

From: Philip Roberts
Sent: Thursday, 17 March 2005
To: Committee, EVT (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into teacher education

Please find attached the recommendations of a report I have recently conducted into the staffing of rural and remote schools in Australia. The report covers many of the broader areas of the inquiry and specifically proposes certain inclusions in teacher education courses to assist with the attraction and retention of teachers in rural and remote areas.

Here I cite the recommendations from the report. In support of these recommendations I site the entire report which is attached for information. Please note that this report will shortly be published by the NSW teachers Federation, however it is not Federation policy. The report is the result of a grant from the NSW Teachers Federation.

The following excerpt is cited;

From this report four broad directions for improving the attraction and retention of teachers in rural and remote areas have been identified. These directions indicate a model of rural staffing which encourages professionalism, recognises rural difference, compensates for economic loss and limits social isolation. The proposed model of rural staffing has deliberately not been divided into attraction and retention as they should be seen as interlinked concepts. Thus the conditions and professional value of rural teaching should be such that teachers who are attracted are also those that would be retained.

Direction

Model

Professionalism

Rural teaching is a rewarding professional experience

- Specifically train teachers for the rural and remote teaching context
- Improve staffing formulas to ensure all subjects are taught by trained teachers and all subjects have the correct number of face to face lessons
- Increase the training and development budget
- Allocate further time to professional development
- Facilitate interaction between teachers in surrounding schools and other areas
- Improve Information Technology
- Support further study by paying HECS and study leave
- Encourage experienced teachers to take up appointments in rural and remote schools
- Provide effective leadership by allowing principals a 'trial period' before accepting positions
- Support beginning teachers with effective mentoring programs
- Improve consultancy support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a state wide staffing system to ensure quality • Extend initiatives to and specifically target casual teachers
Rural Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support trainee teachers from rural and remote areas • Increase the number of indigenous teachers • Specific pre-service training on rural and remote teaching • Support pre-service practicum in rural and remote schools • Increase the resources available to rural and remote schools • Change staffing formulas to ensure all subjects are taught by appropriately trained teachers with the appropriate number of face to face lessons • Select appropriate teachers • Include specific standards for rural teaching in any standards developed by a teaching institute • Guaranteed transfer for professional growth • Maintain a state wide staffing system so that rural service is not devalued • Increase inbuilt district relief
<i>The rural teaching context is different</i>	
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre service teacher education scholarships • Entry scholarships • Paid HECS • Paid removals on initial appointment • Acceptance payments to cover the cost of setting up a home • Vehicle allowances • Increased allowances for the cost of living • Cash payments which increase with the length of service • Standard rental subsidies • Increasing rental subsidies with the period of service • Subsidised utility and food freight costs • Increased paid travel • Paid removals on transfer • Subsidised home loan
<i>Rural teachers have higher costs and are locked out of the economic cycle</i>	
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased paid personal leave • Increased paid medical leave • Increased leave with period of service • Paid sabbatical / study leave • Support rural community development • Community programs to support new teachers • Effective induction programs
<i>Rural teachers live away from family and</i>	

friends

- Provide quality housing
- Limit shared accommodation
- Travel time at each end of vacations
- Enhance staffing formulas to ensure education meets their children's needs
- Enhance incentives to support families
- Guaranteed transfer
- Increased transfer points with the period of service
- Maintain a state wide staffing system to facilitate movement