

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Yaraka Isisford Branch of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association

Reference Type: Parent association

State or territory: Qld

Serial Identification Number: 478041

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

6.1.1 Is the Australian Curriculum meeting the learning needs and interest of regional, rural and remote students?

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/year-12-students-taught-wrong-hsc-maths-course-20170823-gy26r9.html>

Obviously not in Coonamble NSW

6.1.2 Do current assessment processes help to improve the achievements of regional, rural and remote students?

Get rid of NAPLAN, it ties up teachers and resources and the kids and teachers are heavily reported on already. Use the current assessments and reports to target weak areas.

6.1.3 How can schools be supported to deliver the Australian Curriculum in a flexible way to meet local needs?

6.1.4 Are there other examples of innovative ways in which curriculum is being delivered in regional, rural and remote schools?

Rating: 5

Teachers and teaching

Cannot add questions - consumes word count.

Extra financial incentives are not as attractive as they appear. Anecdotal evidence suggests that as much as \$2000 may be lost to tax from \$3600, leaving only \$1600

Principals in one teacher multi-level class room small schools:

Restructured tax incentives and pay commensurate with "real" hours worked i.e. paid for 25 hrs per week 9-3 but in reality the hours look something like this - 7am-5.30pm and 8.30 pm - 11pm

These teachers are paid less than a deputy or head of department i.e. budgets, HR, finance guru, managing / training staff, ensuring department policies re kept up to date, managing health and well-being, creating plans, ensuring audits are complete etc

Limited or indeed no access to childcare means that spouses of these principals are often unable to find work as they have to look after any non-school aged children the family may have.

Travel to professional development costs the school hundreds of dollars which, depending on the PD has to either be funded privately from the teacher's pocket or from the school budget.

Poor housing is sometimes an issue. In one small school the house is a two bedroom donga, supposedly suitable for family of four. The provision of a more suitable dwelling was promised at Easter. Now we have been told it "might" be ready by October.

There is a perception of reduced opportunities for promotion as often principals of one teacher multi-level schools are viewed as "only Band 5" or "only a small school principal." There appears to be some kind of culture which equates the ability to be suitable for promotion to be somehow tied to the number of students in the school. The unique challenges of teaching in a multi-level, one teacher school in a geographically isolated area often appear to be overlooked.

DIRECT QUOTE FROM BRANCH MEMBER:

"Let teachers teach, give them access to technologies that the kids are using for learning; e.g. iPads"

Rating: 5

Leaders and leadership

6.3.1 What needs to occur so regional, rural remote principals can devote most of their time and attention to student achievements in and beyond school?

There is an excessive workload on teaching principals in rural and remote multi-level one teacher schools (P – 6). Often they are expected to teach at least 3 days a week and use the remaining 2 days for administration.

However in order to ensure that the "second" teacher has some non-contact time to do planning etc., in reality the two administration days become 1.5 days.

Some principals don't take admin days at all.

There are insufficient relief staff to meet demand, especially where distances between schools can be hundreds of kilometres.

IF there is a relief staff member available to employ one person for a day can cost up to \$420 a day from the school budget.

6.3.2 What changes could be made to attract and retain experienced educational leaders for country schools?

DIRECT QUOTE FROM BRANCH MEMBER

"Training for rural and remote needs to start at university. We have so many unemployed teachers in metropolitan areas waiting for that leafy suburb job."

6.3.3 What innovative approaches could be taken to support high quality leadership for regional, rural and remote school communities?

In many instances, these staff feel professionally isolated.

In our region, most school support staff (i.e. regional directors etc.) are based in Mackay, Rockhampton or Emerald. The vast distances to our small schools make regular visits almost impossible.

An additional issue is that many of the staff members located “away on the coast” have had little or any rural and remote practical teaching experience and sometimes do not adequately understand the uniqueness of geographic isolation and the challenges it brings.

Rating: 5

School and Community

6.4.1 What new and innovative approaches are you aware of that improve the connection between schools and the broader community?

6.4.2 What motivates regional, rural and remote students to succeed and how can they be supported to realise their aspirations?

Two Quotes from Rural and Remote teachers

“What I love is the kids, my community, my peers I believe it’s the best job and we need to showcase the benefits of the country and rural and remote teaching experiences.”

“I hope I have changed the lives of my students and enriched their learning experiences!”

6.4.3 Are there untapped priorities in rural and remote settings which, if utilised, could help students realise their potential?

6.4.4 What role does/could the philanthropic sector play in improving outcomes for regional, rural and remote students in relation to school achievement and post— school transition?

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

6.5.1 What has to be done to ensure ICT supports education in regional, rural and remote schools and communities like it does in the ‘best of the best’ city schools?

Ensure all schools have access to internet capacity and speed that enables access to current and future education advances.

More regionally based IT technicians are needed. In small schools you often do not have a staff member with aptitude for fixing IT problems. Where subjects are delivered by e-learning, like LOTE, for instance, I.T. becomes even more essential.

Until all schools have comparable bandwidth and reliable connectivity, comparisons are meaningless.

6.5.2 How could ICT be used to improve educational outcomes for regional, rural, remote students?

ICT systems would allow greater choice of subjects via DE in areas where school student numbers plus the difficulty of recruiting quality staff, do not allow a full breadth of subjects

With fast, reliable internet specialist help programs could be expanded. Gifted and Talented children could interact with their peers on projects, children with a difficulty could be better supported, and all children could have their engagement enhanced.

6.5.3 What are the main barriers to regional, rural and remote schools realising the full potential benefits of ICT?

Technology and cost restrictions due to distance and low population.

The use of satellite based IT needs software that is tailored for the technology.

Connectivity limitations, and reliability issues. The lack of accessible I.T. technicians also hampers usage.

TWO QUOTES FROM BRANCH MEMBERS

“Using digital teaching is a wonderful innovation, but would be vastly improved with better internet speeds and reliability.”

“Internet is awful trying to get my students onto digital technology is a nightmare and frustrating for myself and the students.”

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools

6.6.1 What kinds of support would be needed for a school or group of schools to specialise in entrepreneurial education?

6.6.2 What other entrepreneurial education opportunities exist for regional, rural and remote schools?

6.6.3 Are there other examples where entrepreneurial education has improved outcomes for regional, rural and remote students?

6.6.4 What gaps need to be addressed to help students transition successfully to further study, training or work?

Rating: 4

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

6.7.1 Are there changes that could be made to the ways schools are organised and function that would improve opportunities for regional, rural and remote students?

6.7.2 What could be done to expand the opportunities available to regional, rural and remote students to access high quality education?

Opportunities for our year 6 students are limited to undertaking high school studies via Distance Education or boarding school.

Indeed there are EIGHT shires in Outback Queensland with NO high school at all.

This also becomes an issue for teaching principals who have their own children at the school. When the oldest child reaches Year 7, does the whole family leave so that child can access high school from home or do they stay and have to find the VAST amounts of money needed to send the child to boarding school and cope with this splitting of the family unit etc.???

Rating for enrolments: 4

Rating for clusters: 4

Rating for distance education: 6

Rating for boarding: 6

Diversity

6.8.1 Noting the findings of the Red dirt education project, what do you consider to be the purpose/role of education in remote communities?

6.8.2 What does educational success look like in remote communities?

6.8.3 How can schools/teachers in regional, rural and remote areas be supported to meet the individual learning needs of all students?

6.8.4 How can we create and sustain vibrant, high quality learning environments in regional, rural and remote schools?

6.8.5 What can be done to address the directional flow of regional, rural and remote students towards cities?

Rating: 4

Transitioning beyond school

6.9.1 Are there changes that should be made to education, training and employment policies and practices which would improve post school opportunities for regional, rural and remote young people?

6.9.2 Are there innovative models of accommodation delivery that could benefit regional, rural and remote tertiary students studying away from home?

6.9.3 What can be done to address the directional flow of regional, rural and remote students moving to cities for further education and/or training?

Provide better facilities where the students are living. There are EIGHT shires in outback Queensland which DO NOT have a high school. Of course these children leave to seek further education and training. Communication networks need to be significantly improved.

Rating: 6

Additional Comments

Although our branch did not comment on all sections it was very frustrating to have the input of information limited by a word count. It so happens that I am making this submission while using the internet in a major city. Three times the web page has expired and I have had to start again. I would therefore expect it to be almost impossible to complete this submission using any form of satellite based internet provision service i.e. Sky Muster