

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Regional Universities Network

Reference Type: Education association

State or territory: ACT

Serial Identification Number: 477731

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Rating: 6

Teachers and teaching

Approaches which could be taken to support a high quality teaching workforce for regional, rural and remote school communities include:

- Regional undergraduate teacher education scholarships;
- Teacher access to scholarships for relevant post-graduate qualifications;
- Teacher access to high quality professional development that THEY have identified;
- Recognition of quality teaching service in regional, rural and remote communities; and
- Additional funding incentives to support regional university pre-service teachers be placed in rural and remote schools.

All teachers require professional development opportunities to maintain and extend their professional expertise and competence, and to maintain their accreditation. Universities offer a wide range of professional development opportunities for teachers, including workshops and short programs and formal programs offered at the postgraduate level.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Leaders and leadership are important in terms of identifying people who can be role models within schools, and people from outside schools who can come into classrooms to inspire students.

University students and academics can provide inspirational leadership to school students through outreach activities. Professional development for teachers can assist them in providing leadership.

Promotion of successful role models in the community through prizes and events can also be helpful.

Rating: 7

School and Community

Outreach activities by universities and businesses to school and community are .

The Gippsland Access and Participation (GAP) project is an established and valued part of the Gippsland educational landscape, and a key community engagement activity that showcases students and programs. The project is designed to increase teacher capacity and student engagement in STEM disciplines throughout Gippsland, a region with historically low participation

and performance in VCE science and maths and low rates of university enrolment. The GAP team offers a range of activities in partnership with Gippsland secondary schools, including:

- VCE assessors' meetings for senior secondary teachers; and
- Maths and science curriculum workshops for junior/ mid secondary teachers.
- VCE workshops for Year 12 Biology, Chemistry and Physics;
- A 3-day science summer school for Year 9-11 students;
- Themed challenge days in both mathematics and science for middle year students;
- An annual science and maths 'Roadshow' that delivers a range of engaging activities designed for Years 7-10 to regional and remote students; and
- 'Imagine University' visits for primary and junior secondary students.

The University of New England Discovery Voyager Program will take science out of the lab and into schools of ~7,000 students to deliver an interactive science program at primary and secondary schools around the New England (NE), North West (NW) and North Coast (NC) regions of NSW.

Rating: 6

Information and Communication Technology

Affordable and reliable high speed internet access must be available to regional, rural and remote schools. Lack of appropriate access is a major barrier to schools realising the full potential of ICT. Support services and help lines are also important.

Commonly, the lack of other infrastructure such as the availability of public transport, access to adequate childcare other caring facilities, and the cost and distance of travel to campus are compounded by lack of reliable high speed internet as an alternative to face-to-face learning.

Access to teacher professional development can be an issue.

Rating: 6

Entrepreneurship and schools

Entrepreneurial activities via outreach activities from universities or other organisations can help lift aspirations for students to pursue diverse careers relevant to the modern economy. Examples include the following: activities of the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast, located on the University of the Sunshine Coast campus at Sippy Downs, Qld; the eight-day social innovation studio in Gladstone in 2017, which brought together students from a range of disciplines and regions to focus on innovative strategies to address problems experienced by three not-for-profit (NFP) organisations; the Big Idea competition, which allows students from across Australia to develop a social enterprise business plan to address a specific issue in their region. Student teams are mentored by staff across CQUniversity to understand a social issue, such as food insecurity, homelessness or long-term unemployment within the context of their region.

Rating: 6

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Rating for enrolments: 0

Rating for clusters: 0

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 0

Diversity

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

Outreach by universities to assist students transition beyond school to further study is critical, as is up-to-date and relevant career advice.

Better careers advice is needed in schools to provide students with information relevant to today's careers and changing world. Students need qualifications that will give them transferable and higher level skills that will help them in the range of careers they will participate in throughout their working lives. Various new methodologies, such as the use of "virtual reality", can assist students visualise jobs and professions that they have no exposure to.

The provision of student readiness diagnostics is also a useful tool for allowing students and mentors to assess whether preparatory or bridging courses might be a useful step in preparing students for a successful transition to higher education. Specifically-targeted funding for such outreach and preparation activities should be directed towards rural and remote students, whose opportunities to access such resources is much less than that of their metropolitan counterparts.

The presence of a university campus in a region can raise aspiration for university study.

Outreach activities from universities to schools, such as those funded under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) designed to increase and support the participation in higher education of students from low SES backgrounds and other equity groups at university, has assisted regional students.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

Education should be seen as a major lever to drive the economic development in regional Australia. Issues, policy and funding around school education and transition to work or further education should not be seen in isolation from other issues around regional economic development. Governments should ensure that relevant policy settings are consistent and working together across the school, higher education, industry and regional development space.

Encouragement should be given by all levels of Government through policy and programs for regional and other students to undertake further study, and employment, in regional Australia. Students who study in the regions at a tertiary level are more likely to stay in the regions to work.

Lifting Year 12 completions and tertiary education attainment in the regions must be a priority. Programs to support aspiration raising for students are critical, as are professional development programs for teachers. Regional universities are playing a key role in delivering these programs. Long-term funding commitment is required for the programs to change behaviour in the long-term.

Enabling programs and alternative pathways to higher education help many regional students to succeed at university, and must be encouraged and supported.

Various programs and initiatives are running to encourage connection between students and the community and entrepreneurship – these should be expanded and persisted with in the long-term.

One of the most significant reasons students drop out of university courses is financial hardship. More programs/scholarships to assist and support students financially in the regions would assist.

Better and up-to-date careers advise at school will assist in the transition to broader careers for regional students.