

## Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Regional Development Australia Tasmania Committee

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## Responses

### Curriculum and assessment

Through our communication with regional communities in Tasmania we have not received any feedback on the structure and content of the curriculum, but all communities are keen to experience engaging ways to bring the curriculum to life. It doesn't have to be the entire curriculum, but at various points through the school year it helps to break the traditional pattern of class room lessons with something different, be it an excursion, a guest teacher, a bespoke challenge or an event.

### Case Study - Beacon Foundation Business Blackboards (Financial Literacy):

The Beacon Foundation is working with 22 schools in Tasmania. The Beacon model creates a Business Partnership Group for each school that can respond to the education requirements for each term by participating in Beacon programs. One program RDA Tasmania has experienced firsthand is the Business Blackboard. Business Blackboards are co-delivered lesson plans which link authentic industry practice with the Australian Curriculum. An RDA Tasmania staff member delivers a popular Financial Literacy lesson for the Learning Areas of Mathematics and Economics and Business which subsequently helps with the General Capabilities Personal and Social Capability and Numeracy. Their Financial Literacy lesson has been taught to over 2,500 students across five schools since 2014.

The Beacon model provides schools with a willing resource of professionals to help bring the curriculum to life. All schools could do this if teachers are trained on how to allow guests to deliver experiential learning experiences in relation to the curriculum.

### Case Study – Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment:

Launched in 2015, The Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment is a joint initiative between the University of Tasmania and the State Government fostering independent and non-partisan expertise to benefit Tasmanians to flourish over the long term. This collective effort is to provide academic support to address barriers to education. The Centre's purpose is to increase levels of educational attainment in the pre-tertiary sector in Tasmania by providing independent and non-partisan expertise on such matters to educators, government, industry and community.

Rating: 0

### Teachers and teaching

RDA Tasmania would encourage the Australian Government to develop initiatives that strengthen the teaching profession in regional, rural and remote communities and make the choice to be a non-metro teacher valuable both professionally and personally.

Rating: 0

## Leaders and leadership

RDA Tasmania would encourage the Australian Government to develop initiatives that strengthen being a school leader in regional, rural and remote communities and make the choice to be a non-metro Principal valuable both professionally and personally.

Rating: 0

## School and Community

We see the link between school and community as a regional development approach to education. Regional development brings together people and place, it is multi-disciplinary, it is asset based and it uses evidence to understand the trajectory a region travels on so it can plan for the long term. Local communities can provide insight into the challenges and opportunities facing their region and can formulate tailored local solutions.

Families are a significant determinant in how education is valued. Schools and families need conduits that encourage them to stay connected in a meaningful way.

### Case Study – BIG, Burnie:

Burnie in north-west Tasmania has used the Collective Impact framework to unite the community with education providers to improve attainment and student aspirations. Burnie City Council initially led the program, called BIG, and the community were quick to support it. BIG projects include Dream Big (getting 150 Grade 5 students into 80 businesses for a day), Everyday Counts (wraparound service for at-risk non-attending families) and Up Close & BIG (business lunch with keynote speaker). BIG plans for the future include tailored pathways for individuals.

### Case Study – Devonport Learning Community:

The Tasmanian Adult Literacy Plan shows that across the state 49 per cent of adults lack the literacy skills to cope with the demands of everyday life and that these rates are higher regional areas. Devonport City Council are targeting literacy to improve learning, family connections, community participation and social inclusion. In 2012, the City of Devonport Council began working with local stakeholders to become a Learning Community. Initiatives have included the Festival of Learning, Reading Salons (children get money back if they can read out loud while having their hair cut), Story Dogs (a program for children struggling with reading), a Year of Literacy and parent reading workshops with Mem Fox.

Rating: 0

## Information and Communication Technology

With one in five Tasmanians not accessing the internet at home there are lots of students not benefitting from the advantages of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It is therefore problematic to assume universal use of computers amongst students to support their achievements or access information to aid their transition from compulsory education. A digital inclusion initiative to support students at home could enhance the role of ICT in education.

Exposure to ICT is essential for students as every industry sector uses ICT. From a regional development perspective, Tasmania's industries compete on quality and this requires innovative use of ICT and therefore a skilled and educated workforce. Programs and initiatives that support student's interest in ICT are to be encouraged by both schools and industry. Examples from Tasmania include:

- TasICT Generations, IT@Work and IT's Your Career programs, Statewide
- Innovation Circle at the QVMAG, Launceston
- STEAM NGN at Launceston College, Launceston
- LoRa Schools Challenge, Statewide

Rating: 0

### Entrepreneurship and schools

RDA Tasmania is supporting initiatives which introduce students to entrepreneurship because it helps students to learn transferable and adaptive skills that can help them transition from compulsory schooling and equips students with business management and technical ability for their adult life. Regional Tasmania has gone through a long period of slow economic growth and it can be hard for students to see tangible opportunities worth further studying or opportunities creating access to employment. Entrepreneurship encourages self-determination to find the next opportunity.

Although entrepreneurship is worth focusing on it helps to be realistic about the purpose and expectations: A student becoming a young entrepreneur is less important than learning the skills of an entrepreneur simply because the smaller size of the market in regional areas makes it challenging to test and launch a minimum viable product.

### Case study – Nextgen Challenge:

The Nextgen Team Challenge is a weeklong session where teams of students from Years 9 and 10 develop and grow an idea for a successful business. The program partners with industry and education stakeholders to provide professional advice and encouragement to the students. Challenges are designed to fit with the Tasmanian economy so they are tackling contemporary issues. It is held three times a year in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie and began in 2010.

Rating:

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

In 2014, the year 12 or equivalent attainment rate was 78.35 per cent in Tasmania, far behind the national target for 2015 of 90 per cent. This is hard to comprehend when evidence shows that Tasmania's school education system delivers capable and promising students up to year 10. It therefore must be a lack of opportunities appropriate to the situations of young people presently missing out on education post year 10. In 2014 a report called 'Tasmanian education today – digging around in the data' revealed that almost two thirds of students, according to TQA data for TCE, fall by the wayside in continuing education post year 10 through to year 12.

The Tasmania Report, commissioned by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) and the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) helps explain Tasmania's educational attainment. The report provides data to show that low retention and completion rates are not due to the fact that a higher proportion of Tasmanian students come from low socio-economic status background, or that the state has a highly dispersed and non-urban population. The Tasmania Report suggests that the single most important reason for Tasmania's persistently low Year 12 completion rates is the 'structural break' between Year 10 and Years 11-12 unique to Tasmania and the ACT. Too many Year 10 students don't progress to college (or stay to attain their Tasmanian Certificate of Education). Year 7-10 students at Tasmanian government high schools, do not see Year

11 and 12 students every day, being 'role models' they seek to emulate, and have the same 'natural progression' from Year 10 to Year 11 that students in other states enjoy; and these appear to be major reasons for such a small proportion of Tasmanian students attaining the highest level of school accreditation.

Additional information is included in the final section.

Rating for enrolments: 0

Rating for clusters: 0

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 0

Diversity

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

RDA Tasmania thinks it is a priority to encourage school retention and improve Tasmanian's understanding of career and further education pathways.

Youth unemployment statistics are high in Tasmania and are indicative of a lack of opportunities suitable for those transitioning out of school. In South East Tasmania the youth unemployment (15-24 year old) rate of 19.6 per cent in January 2016, makes the region one of the top five youth unemployment hot spots in Australia. Launceston and the North East also made it into the top 20 regions in Australia for highest youth unemployment with 16.9 per cent youth unemployment in January 2016. This was significantly higher than the Australian average of 12.2 per cent.

Case Study - Launceston City Deal Jobs Pathways Director:

The Jobs Pathways Director is a new position created by some of the stakeholders involved in the Launceston City Deal. The role of the Jobs Pathways Director will be to analyse how the curriculum is delivered in Launceston in an effort to understand the below average trend of school children transitioning into employment and make recommendations on a city-wide response. There are isolated incidents of innovation, like the work of the Beacon Foundation, but they are limited in breadth and depth to make a regional impact. The Director will be employed for two years, beginning in late 2017, with the objectives of building the evidence base by bringing together people working in the education and employment pathways sector to map existing programs, identify successes, share failure and identify gaps; facilitate development of a set of common objectives; and lead the development and implementation of a Launceston Education and Jobs Framework.

RDA Tasmania is one of the funding partners behind the Jobs Pathways Director. We believe that Launceston needs a locally specific framework to identify strategic priorities for stakeholders to work towards. We also see value in prototyping this activity in Launceston and then sharing our knowledge through the RDA network to support regional communities also challenged by transitioning school leavers into employment or further training.

Additional information is included in the final section.

Rating: 0

## Additional Comments

Additional information for Question 7 regarding improving access:

Tasmanian Government policy to extend high schools in regional areas to Year 12 will help address historically low enrolments and attainment of students from regional communities. Beginning in 2015, the Tasmanian Government report this is already achieving results, with an increase in the Year 10-12 Government Apparent Retention Rate for 2015 of 73.8 per cent compared with 70.1 per cent in 2014. From 2018, a total of 38 schools will have extended to teach Years 11 and 12.

Additional information for Question 9 regarding focussing on transitioning:

Case Study – East Coast Marine Studies:

Triabunna on Tasmania's east coast is located in a deep water harbour with significant local employment coming from aquaculture and fishing. The community has struggled with the closure of the woodchip mill and decline in forestry employment over the last decade. Local industry in Triabunna support students at the local high school through job expos and work experience. A local oyster producer provides spat for the students to care for and grow than is then combined with the commercial stock. Coastcare, a program of the National Heritage Trust worked with teachers from schools in rural and remote locations across the state to develop a teacher's guide for 'Putting a toe in the water' that is used for coastal and marine studies in the K-10 curriculum. The state Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment also has a Marine Links Education Kit for Tasmanian coasts and fisheries information.