this should not be a substitute for rigorous, relevant and engaging

Rating for enrolments: 6

Rating for clusters: 5

Rating for distance education: 6

Rating for boarding: 4

#### Diversity

Education in remote communities needs to be relevant to that community and cohort of students. Teachers need the flexibility and training to alter the curriculum to support this. It is essential that these schools have good leadership and ongoing professional development for new teachers to deal with this type of learning environment. Success in these communities is high attendance rates, engaging lessons and students that are progressing in their learning and a community that has pride and involvement with the ongoing education of its children. Not all learning is done in the classroom.

Rating: 6

#### Transitioning beyond school

Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC) Emerald Campus has announced that it will have a new specialist agricultural Program in 2018 that will offer an alternative to completing years 11 and 12. Many practical students will flourish in this learning environment whilst learning skills that will lead to job opportunities available in rural areas.

In many rural towns success is seen as going away and furthering your education but rural students need to know that success is measured in many forms and returning to a rural area is by no means a failure.

Rating: 7

#### Additional Comments

Just want to say that ICPA Winton Branch represents parents from

St Patricks School - 25 Students

Winton State School - 95 Students

Longreach School of Distance Education - 132 Students