

Recipient Details

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Responses

Curriculum and assessment

The quality of the educational experience should be equivalent to the metropolitan schools and this can only happen if there is equally fast internet (both at school and at home) and there are teachers who are competently trained in the area they are teaching.

Flexible models of learning should be encouraged and enabled. Connecting students with like peers should be a priority.

Rating: 7

Teachers and teaching

Most teachers in rural areas teach several different KLAs, for which they have no training.

Therefore, initial training needs to be more diverse.

Access to regular professional learning for staff is critical, as is encouragement to complete post-graduate study. (This is something that is both expensive and difficult for people in rural areas. Distance and poor internet make it prohibitive.)

The establishment of formal networks for each of the KLAs could mean better transfer of ideas and support for schools where there are no others teaching in this area and no KLA Coordinator to supervise and monitor.

Lower ATAR requirements in rural universities exacerbate the problem, as there is a spiralling down of the quality of education offered in rural schools.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Leaders in rural schools have to be masters of all things and have fewer people to 'spread the load'. It is very difficult to be an instructional leader when compliance matters consume so much time.

My working week is often more than 70 hours and this is hardly inspirational for future leaders. Therefore, attracting quality candidates to leadership positions in rural schools is problematic. Currently, incentives are limited or non-existent.

Addressing and stream-lining the growing compliance and legal matters may support school leaders.

Rating: 6

School and Community

Lower expectations for our students held by the community and families comes about because they do not know all the options. Exploring and undertaking options is an expensive endeavour when there is distance and accommodation involved. Excursions are prohibitively expensive.

Virtual excursions are an option but they rely on good internet...

It is also more expensive to take up tertiary option when you can't do it from under your parents' roof and eat out of their fridge. Setting up a young person at a metropolitan university is a huge cost commitment.

Rating: 4

Information and Communication Technology

The ICT experience should be the same regardless of where you live. And it is not

It is 2017 and 25% of the students in my school have no, or very limited dial-up internet at home. This is not a school fix matter. It requires genuine will by the government.

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools

This is a considerable shift in educational thinking (and not before time) that requires professional learning for leaders and staff, and time to plan and engage with the community.

Models for schools to trial and follow could be a good starting point. Engagement with local councils, TAFE, youth centres could begin the conversations.

Rating:

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding
Students who live remotely have multiple disadvantage and subsidising boarding school is only one very small way to minimise that. In addition, students who attend boarding school often effectively leave home from that point, rarely to return. It is then a loss to the community as well as the family.

The emotional cost of long distances from family can't be calculated. Efforts to keep families (and communities) together need to be explored.

Rating for enrolments: 5

Rating for clusters: 5

Rating for distance education: 6

Rating for boarding: 4

Diversity

Teachers need to be supported (through professional learning and networks) to manage and support aspects of diversity (different abilities, high need learners, NESB students).

Rating: 5

Transitioning beyond school

Defeating lower expectations and building aspirations is critical and can only be based on knowledge of possible options.

Identifying possible positive role models in the community helps. Subsidising mini experiences of tertiary options helps. Making TAFE and university affordable for families who may be rich in assets but low in income (ie most farmers and many local business people) could be an excellent starting point.

Building visible partnerships between schools and tertiary institutions, with flexible learning patterns, could assist a change in view.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

As a school leader and a parent, I know there are factors that have affected both my students' and my children's quality of education and their transition to higher education.

The 'tyranny of distance' has never been more relevant. This could, and should, be minimised through attention to the quality of the internet, creative flexible learning models and minimising the significant cost of educating a young person in a rural area, so that they have equity of access to valuable experiences.