

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [I] Needham, Jo

Reference Type: Teacher - School

State or territory: WA

Serial Identification Number: 475286

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Curriculum and assessment are standardized throughout WA at Year 11/12 level so don't impact on rural students access to university.

Rating: 4

Teachers and teaching

Again, not a big impact

Rating: 1

Leaders and leadership

Leaders need to be encouraging these pathways but the biggest difficulty facing young people in rural areas is the lack of early access to government assistance and forced gap years that slow motivation for study.

Rating: 4

School and Community

Opportunities for students to access university speakers and get to uni campuses helps students get an idea of what is available and a feel for the campus.

Rating: 5

Information and Communication Technology

Rating: 0

Entrepreneurship and schools

NA

Rating: 0

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

This is the area in my opinion that will make the biggest difference. There are way too many students in country WA who are forced to have a gap year to become 'independent' in the eyes of Centrelink by earning enough money. They can't afford to move to the city without this assistance and the majority of families can't afford to support a second household in a city location. These students are not able to continue to live at home with their parents and study as their city peers can do. So students are forced to take a year off to work and often lose the motivation for study. At the very least, surely students can be declared 'independent' if they are unable to travel from their family home to university daily (eg 100km). Another thing that really bugs me with the current

system is that students whose parents have a combined income of over \$150,000 qualify for independence in a different way to those whose parents earn less than that amount. I struggle to understand how the combined parental income can change the way that a student is declared independent! Also, requiring students to work 30 hours per week is absolutely ridiculous in country areas - there are adults struggling to access work for those hours despite their best efforts - the jobs are not always available.

Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 7

Rating for distance education: 7

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

Na

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

The biggest assistance that is required for the transition for country students is financial.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

Push for a change in Youth Allowance. If your family home is further than 100km from the nearest university offering your course, you need to be independent of your parents and therefore automatically qualify for Youth Allowance. Stop forcing country kids to have gap years! Then you will find more of them can go to university.