

Recipient Details

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Reference Type: Teacher - Mobile Preschool; Parent - VET

State or territory: NSW

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Responses

Curriculum and assessment

A critical factor in education delivery in country areas is enrolment numbers, particularly for secondary schooling. Our community members are telling us that low and/or falling enrolment numbers impact a school's ability to offer subjects beyond the basics in a traditional teaching setting.

If there is a true commitment to provision of a level educational playing field across Australia, country schools need greater and genuine support in subject delivery. By way of example, perhaps it is not viable for every country secondary school to have a specialist Economics teacher but what should be achievable is for all senior secondary school students to have access to Economics as a subject and have genuine support from a dedicated Economics teacher who provides support to a number of schools in a catchment. Genuine support may include periodic on-the-ground tuition in addition to remote learning.

The ability to deliver subjects remotely is critical to ensure the viability of schools into the future, primarily in the high school sector. For this to happen, principals and teachers need to be supported and encouraged to think "outside the box" to identify and implement what works in their school.

VET courses are pushed due to the social-economic placement of our students. But a town like ours can only employ so many mechanics, beauty therapist or child care workers. These kids leave school with a certificate but have little or no expectations of ever actually gaining meaningful employment in these fields. If you have a child who is academic, you are given the choice of sending your child to a boarding school for academic school choices. However, if like us because boarding fees are beyond our financial reach, we offer our kids a second-rate education where they study class subjects they have no interest in or correspondence courses with no support to attain an ATAR and HSC.

Rating: 7

Teachers and teaching

Teachers and teaching: A school as Rural/Remote school Moree Secondary College needs stronger teaching staff. Currently we are a nursery for first year teachers who do not stay longer than a couple of years or those that are here because they have married into the community and will never leave because it is the only district high school. Neither scenario is a good outcome for the schooling of our kids. Graduates come to Moree with the understanding they can teach for a short period of time before transferring to a coastal or city environment. We need an innovative school to encourage innovative teachers. Until this happens, we are going to disappoint students, their families and the communities.

The two campus's are a complete waste of taxpayers money and does not work. Both need huge upgrades. Teachers waste time commuting between campuses. Meeting are a fact of life, but when they need to happen twice so all staff over two campus' are involved, it is convoluted and ineffective.

We are asking for top teachers and then giving them a substandard environment to work in. WIFI is UNAVAILABLE in nearly all areas of the school including classrooms and staffrooms. Time is wasted with two campus' through meetings and travel time. Money has been thrown at this school through the Connected Communities Programs, but you could not get a school which is more disengaged, dysfunctional or split.

Teachers are asked to contribute to both the school and the community. This is vital, but seems to breed fatigue, stress and exhaustion.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Leadership is vital. MSC has none. Proactive teachers do not last long in our school. Graduates arrive full of enthusiasm; however they soon realise that the School Executive does not approve of any new ideas or innovations to curriculum. It is like the "little boxes on the hillside" paradox. No change is good change. A strong, solid, innovative leadership is vital in our school. We have lacked this for many years and it has resulted in our school failing not only it staff, students and families, but the entire community of the Moree Plains district. It has had major community flow-on effects.

Rating: 7

School and Community

Our school is a divided school. With a high indigenous population, programs have been focused on that sector alone. The school needs programs that are available to the entire school population. There needs to be an even playing field no matter what race, colour or creed. If you are from a working class white family, your children are not given the same support or opportunities as those from indigenous backgrounds. This is also indicative of the entire community. It breeds resentment and disharmony. We have approximately 75 students enrolled for Yr 7 in 2018 At MSC. The school's executive are very pleased with this number. However I have been told that there are currently approximately 150 students in year 6 in 2017 currently in the public school system within the catchment area of MSC. 50% of the students are being removed from the public school system when they are due to start highschool in Moree. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?? WHY ARE NO ALARM BELLS RINGING?????????

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

I once had a conversation with a person who worked for the Dept of Ed in Canberra. Her sole job was to ensure that students and teachers did not loose their internet connection when moving from room to room within their schools. At Moree Secondary College, we don't have internet access in our staffrooms or offices let alone classrooms, hallways and auditoriums. I am speechless. How do you actually believe we could teach these concepts which are seen as so vital to our kids future? And they are vital. Our kids need have access to webinars without disruptions and lack of service.

Correspondence students need to have support using technology because there may not be a teacher available at the campus.

Rating: 5

Entrepreneurship and schools

Assuming that ICT could be reliably and affordably provided to students in the appropriate capacity, it is felt that ICT could greatly improve outcomes for these students.

Support for remote delivery of additional subjects will broaden the exposure for students and help to boost results and opportunities through exposure to more subjects. There is a range of delivery methods that may be suitable; webinars with teachers qualified in the delivery of these subjects helps to provide access and reduce delivery costs for smaller schools and virtual classrooms in which students from a range of areas all participate in a lesson together (which could include metropolitan as well as regional, rural and remote students) are two such ideas.

Universities are now increasingly delivering units online and the same could be applied to high school students in regional, rural and remote areas, subject to the availability of quality internet access, as explored elsewhere in our response.

Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

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Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 5

Rating for distance education: 5

Rating for boarding: 0

Diversity

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

For rural and remote students this is a vital part of their schooling. Our kids usually need to leave the community to gain qualifications and experience in most choices of employment. The financial burden on a family sending their kids away is substantial and often crippling. We can not afford to pay for our children's university degree, accommodation and other expenses. If they choose this

path, they must be financially independent. Because of these constraints many students in our community have given up the hope of ever going to university or even leaving the district. Most students at Moree Secondary College get to Year 12 with no ambition and life plan. Our kids need to be educated on the diverse ways a career path can be achieved. They need to be shown that it is achievable despite the hurdles they have. They need teachers who encourage and guide them through the quagmire of paperwork, government departments and institutions. We need them to see that it isn't all just too hard and that there can be an outcome.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

In a community consultation, it was found that a strong desire amongst local parents in our area for their children to complete their schooling locally rather than through boarding school. However, many parents expressed concerns in relation to falling enrolments in the secondary school and the potential impact this has on the education capable of being offered.

A common sentiment expressed was the perceived shift towards enrolling local students in boarding school or families moving away to access larger secondary schools. The consequences of this are far reaching for our community; a significant portion of discretionary expenditure by boarding school families is spent outside our Shire, local businesses are reporting loss of experienced and well-qualified staff members as their offspring approach high school age and it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract skilled employees when their children are of a particular age.

There is a feeling that diminishing enrolments mean that local high schools are simply not able to offer the curriculum to provide a diverse and enriching experience for students. Academic kids are not as well catered for. Education in Moree is focused on one demographic of students to the detriment of others. Until a level field is used within the school, this will continue to happen. It is sad. As a parent it is disappointing.